

Spring 2011

"Oberon's Henchman; Or The Legend of The Three Sisters" by Matthew Gregory Lewis: A Critical Edition

Erin Waddell

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Waddell, Erin, "'Oberon's Henchman; Or The Legend of The Three Sisters" by Matthew Gregory Lewis: A Critical Edition" (2011). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 182.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/182>

This thesis (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies, Jack N. Averitt College of at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

"OBERON'S HENCHMAN; OR, THE LEGEND OF THE THREE SISTERS"

BY MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS:

A CRITICAL EDITION

by

ERIN WADDELL

(Under the Direction of Douglass H. Thomson)

ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a critical edition of M.G. Lewis's "Oberon's Henchman" with an introduction to the text that recontextualizes the poem within its historical milieu. The introduction also presents a critical reading of the text, arguing that Lewis's pastiche is a carefully orchestrated, respectfully playful synthesis of source material which redefines the nature of the spirit world on his own terms. In addition to this background and critical information, this edition provides tools for the reader's comprehension and analysis of the poem: a character guide, synopses presented both chronologically and in order of occurrence within the ballad, extensive notes and glosses to guide and enhance the reader's understanding, and appendices to supplement the reading.

INDEX WORDS: Matthew Gregory Lewis, Oberon's Henchman, Romantic Tales, Lady Frances Douglas, Bothwell, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare, Wieland, Parody, Pastiche, German literature, English ballads, Gothic literature, Fairies, Brownie, Scottish folklore

"OBERON'S HENCHMAN; OR, THE LEGEND OF THE THREE SISTERS"

BY MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS:

A CRITICAL EDITION

by

ERIN WADDELL

B.A., Georgia Southern University, 2007

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in Partial

Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2011

© 2011

ERIN WADDELL

All Rights Reserved

"OBERON'S HENCHMAN; OR, THE LEGEND OF THE THREE SISTERS"

BY MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS:

A CRITICAL EDITION

by

ERIN WADDELL

Major Professor: Douglass H. Thomson
Committee: John Thomas Lloyd
Mary A. Villeponteaux

Electronic Version Approved:
May 2011

DEDICATION

FOR MOM AND DAD

& FOR A'MAMA

Because you've shown me unfailing support, love, and encouragement,
I'm dedicating this work to you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are due to the Department of Literature and Philosophy at Georgia Southern University for fostering a nurturing and challenging learning community. My professors throughout my graduate and undergraduate work have been perpetually encouraging and inspiring. To see your excitement over literature has allowed my own to blossom. I'd like to thank especially my advisor Dr. Douglass H. Thomson, who introduced me to M.G. Lewis and who gave me the opportunity to pursue graduate studies at Georgia Southern—before I'd even applied. His own work on Lewis has been instrumental in the creation of mine, and I thank him for being such a strong role model and for providing so much guidance during the drafting of my thesis. I'd also like to thank Dr. David Dudley and everyone else within the department who granted me the graduate assistantship which allowed me to pursue my studies. Thanks are also in order to Dr. Mary A. Villeponteaux and Dr. John Thomas Lloyd for serving as readers on my committee—this was no small project and it certainly took time away from their already busy schedules. I also acknowledge Dr. Rebecca Ziegler, who kindly provided her assistance in tracking down some elusive fairy tales and folk motifs.

In addition to the academic support provided to me by my professors at Georgia Southern, I've had quite a bit of moral support throughout my graduate career and through the drafting of my thesis. First, thanks are due to my husband who forgives me even when I take out my writing stress on him. Thank you, Joe, for picking up my slack, and for all of those nights when we relax on the sofa together because we're both too mentally exhausted to do anything else. I also owe so much to my parents, George and Sandy Curley, who have never failed to listen and guide me when they get my hysterical phone calls. Their unending love and encouragement, even over the phone, means more than I can say. My grandmother, Connie

Davis has been a lifelong inspiration to me for her ardent belief in the importance in learning, and in literature, specifically. I also owe her thanks as a steadfast grammarian; thank you, A'mama for helping me edit and proofread, and thank you for not running, screaming from the room when I showed you my first (grossly incomplete) draft. I'd also like to thank my brother and my sister-in-law, Scott and Christy Curley, for opening their home to me—and even occasionally providing food!—while I finished up my coursework at Georgia Southern. And a final thank you to my whole system of support: to my mother- and father-in-law, Kay and David Waddell, who treat me like I'm one of their own, and to my sister-in-law Steffi, whose break times always seem to match up with mine. To Kristi McKay, and Jane Maddox, Whitney Zried, Amelia Wilhelm, and everyone else who told me (over and over again) they believed I could actually finish this thing. You have no idea how much your encouragement continues to mean to me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	6
LIST OF FIGURES.....	10
PREFACE.....	11
INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT.....	11
I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF “OBERON’S HENCHMAN”.....	14
A. A Biographical Sketch of Lady Frances Douglas.....	14
B. Lewis’s Presentation of “Oberon’s Henchman” to Lady Douglas.....	23
II. READING GUIDE.....	33
A. Character Guide.....	33
B. Chronological Timeline and Plot Synopsis of “Oberon’s Henchman”.....	36
1. <i>Chronological Timeline</i>	36
2. <i>Plot Synopsis</i>	37
III. CRITICAL ANALYSIS.....	40
A NOTE ON THE TEXT.....	74
“OBERON’S HENCHMAN; OR, THE LEGEND OF THE THREE SISTERS” BY M. G. LEWIS.....	77
PREFACE.....	78
TITLE PAGE WITH EPIGRAPH.....	80
ADVERTISEMENT.....	81
“EXTRACTS FROM THE MIDSUMMER’S NIGHTS DREAM”.....	84
“TO SHAKESPEARE”.....	86
“OBERON’S HENCHMAN; OR, THE LEGEND OF THE THREE SISTERS”	
BOOK THE FIRST.....	88

BOOK THE SECOND.....	108
“TINEY’S PETITION”	137
WORKS CITED.....	143
APPENDIX A: “TINEY’S PETITION,” AS IT APPEARED IN <i>ROMANTIC TALES</i> (1808).....	149
APPENDIX B: A QUERY REGARDING PLAGIARISM.....	152
APPENDIX C: CRITICAL RECEPTION	
1. <i>Annual Review</i> (1808).....	154
2. <i>Critical Review</i> (Dec 1808).....	154
APPENDIX D: OTHER CONTEMPORARY LITERARY ATTENTION TO BOTHWELL CASTLE	
1. “Bothwell’s Bonny Jane” by Matthew Gregory Lewis, 1801.....	156
2. “Bothwell Bank” by John Pinkerton, 1773.....	156
3. “Bothwell’s Sisters Three” by Walter Scott, 1799.....	159

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Frances Scott (Lady Douglas), after Robert Adam. <i>A Castle above a River, among Mountains</i> . (n.d.) Pencil, pen and ink, watercolor wash and ink and brush on paper. With permission of The Tate Collection, London.....	32
Figure 2: James B. Brown. <i>Bothwell Castle fae Blantyre</i> . (3 November 2007). Photo. Online image. Flickr. 21 Feb. 2011.....	39
Figure 3: Xxxrmt. <i>This is Bothwell Castle (at Night)</i> . (18 July 2010). Photo. Online image. Flickr. 21 Feb. 2011.....	73
Figure 4: Title page of “Oberon’s Henchman” from <i>Romantic Tales</i> , First edition (1808).....	77
Figure 5: The first and second pages of “Tiney’s Petition” from <i>Romantic Tales</i> . First edition (1808).....	149
Figure 6. Oberon’s curse interrupted by “Tiney’s Petition,” as printed in <i>Romantic Tales</i> (1808).....	150

PREFACE

Matthew Gregory Lewis's long poem "Oberon's Henchman, or The Legend of the Three Sisters" is essentially a verse sequel to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* composed in the ancient ballad style. Lewis creates a tale surrounding Titania's and Oberon's little Indian boy from *Dream*; he is a human child in the fairies' possession, to whom Lewis gives the name of Zelim. Lewis transplants Oberon's fairy kingdom from Shakespeare's Athens to the area surrounding Bothwell Castle, located on the bank of the River Clyde in Lanarkshire, Scotland. As Lewis explains in his preface to the poem, "Oberon's Henchman" is an etiological tale written to explain the presence of three standing "sister" stones on the river's bank beside Bothwell Castle: the stones, Lewis's poem depicts, were once three human sisters transformed into stone by Oberon, as a punishment for their grave transgression detailed in the course of the poem.

As Lewis explains in his preface to the poem in *Romantic Tales*, "Oberon's Henchman" was "composed to amuse a person, from whom during many years I have experienced much kindness, and whose friendship and regard I value very highly" (78). This person is Frances, Lady Douglas of Bothwell Castle. The first known copy of "Oberon's Henchman" is a manuscript dated 4 September 1803, a presentation copy intended for Lady Douglas, complete with illustrations and explanatory notes which reference Lady Douglas's private life. Later, Lewis developed the poem into a much less personal form, omitting many lighthearted footnotes which had accompanied the original manuscript. It was in this form, largely (though not entirely) stripped of its focus on Lewis's personal relationship with Lady Douglas, that Lewis included "Oberon's Henchman" in his *Romantic Tales*.¹

1. For the publication history of *Romantic Tales*, see A Note on the Text.

In adapting the text to suit a larger audience, Lewis concedes, “many passages relate to accidental occurrences in society (to explain which would be totally uninteresting to the public) and which therefore will not merely lose what little value they might originally possess, but must unavoidably appear as blemishes” (“Preface” 78). Lewis’s concern that these personal details would be “totally uninteresting to the public” led him to omit them, leaving gaps, or “blemishes,” in their wake. The end result of Lewis’s alterations to the text is a poem which mixes traditional Gothic elements of horror in a fairy-tale setting with occasional parodic passages, all of which combined make Lewis’s overall purpose rather difficult to ascertain. Critics were unsure what exactly to make of it. An anonymous reviewer in *Critical Review* notes that Lewis has “translated” Shakespeare’s story of Titania and Oberon’s changeling child “with some fancy and some pleasing description” and yet the reviewer also finds fault with the poem: “But, notwithstanding the occasional strokes of imagination and genius discoverable in the poem, we rather fear that the poor little changeling has suffered a great deal from the cold in migrating from Athens to Caledonia.” The critic writing for the *Annual Review* gives a more positive review, calling the ballad “an elegant and ingenious fiction” and a “jeu d’esprit,” “the *scenery* of which is fanciful and picturesque” (617). And yet this review also expresses its dissatisfaction with Lewis’s verse, calling it “a sort of measured, dancing-master step, which palls upon the ear” (617).²

2. Sir Walter Scott notes in 1802, in a letter to Lady Anne Hamilton: “you do not know how beautiful a poem Mr. Lewis has written upon Bothwell Castle at Lady Douglas [sic] request”; he goes on to suggest she request a copy of “the *Three Sisters* which Lewis shewed me in Edinr” (Scott, *The Letters* 151). This attention from Scott, although very brief, gives no criticism of Lewis’s work, only praise.

This edition reintroduces “Oberon’s Henchman” to the public with an effort to restore much of its original joviality. While no edition can lighten the “master step” of Lewis’s verse, this one certainly gives a better context through which to read his text and examine its purpose. The introduction to this edition provides historical context to the poem’s composition, with an emphasis on Lady Douglas’s character as the poem’s recipient, as well as providing sections on Lewis’s various literary sources and inspirations. The critical edition of the ballad also provides plot summaries (both chronological and in the order of events as they occur in the text), the editor’s critical analysis, as well as footnotes and appendices to inform and supplement the text. This edition restores footnotes from the 1803 manuscript which return the critical focus to Lewis’s composition of the poem for a friend. With these supplementary materials, Lewis’s all but forgotten ballad of love, deceit, murder, and revenge can once again be appreciated for its singular combination of fairy lore, Gothicism, tragedy, and parody in one fascinating pastiche.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF "OBERON'S HENCHMAN"

A. A Biographical Sketch of Lady Frances Douglas

Although the whole of Lewis's *Romantic Tales* is "inscribed to the Right Honourable Lady Charlotte Maria Campbell,"³ his composition of "Oberon's Henchman" is playfully and obviously dedicated to another lady of rank in his life: Lady Douglas of Bothwell Castle. The Lady Douglas, recipient of Lewis's poem "Oberon's Henchman," was the daughter of Lady Caroline Campbell and Francis Scott, Earl of Dalkeith. She was born Frances Scott, named after her father, whose death in 1750 predated her birth on the 26th of July of that same year. For the first four years of her life, she was victim to a harsh childhood, burdened by a particularly cold mother. Florence MacCunn, Sir Walter Scott's biographer, laments Lady Dalkeith's treatment of her daughter Frances: her "resentment of her elder daughter's lack of grace amounted to one of those unnatural animosities which shock us as contrary to universal instinct" (190). The child, however, found love and support in the form of a stepfather who married her mother when Frances was four years old: politician Charles Townshend. Townshend's "private character," according to Lady Frances's close friend Lady Louisa Stuart's memoir,⁴ was "careless, gay,

3. Lady Charlotte Campbell, later Lady Bury, was a personal friend of Lewis's, as well as an English novelist. It was at one of her parties that Lewis and Sir Walter Scott first met in person, although they had already communicated with each other thorough letters.

4. Although a few short biographies of Lady Douglas exist, the most information on both her life's history and her character can be found in a memoir which Lady Louisa Stuart (Douglas's cousin) wrote for Lady Douglas's daughter Caroline sometime after the death of Lady Douglas. *The Memoire of Frances, Lady Douglas*, Lady Louisa Stuart's text, details a rich portrait of the woman, and however highly she cherished Lady Frances, or "F." as she is called in the *Memoire*, she does not fail to paint a realistic portrait, one that proudly boasts her strengths,

inconsiderate, volatile, seemingly foreign to every serious reflection or feeling” (37). From accounts of his dealings in the public eye, he seemed to have been quite the entertainer, and Stuart claims he enjoyed “*mystifying* his hearers” through wild tales of invention, although “he checked it, and was always in earnest” with his beloved stepdaughter Lady Frances (37). It was from this relationship with her stepfather that Lady Frances developed her appreciation for knowledge, and with age, became his close friend and confidante. His kindness toward Lady Frances occasionally protected her from her mother’s wrath, yet, perhaps more frequently, it caused her mother’s increasing spite and “bitter resentment” (Stuart 45):

Yet after all, she was under Lady Dalkeith’s authority; and many are the ways in which women can teize [sic] and torment women, unperceived by a male spectator; who may hinder open violence, ward off a dagger offered at the breast, but can do nothing to prevent thorns from vexing the thing that is raw, and pins from pricking a sensitive part to the quick. (Stuart 45)

Thus, even with a protective step-father, Lady Frances’s childhood and adolescence were troubled. However, as Stuart later details in her memoir, the relationship between Lady Frances and her stepfather became more of a curse. Although he had children of his own from a previous marriage (as well another child with Frances’s own mother, Lady Dalkeith⁵), Townshend

but one which also does not shy away from the darker shadows of her character. Through this work, we see a dynamic Frances, Lady Douglas who could welcome the friendship of M.G. Lewis and Sir Walter Scott, and we can perhaps know her better than these men did themselves. Lady Stuart wrote her *Memoire* following the death of her dear friend; it stayed in private hands until finally being published in 1985.

5. This child is Anne Townshend, a notable beauty (1756-?). Her marriage to Richard Wilson resulted in their needing financial support from Lady Frances, which she kindly bestowed upon them.

lavished his attentions on the young Lady Frances. These attentions were excessive: he was prone to writing her sentimental letters if the two were apart for even a matter of hours. Lady Frances became a prisoner to fear as she hid his overly affectionate letters away, nervous that anyone could easily infer a more inappropriate relationship from such apparent evidence. She assured Lady Louisa Stuart, her lifetime friend and confidante, that nothing more than these verbal displays of emotion ever became of their relationship. Stuart's memoir gives this account: "He idolized her mind alone; seeming hardly to recollect she has a person: and perhaps the very consciousness that there was nothing sensual in his passion rendered him the less solicitous to put any curb upon it" (46). Regardless of his apparent lack of sensuality towards his adolescent stepdaughter, Lady Frances became troubled by Townshend's constant passion, for "passion it was—passion marked by it's [sic] engrossing tendency, it's [sic] overwhelming and uncontrollable force: in which she could not help feeling a something distinct from the paternal tenderness he used to show her" (46). When, at seventeen, Lady Frances was given the opportunity to leave the Townshend home and live with her brother⁶ in Scotland, she left as quickly as possible. During that same year, 1767, the Right Honorable Charles Townshend, stepfather of Lady Frances, died.

6. Henry Scott, 3rd Duke of Buccleuch (1746-1812). Born 2 September 1746, the son of Francis Scott and Caroline Campbell. He is one of five children from this union, and a full brother to Lady Frances (the youngest). He married Lady Elizabeth Montagu on May 2nd, 1767. They maintained residence at Dalkeith Castle, Scotland. Lady Frances was overjoyed about this union, and became very close companions with her sister-in-law. Stuart quotes Lady Frances's response to her brother's wife: "When I reflect upon it, I protest it looks as if Providence had sent her into the family on purpose to be my guardian angel" (48).

Just over a decade later, Lady Frances inherited an income as well as a house⁷ after the death of her paternal aunt, Lady Jane Scott.⁸ During these years, she also cultivated relationships in high society, including very close friendships with Lady Louisa Stuart and with Lady Lucy Douglas⁹. In the months following her aunt's passing, Lady Frances made her way to Bothwell Castle in South Lanarkshire, Scotland, to attend her friend Lady Lucy Douglas after the birth of her third child. Lady Frances stayed with her friend for over a month. As Stuart's memoir explains, "Lady Lucy wanted cheering and support; her health seemed drooping without any particular complaint or symptom to create alarm" (81). This visit included an experience Lady Frances would remember all her life (or so Stuart reports): while sitting together, the first Lady Douglas made an odd request to her friend. Stuart's memoir is so detailed that it is worth quoting at length:

One day as *F.* [Frances] was sitting beside her couch and the boys were at play on the floor, something led the conversation to second marriages—"If I should die[""]—said Lady Lucy—"["I wish to God you and Mr. Douglas would marry, for I am sure you would be kind to my poor children—Aye, you may laugh; but I tell you once again I wish it"—At that instant he [Lord Douglas] came in, and directly turning to him—"Do you hear? (repeated she) I have been saying so and so to Lady Frances"—"Well"—cried *F.* in her lively manner "what say you? Had we

7. Douglas House, Petersham, Surrey.

8. Lady Jane Scott (?-1779) never married and willed her fortune to Henry (3rd Duke of Buccleuch) and Lady Frances, the only two children of her brother (Lord Francis Scott) who lived to adulthood.

9. Born Lady Jane Graham (1751-1779), she was the first wife of Archibald James Edward Douglas of Bothwell (who later married Lady Frances).

not better agree upon it”—“By all means[,]” replied he in the same tone[,] “I think there cannot be a better scheme.” And all three laughing it off as a jest, Lady Lucy let it pass so, though she had probably spoken from an inward presentiment that her days were numbered. (81-2)

This visit was, in fact, the last Lady Frances had at Bothwell before returning as Lady Douglas herself in 1783.¹⁰ Lady Frances, now Lady Frances Douglas, became stepmother to three young children at Bothwell. The following year Lady Frances became a mother herself on 16 February 1784 with the birth of her daughter Caroline Lucy Douglas.¹¹

These facts, although important in illustrating her station in life as someone Lewis must have respected,¹² do not depict her entire character. To do so, we must return to some details of her earlier life. Before her marriage to Lord Douglas in 1783, she spent time traveling between England, Ireland, and Scotland, during which she kept verse journals of her travels, and occasionally painted.¹³ Manuscripts of some of these verse journals are currently housed in the

10. The wedding took place on 13 May 1783 at Grosvenor Square, London.

11. Caroline Douglas, first daughter of Lady Frances Douglas, was also a close companion of Lady Louisa Stuart. It was for Caroline that Stuart wrote her memoir of Lady Frances.

12. According to Sir Walter Scott, Lewis was “fonder of great people than he ought to have been, either as a man of talent or a man of fortune. He had always dukes and duchesses in his mouth” (qtd. in Macdonald 103).

13. Four of her landscapes are currently part of the Tate Collection: *A Waterfall in a Gorge* (1782), *A Mountain Gorge with a River* (1782), *A Castle above a River, among Mountains, after Robert Adam* (n.d.), and *Dunskie Castle near Port Patrick* (n.d.). *A Castle above a River, among Mountains, after Robert Adam* is featured following “Oberon’s Henchman” of this edition (32). Each of these works is described by the Tate Collection as pencil, pen and ink, watercolor wash and ink and brush on paper.

Scottish Poetry Library, for which the institution gives this descriptor: “most of the verses are in the form of epistles to relatives and friends, with some riddles and epitaphs” (*Manuscript*).

Below is an example of Lady Frances’s poetry, and from it, one should begin to sense her personality:

To Lady E. Home with a Cushion of False Hair (1777)

Fond Youths in days of yore ‘tis said

To deck their favorite fair one’s head,

The sweetest, freshest flowers chose,

The Violet, Pinks, and Blushing Rose.

How times are changed—a lover now

T’adorn a beauteous damsel’s brow,

Scorns such mean arts, and sends his Fair

A Wig, that’s made of dead men’s hair!¹⁴

In its jovial nature, this work paints a portrait of the character of Lady Frances, with a particular emphasis on her ability to laugh at the culture of the day, and her sense of humor in general.

Penny Duce, affiliated with the Scottish Poetry Library, reflects on Lady Frances’s manuscript: “her verse is lively and humorous; though not great poetry, it reveals much of the writer’s social milieu, whether asking a friend to assist her in making tassels for her bed-hanging, or sending a poem to accompany a gift.” In addition to poems like the above, the manuscript also contains

14. Although Lady Frances’s MS notebook is only available for private viewing at The Scottish Poetry Library, I am indebted to Penny Duce for her reprinting of two of Lady Frances’s short poems in her article introducing the new building for the library in 2005 in *Textualities* online magazine.

“epitaphs for deceased pets, including a favourite monkey and caged bird, and poems on the diversions enjoyed by the family at Dalkeith—a musical evening hearing Mrs. Sheridan sing, charades, needlework, drawing, games of whist; and visits to friends” (Duce). Duce includes another spirited excerpt from Lady Douglas’s journal:

At Wilton, Dec. 1780
 Thursday Farewell! Ah when again shall we
 A day so glorious, so eventful see?
 At morn, what visits made! what walks were taken,
 At dinner, of what Bouilli and what Bacon!
 When ev’ning came, we charm’d the fleeting hours
 With sports and games, (th’Olympicks fools to ours);
 To crown the night with Joys sublime as these,
 Record it Fame! we ate some toasted cheese!...

Any acquaintance of Lady Frances must have known her kind and open character, as well as her lighthearted sense of humor characterized by these poems.

Lady Frances Douglas was no remarkable beauty. Lady Louisa Stuart describes Lady Frances’s underwhelming physical presence:

“F. [Frances] was always held remarkable for the reverse of beauty.... This was the general opinion, fully assented to by her own family, and above all by herself. Her constant joking on the subject made it an easy one to others; yet I remember her once saying seriously and sadly to my sister Caroline—‘Though I laugh it off, I can tell you my lot is hard; for nobody admires beauty more than I

do...I do assure you that when I rise in a morning, it turns me half sick to look at my own face in the glass.” (Stuart 33-4)

The character of Lady Douglas was one marked by such dualities: although she joked about her appearance, inwardly her own reflection disturbed her. Yet these personal troubles seemed to go unnoticed by many who knew her, possibly because they were hidden by her appearing constantly jovial and warm. Her compassion for others revealed itself in many forms including her unending support for friends. Lady Stuart, in her memoir, reflects fondly on Lady Frances’s encouragement of her (Stuart’s) poetry: “One of the delights of having a friend was to indulge vanity by showing her my verses—hitherto mostly kept to myself because laughed at and held cheap at home” (71). As J. Steven Watson, who prefaced an edition of Lady Louisa Stuart’s *Memoire of Frances, Lady Douglas*, states, this praise was “difficult to justify” as the verses are “not much above the level of those to be found in many girls’ albums, where pressed flowers neighbor conventional emotions” (x). His critique of Lady Stuart’s verse certainly suggests a truth about Lady Douglas’s personality: she was friend first, critic second.

Lady Frances Douglas became a friend to Lewis as well as to Sir Walter Scott, and proudly held her station as hostess at Bothwell. MacCunn again provides insight with a brief sketch of Lady Douglas’s character as hostess: “She had a hostess’s best gift, unaffected zest in all that was going on. The vitality which made her endow those she met with admirable, original, or at least whimsical qualities, might have led into caprice and disillusionment a woman with less fairness of mind and warmth of heart: with Lady Douglas it merely kept alive a delightful sense of social adventure in her everyday life” (199). MacCunn’s portrait of the lady includes a sketch of the setting at Bothwell as well: “while the old castle close to the modern house was *the* feature in the old romantic landscape, the ruins were decorated with trim flowers

and creepers” (200). Her very personality seemed to have that dual inspiration of light and darkness which made her the perfect muse for Lewis’s “Oberon’s Henchman.” MacCunn tells us that in a letter to Lord Montagu after Lady Frances’s death, “Scott recalls her happy in her garden in a checked apron, or masquerading as a Banshee, yet adds that the great and majestic Lady would be resumed the next moment” (203).

Lady Douglas’s whimsicality must have been a partial inspiration for “Oberon’s Henchman.” In a letter to his mother from Bothwell Castle, Lewis explains: “I like every individual of the family in which I am living. Lady Douglas, in particular, is the most sensible and entertaining woman I almost ever met with” (Baron-Wilson 92). It is unlikely that Louis was aware of the complex nature behind Lady Douglas’s frequently cheery façade.¹⁵ He must, however, have at least known about her penchant for humor and her admiration for his Gothic literature¹⁶ as he incorporates both elements into his “Oberon’s Henchman,” a gift for Lady Douglas.

15. Even when she was married and established at Bothwell, Lady Douglas was not always the picture of contentment. Stuart quotes her friend: “I have a great deal to make me happy, and I am thankful for it—but cannot you conceive that one may have been so unhappy, and unhappy so long, as to deaden the faculty, take away the power of fully tasting happiness when all obstacles to its enjoyment are seemingly removed?” (96-7).

16. MacCunn mentions a collection entitled “Bothwell Poetry Book” which includes “mock heroic ballads and ghostly legends in ‘Monk’ Lewis’s vein”; however, MacCunn’s prose is ambiguous as to the author of these verses, though Lady Frances as the poet would make sense in this context (200).

B. Lewis's Presentation of "Oberon's Henchman" to Lady Douglas

This section draws on the work of W.B. Carnochan and David W. Donaldson whose article in *The Book Collector* (1981) provides us with a glimpse of a rare 1803 edition of "Oberon's Henchman," described by Carnochan and Donaldson as a "presentation" copy to Lady Douglas.¹⁷ Their article combined with knowledge of Lady Douglas's character is a useful lens through which a modern reader can read Lewis's "Oberon's Henchman," as it helps us in classifying this otherwise elusive text as one written for a friend. As we come to see details in the text for the jokes they are, we can begin to see the often pilloried "Monk" Lewis in a new light, one which his close friends and companions must have seen.

We can first turn to Lewis's own preface to the poem in the 1808 edition of *Romantic Tales* for his own explanation of its origin:

It was composed to amuse a person, from whom during many years I have experienced much kindness, and whose friendship and regard I value very highly: In consequence, many passages relate to accidental occurrences in society (to explain which would be totally uninteresting to the public) and which therefore will not merely lose what little value they might originally possess, but must unavoidably appear as blemishes. (78)

This person, of course, is Lady Frances Douglas. And as for the "blemishes," we now, with the work of Carnochan and Donaldson, can clarify many of them. Carnochan and Donaldson note that "Although Lewis is in one sense right—it would have been heavy-handed to explain the fragile allusions on which much of the poem depends—it is a pity not to be able to recognize

¹⁷. The presentation copy Manuscript from 1803 is housed and available for private viewing at the Stanford University Library.

them all” (349). In 1808, the infamous “Monk” Lewis may not have had the support of his audience for such personal details. Now, however, as we learn more about his life, his influence on other writers, and his role in incorporating the German Gothic literary tradition into English literature, these details make for a fascinating new side to the Lewis who sneaks into the letters of his friends. Again, as Carnochan and Donaldson state, the poem of the three sisters “has substantial interest beyond its aesthetic elegance: it points up Lewis’s knack of writing to the occasion” (349). Thus, in an effort to contextualize “Oberon’s Henchman” according to Lewis’s life and interpersonal relationships, this edition restores as many of these lost anecdotes as possible to enrich our understanding of the poem.

“The enterprise,” of writing “Oberon’s Henchman,” in the words of Carnochan and Donaldson, “was conducted in a spirit of considerable fun, as the presentation copy now makes more clear” (349). Their research revealed a number of personal touches completely absent in the text we see in *Romantic Tales*, several of which are in the form of sketched illustrations which “are evidently by Lewis himself” (Carnochan and Donaldson 346). The first, and perhaps most personal illustration in the 1803 edition, is found on the poem’s title page: below the title on this page lies an extravagantly detailed drawing of cherubs and greenery with floral embellishments, all in the form of a script letter “F,” clearly in recognition of Frances, Lady Douglas. Other illustrations include: a moonlit scene beneath bare tree limbs in which two winged fairies sit in a garden beside a partially-sketched cottage; decorative floral spreads on a few various pages; as well as a border of greenery around the word “Moral” at the conclusion of

the poem.¹⁸ What these illustrations can say for Lewis is that he took great pride in delivering this manuscript to Lady Douglas.

In their description of the 1803 text, Carnochan and Donaldson also include a facsimile of one page from the manuscript on which Lewis made some revisions to the text. On the page, two rows of verse have been scribbled out after the line which ends “and how through Lillia died!” (80). In addition to some small line revisions such as these, there are a few major changes to the text between the 1803 presentation copy and the poem that was published in *Romantic Tales* in 1808. The first of these larger revisions is a change in the epigraph. Rather than the passage from Crabbe’s “The Library” which begins the 1808 text,¹⁹ the manuscript’s title page features the following passage from Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*:

Ferd: “May I be bold to think these Spirits?

Pros: “Spirits, which by mine art

I have from their confines called to enact

My present Fancies!”²⁰

Carnochan and Donaldson’s musings on the reasons for this change are worth quoting: “Perhaps Lewis thought that comparing himself to Prospero would not go down well publicly.... Whatever his motive, the effect is that of Gothic gravity supplanting airier notions: a ‘thousand visions’ and a ‘former dread’ replace ‘present Fancies’” (350). This change from lightness to gravity is

18. See Carnochan and Donaldson’s “The Presentation Copy of ‘Monk’ Lewis’s ‘Oberon’s Henchman’, 1803” for facsimiles of these images.

19. See page 79 of this edition for the epigraph to “Oberon’s Henchman.”

20. Carnochan and Donaldson note that the lineation of this passage is not true to Shakespeare, but rather Lewis’s own invention; however, the only adaptation is a minor one. The actual text splits Ferdinand’s line into two: “May I be bold / To think these spirits?.” The whole passage comes from Act IV, Scene I, lines 119-22 of *The Tempest*.

characteristic of most of the changes Lewis made to his 1808 edition; evidently he thought that while gaiety was a fine thing in a poem addressed to a friend, his reading public would accept nothing but the Gothicism which made him both famous and infamous.

Lewis made few other adjustments of the prefatory material between the two editions: he added excerpts from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (presumably for the benefit of his readers who may not have been as familiar with Shakespeare's work as was his original audience, Lady Douglas), and he removed a headnote from Dante's *Inferno*. The quotation from Dante was in reference to the lovers Paolo and Francesca, who suffer eternally in the second circle of the *Inferno* for pursuing their adulterous relationship; it can be translated into English as "Alas! How many sweet thoughts, what great desire, brought them to the woeful pass!" (qtd. in Carnochan and Donaldson V.112-4).²¹ The removed line from Dante's *Inferno* may provide a hint of Lillia's pain in losing Zelim and also adds to the pathos of the work as a whole. However, Carnochan and Donaldson note an obvious truth: "The story of Paolo and Francesca does not much resemble the story of the three sisters; perhaps Lewis realized this as he reworked the poem" (350). They further speculate about Lewis's motivation for cutting his allusion to Dante: "Matters of tone are more important, however: in 1803 he casually invoked not only Shakespeare but Dante; then in 1808 he excised such casual extravagances" (350). Their observation here is a good one, and although conjectural, it does seem to fit with other facts. Lewis humbles himself in his address to Shakespeare, as well as calls his poem "My earth-born verse" (II.492). He also seems to fear negative reactions from critics, illustrated by the line: "From critic-wrath my idle

21. Lewis's headnote in the MS is Latin; however, Carnochan and Donaldson note that Lewis's transcription is inexact. His headnote reads "Ahi lasso! / Quanti dolci pensier, quanti desiri / Méno costoro al doloroso passo!" but properly, the passage should read: "Oh lasso, / quanti dolci pensier, quanto disio / menò costoro al doloroso passo!" (359n10)

rhyme to save” (II.496). Considering these pieces of evidence, one could postulate that Lewis was attempting to deny himself poetic extravagances for which readers and critics alike might condemn him.

The biggest differences between the 1803 manuscript and the 1808 publication of the text in *Romantic Tales* come in the form of Lewis’s playful explanatory notes, many of which describe what appear to be shared jokes between Lewis and his hosts at Bothwell. The examples are many, though a few remain in the 1808 version. Lewis’s footnote in the 1808 “Oberon’s Henchman” which claims that Maudlin’s cottage “still exists, though with some alterations; the toads have been turned out, and the walls having been white-washed, retain but few traces of the labours of the efts and vipers” (I.134n43) is a shortened version of the 1803 note: “the walls having been white-washed retain but few traces of the labour of the Efts and Vipers; the Toads have been turned out; and the Witch’s cauldron now serves Lady Douglas for a Tea-Kettle” (qtd. in Carnochan and Donaldson 353). The most obvious difference between these versions is the comedic aspect of the earlier with its inclusion of Lady Douglas’s Gothic tea kettle, quite clearly a joke meant for her personal amusement. In the same vein, the text of the 1808 edition includes a line describing Maudlin’s girdle “scorned / With brazen knobs of lion-heads adorned” (I.170-1), but does not include the note present in the 1803 manuscript: “the Lion’s head is still a favourite ornament in the Bothwell family; though I by no means intend to hint’—thereby hinting conclusively —‘that the Ladies deal in the Black Art’” (qtd. in Carnochan and Donaldson 353).

Later in the poem, Lewis’s 1803 manuscript includes a gloss on Oberon’s summoning of the storm which “rocked the ground” (II.365). Carnochan and Donaldson transcribe the lengthy footnote:

Oberon having once taught them the way, the Winds still play occasionally the above gambols at Bothwell; as it was found [by woeful experience] by a certain *Great-Northern-Female-Potentate* in the summer of 1802—She was proceeding to take a sketch of the Castle’s ruined Towers, when [terrible to mention!] She was suddenly attacked by the Winds, and attacked too in *all* quarters! Drawing apparatus, Hat, and Habit, Head and Feet, equally and at once experienced the fury of those assailants. —Resistance had been vain! What could the Great-Northern-Female-Potentate do? She wisely abandoned to the Foe the least valuable part of her baggage; and while occupied with their plunder, the Sylphs of the South-wind flew off with her paper, and the Daemons of the North scampered away with her pencils, the Great-Northern-Female-Potentate made good her retreat to the House, though completely routed, and in the most absolute disorder—“Sans Ink, sans brush, sans sketch, and . . .almost! sans any thing![]”²² (qtd in Carnochan and Donaldson 353)

Carnochan and Donaldson speculate that this “Great-Northern-Female-Potentate” is indeed Lady Douglas, and given our knowledge of her interest and skill at landscape sketching and painting, as well as Lewis’s mention of her preferred art supplies, their guess is probably correct. In any case, this note interrupts the most serious and dramatic scene of the poem (Zelim’s death and Oberon’s subsequent wrath) with what is obviously a joke between friends. At this point in the text, Lewis further divides his audience’s attention by including “Tiney’s Petition” (a verse address to Lady Douglas in the voice of her dog) alongside Oberon’s curse of the Brownie and

22. Lewis parodies the final line of Jaques’s “All the World’s a Stage” soliloquy from Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*: “Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything” (II.vii.166).

the three Bothwell sisters. Of course, Lewis does keep “Tiney’s Petition” in the later (1808) edition, making it clear that although he may cut back on the personal footnotes, “Oberon’s Henchman” is still intended for the amusement of a friend. Even with all of Lewis’s revisions for the poem’s inclusion in *Romantic Tales*, the ballad still provides glimpses of playfulness, a side rarely emphasized enough in critical accounts of “Monk” Lewis’s works.

Carnochan and Donaldson provide two additional notes, both of which are only relevant to the Douglas family. The first note relates to the monks at Blantyre Priory who assume the sisters have been punished for their religious indifference (II.401-19). Lewis’s note reads:

Though the fact happened to be otherwise, the worthy Prior was certainly justified by the premises in drawing the above conclusion.—That a similar censure should ever be a second time deserved by the Ladies of Bothwell, I humbly pray Heaven and St. Undecimillia²³ to prevent! But *should* any female Delinquents ever appear, it is hoped with all reasonable confidence, that the perusal of the Prior’s sentiments on a former occasion will awaken their sense of error; Otherwise, I do not hesitate to decide between the Sister-Crags and their consciences, that the latter must be far the most hardened of the two. (qtd. in Carnochan and Donaldson 354)

This playful jab accords well with Lewis’s previous notes featuring Lady Douglas’s witch cauldron for a tea kettle, and the insinuation that the Douglas ladies use lion head figures as a tool for dark magic. His implicit suggestion that the ladies might one day meet the same fate as the sister stones springs from his knowledge of their dilatory religious habits. Lewis’s note

23. Carnochan and Donaldson propose that St. Undecimillia “is probably Lewis’s joke on St. Ursula and her eleven thousand (undecimillia) virgins” (359n16).

cleverly teases Lady Douglas for her habit of skipping church, and simultaneously seems to commend her for it.

The very last footnote we can restore to “Oberon’s Henchman” regards Lord Douglas rather than his wife. The note appears near the conclusion of the poem, after the Brownie has met her fate. The text explains that “Since then, to Bothwell’s Lord though danger’s near, / No Brownie’s warning strikes his startled ear” (II.472-3). On the topic of the Brownie’s inability to provide protection for her heir at Bothwell, Lewis has this story to share:

This was sufficiently proved when the present Lord Douglas’s Toupee was burnt off in firing a canon; and also when by the merest accident in the world He shot his Dog, an Hare, and a brace of his best Friends! On neither of these occasions did the Brownie give the least hint *before* the fact, nor express the least affliction after it. (qtd. in Carnochan and Donaldson 354)

All we can understand with certainty about this last note is that Lewis must have known the stories (and perhaps the odd habits) which made up both Lady and Lord Douglas’s characters.

It is likely that Lady Douglas addressed Lewis in verse to compose a ballad to explain the three sister stones on the bank of the River Clyde at Bothwell. In fact, Lewis seems to have included her very request in the advertisement of his 1808 edition, which unfortunately does not conclusively attach Lady Douglas’s name to the document. It is, however, playful and simple enough in meter and rhyme to fit in with other examples of her known poetry. We also know that Sir Walter Scott began a manuscript (never completed) entitled “Bothwell’s Sisters Three” and dated 1799.²⁴ According to Florence MacCunn, this ballad “was begun to please his kind hosts” at Bothwell (201), so perhaps Lady Douglas appealed to Scott first for the tale. We also

24. Appendix D provides a copy of Scott’s fragment with notes.

know that Lewis was an occasional guest at Bothwell, with his first visit shortly after his return from Germany in 1793. Other than what we can gather of their relationship from the deleted glosses from the 1803 text, there is not much to be said about the composition process of “Oberon’s Henchman,” and much less on why Lewis may have included it in *Romantic Tales* if it was simply meant to be a gift for a friend.

His preface provides some insight: he explains that “as it [the poem] thus possesses a slight connection with Shakespeare, it will probably be read with a greater share of interest, than it could possible excite by its own slender merits” (78). His original use of Shakespeare is most likely a result of his knowing Lady Douglas’s love for the playwright’s works,²⁵ yet Lewis obviously viewed this “slight connection with Shakespeare” as enough to merit the attention of his reading public even with its “blemishes.” There is very little in Lewis’s correspondence or in any of his biographies concerning the composition of “Oberon’s Henchman” or about his including it in *Romantic Tales*, but biographer D.L. Macdonald states, “In April 1808, back home at Barnes, Lewis wrote to Lady Holland to ask for Lord Holland’s help in revising ‘Oberon’s Henchman’” (168), evidently for its inclusion in *Romantic Tales*. Apparently this help was procured and Lewis’s narrative poem appeared in *Romantic Tales* later that year, with significantly fewer personal footnotes and a more somber tone overall.

The poem, however, is not simply a work for a friend. As biographer Louis Peck explains, “The poem is filled with fancy and successfully combines Shakespearean fairy lore with the witchcraft Lewis delighted in” (140). Also, true to Lewis’s form, “Oberon’s

25. Stuart makes note of Lady Douglas’s appreciation for Shakespeare and Milton in her memoir (96).

Henchman” is an incredibly allusive text; these influences will be discussed in later sections of this introduction.



Fig. 1. *A Castle above a River, among Mountains* (n.d.) Scott, Frances (Lady Douglas)

II. READING GUIDE

A. Character Guide

Characters listed by order of appearance.

Titania: queen of the fairies, wife and consort of Oberon. Lewis takes her from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She plays a minor role in "Oberon's Henchman;" however, her lamentations over Zelim's death provide the opening exposition and set the tone for the poem.

Zelim: the eponymous "henchman" in Oberon's train. As with Titania and Oberon, his character originates from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, although it is Lewis who dons him with the name "Zelim."²⁶ Before the start of the poem, Zelim inadvertently kills Lord Bothwell while on a hunting excursion with Oberon. Later Zelim falls in love with Lillia and marries her with Oberon's blessing. Oberon sets a condition on the marriage: Zelim may spend six months with his wife, but must follow these with the same length of time in the fairy kingdom. Oberon enchants Zelim to change into the shape of a spaniel dog if he strays from the fairy realm during his time with Oberon. In his animal form, Zelim returns to Bothwell Castle frequently to look for Lillia. Marion is also in love with Zelim, but he refuses her pleas and advances.

Oberon: king of the fairies, and husband to Titania (also taken from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Zelim is an attendant, or henchman, in his train. He loves Zelim as a son, and gives him six months with Lillia followed by six months in the fairy kingdom. While Zelim spends his forced time away from his wife, Oberon enchants him to take the shape of a spaniel dog if he leaves the forest. Oberon also fastens a golden trumpet around Zelim's neck; the horn gives a warning blast when danger comes near. Although Zelim throws the spear which

26. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he is known as "the little Indian boy" or the "changeling child."

kills Lord Bothwell, it is Oberon who guides the spear to its target. Later, Oberon avenges Zelim's death by transforming the Brownie into a spaniel and the three sisters into stones.

Margaret, or Black Margaret: Earl Bothwell's eldest daughter, sister to Marion and Lillia. She originally disapproves of Lillia's engagement to Zelim, but finally concedes and allows them to marry. She seeks revenge on her father's killer, and leads her sisters to Maudlin's hut for assistance in summoning the sisters' protective sprite, the Brownie. Under the Brownie's direction, she casts a spear to kill the spaniel (Zelim in disguise). As punishment, Oberon transforms her into one of the three sister stones.

Marion, or Brown Marion: middle daughter of Earl Bothwell, sister to Margaret and Lillia. She goes with Margaret to Maudlin's hut to ask the Bothwell Brownie for help in gaining Zelim for herself (although at the time of her request, she does not mention his name). She becomes one of the three sister stones. Her role is relatively less significant than those of Margaret and Lillia.

Lillia, or Fair Lillia: Earl Bothwell's youngest daughter, sister to Margaret and Marion, and Zelim's wife. After six months of living with Zelim at Bothwell Castle, he has left her with no explanation and never returned. She follows Margaret to Maudlin's hut because she wishes to know whether Zelim still loves her. Her gentle manner encourages the spaniel to come close enough for Margaret to kill it, although Lillia cries out in shock when this happens. When Oberon learns of Zelim's death, Lillia becomes the third sister stone.

Maudlin: a witch who lives in a hut near Bothwell Castle. The three sisters come to her because they know she can contact the Brownie. She maintains a haggard personal appearance and squalid living conditions.

The Bothwell Brownie: a fairy-like being bound to protect the inhabitants of Bothwell Castle. Because Lord Bothwell's life becomes linked by fairy law to the life of her only son Amiel, the Brownie's primary motivation in protecting Lord Bothwell is for the comfort and safety of her own son. After Amiel and Lord Bothwell die, the Brownie uses the three sisters' requests to avenge her son.

Earl Bothwell: also called "the Thane" throughout. Earl Bothwell, of Bothwell Castle, dies before the poem takes place; however, other characters frequently speak of him throughout the course of the ballad. He has three daughters: Margaret, Marion, and Lillia. He shares a birthday with the Brownie's son Amiel, and because of ancient fairy law their lives become intertwined. During Titania's opening exposition, she explains that Earl Bothwell has become incensed that Zelim and Oberon hunt on his land, and thus Bothwell hurls a spear at them. Oberon catches this spear and then guides Zelim's own spear to murder Earl Bothwell.

Amiel: the Brownie's son, a fairy child. As with Lord Bothwell, Amiel dies before the poem takes place, yet his story becomes clear through the narration. Born on the same day as Lord Bothwell, Amiel becomes bound by ancient fairy-law to the life of Bothwell. As the Brownie explains, the two share every emotion, every experience, and according to fairy-law when the human dies of natural causes, the Brownie child is released from the bond. If, however, the human's life ends early and unnaturally, the Brownie child also dies. Thus, when Lord Bothwell is slain by Zelim's spear, Amiel also dies.

B. Chronological Timeline and Plot Synopsis of “Oberon’s Henchman”

As the verse of “Oberon’s Henchman” seems purposefully obscure and convoluted at times, this edition provides two timelines to aid the reader in comprehension and analysis of the text. The first timeline lists in chronological order the events leading up to and included in the plot of “Oberon’s Henchman.” The second provides a concise synopsis of the events told in the ballad, in order of their occurrence.

1. *Chronological Timeline*

Birth of Lord Bothwell and Amiel, son of the Bothwell Brownie, on the same day

Birth of the three sisters (their mother dies)

Titania adopts Zelim

Zelim becomes a henchman in Oberon’s train

While hunting, Zelim’s spear kills Lord Bothwell and (indirectly) Amiel

Zelim and Lillia marry and spend six months together

Zelim returns to the fairy kingdom, yet frequents the banks of the Clyde in the form of a spaniel

Margaret, Marion, and Lillia come to Maudlin’s hut and summon the Brownie to whom each sister makes a request. The Brownie instructs them to kill the spaniel that frequents the bank of the Clyde to have their wishes granted.

The three sisters kill the spaniel, discover they have killed Zelim under an enchantment, and curse the “false” Brownie.

The Brownie returns, reveals Amiel’s story, and argues that each girl’s wish has been granted.

Oberon arrives on scene, enraged to find his henchman dead. He curses the Brownie and the three sisters, and destroys Bothwell Castle.

The monks of Blantyre Priory come to investigate the ruins of Bothwell, and assume their God has punished the Bothwell sisters for their religious idleness. The next day, the Prior sees the sisters' names etched into the three stones.

Fairies and other fantastic beings prepare Zelim for the grave and bury him beneath the Clyde. The narrator describes walking along the bank of the Clyde in the moonlight and contemplates whether spirits and sprites still haunt Zelim's resting place.

The narrator provides a moral.

2. *Plot Synopsis*

Lewis provides several additional prefatory texts to "Oberon's Henchman," including an "Advertisement," a short poem addressed "To Shakespeare," and extracts of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to which Lewis makes reference in his own main text "Oberon's Henchman; Or, The Legend of the Three Sisters." As the advertisement explains, Lewis's purpose in creating the ballad was providing a fantastical etiology for three free-standing stones on the bank of the River Clyde near Bothwell Castle in Lanarkshire, Scotland. To achieve this purpose, Lewis invokes Shakespeare's characters Oberon and Titania, and their adopted changeling child, "the little Indian boy," whom Lewis names Zelim.

"Oberon's Henchman" opens with Titania's lamentation over the loss of Zelim, told through third person narration. Her lament functions as exposition: the audience learns of Shakespeare's plot, of Zelim's love for Lillia, of the circumstances of Earl Bothwell's death, and finally of Zelim's own death. The narrator, having had Titania catch readers up to speed, then flashes back to three nights before Zelim's death. The three sisters, Margaret, Marion, and Lillia, go at night to the witch Maudlin's hut; they know Maudlin can summon the Bothwell Brownie.

The witch summons the Brownie for the sisters, and each gives her request. The Brownie remains unseen, but her voice directs the sisters to kill the spaniel that frequently visits the bank of the Clyde—this will grant each girl's wish. Book the First concludes with the sisters reaching home safely the next morning.

Book the Second commences with the sisters' hiding themselves from sight, watching for the spaniel. When he arrives on the scene, Margaret attempts to lure him closer but twice the horn he wears around his neck gives a warning blast. Finally Lillia, who seemingly has forgotten their assigned task, entices the dog close with loving words; however, Margaret takes advantage of the dog's proximity and kills him after he jumps into Lillia's arms. In death, the dog resumes his shape as Zelim and the girls cry out in grief and shock, cursing the Brownie for leading them to make such a calamitous mistake.

The Brownie hears their curses and appears to them in person. She explains that through Zelim's death each sister's wish has been granted; moreover, the Brownie explains that she has met her own goals in avenging her son through causing Zelim's death. Oberon senses Zelim's death and enters the scene enraged and grief-stricken. He transforms the Brownie into the shape of a dog, befitting her crime, and transforms the Bothwell sisters into three standing stones. In his rage, he also razes Bothwell Castle. This last act attracts the attention of monks at nearby Blantyre Priory. The clergymen sift through the wreckage and find all inhabitants of the castle save the three Bothwell sisters. The Prior, realizing the sisters have been punished (presumably by the Almighty), has his monks give annual rites for the sisters' souls. The narrator here interjects that Blantyre Priory fell with the Protestant Reformation, and thus the sisters' story was lost forever, although each stone still displays one of the three sisters' names. After this heavy-handed interruption, the narrator returns to the scene at Bothwell and describes the fays'

preparing Zelim for his grave beneath the River Clyde. The narrator notes that since then, the lords and ladies at Bothwell have received no protection from the Bothwell Brownie. Now thoroughly back in the present, the narrator describes his own Romantic experience as he once ambled along the Clyde in the moonlight. He recounts hearing some unearthly sound, and hints that this sound proves that supernatural beings still haunt the grounds at Bothwell. Finally, the narrator seems to dismiss this claim (yet in an alluring way) and instead focuses on what he assumes critics will want to hear: a grave and meaningful moral. “Oberon’s Henchman” thus concludes with an oddly jocular moral suggesting that women not kill puppies, covet their sisters’ spouses, or attempt to bind their husbands’ hearts forever.



Fig. 2. *Bothwell Castle fae Blantyre* (2007) James B. Brown

III. CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Compared to other works by “the Laureate of that nether king” (“Advertisement” 1), Lewis’s “Oberon’s Henchman” has remained somewhat of an anomaly, and hence has been largely ignored by critics. Lewis’s poem simultaneously proclaims itself fairy tale *and* tragedy, as well as parody *and* exploration of the Romantic imagination. Lewis accomplished this feat of versatility through his adoption of numerous and varied literary styles and traditions. Rather than write another Gothic ballad to add to his extensive collection, in “Oberon’s Henchman” Lewis pulls themes, motifs, and specific details from other works of literature and from folklore, illustrating a hugely expansive pool of source material from which to develop his verse. This multiplicity of literary elements and approaches seems to suggest that Lewis refuses to classify his poem into any single tradition—we cannot define it as simply fairy tale or Gothic ballad, German moralizing or French satire. Rather, Lewis expands his work to include elements of all. These allusions function to form a rich literary heritage through which Lewis fosters the three sisters’ story, which in itself is just as intricate as Lewis’s abundant source material. This braided collection of literary traditions can only classify “Oberon’s Henchman” as one type of work: a pastiche.

The true “pastiche” has several definitions: it can imitate or pull from another’s work in tribute to the original artist; it can create satire through imitation; or it can simply mesh together themes from a variety of sources. Lewis’s “Oberon’s Henchman” fits each of these three definitions in various ways. While he continuously treats his source material with respect, the whole of the poem contains several parodic elements which add complexity to the overall meaning. The most obvious and prominent source material from which Lewis pulls is Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

As his inclusion of “Extracts from *the Midsummer’s Nights Dream* [sic], referred to in the course of this Poem” (just one piece of Lewis’s extensive prefatory material for the ballad) makes clear, Lewis’s ballad uses the story of Titania’s little Indian boy from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* as a launching point for his own “Oberon’s HENCHMAN.” In Shakespeare’s work, Titania, queen of the fairies, explains that she had befriended an Indian queen whose early death orphaned her young boy. In her devotion to the boy’s mother, Titania brought him back to her fairy kingdom to raise as her own child. Her love for the boy, however, rouses jealousy in her husband and consort, the fairy king Oberon, and consequently causes a rift in their relationship. Oberon begs her to let him take the Indian boy as a henchman in his fairy train to accompany and assist him in hunting expeditions, yet Titania refuses. Her refusal to yield to his will and relinquish the changeling child inspires Oberon’s other actions in the play. Oberon manipulates her emotions, enchanting her to fall in love with Nick Bottom (a human whose head has been transformed into that of an ass). Oberon explains to Puck how he manages to win the boy while Titania remains under her enchantment: “When I had at my pleasure taunted her, / And she in mild terms begg’d my patience, / I then did ask of her her changeling child; / Which straight she gave me” (IV.i.56-9). Once Oberon has the Indian boy, he removes the enchantment from Titania’s eyes. Relieved to awake from the enchantment she mistakes for a dream, Titania welcomes her estranged lover (“My Oberon! What visions I have seen!” [IV.i.75]), and they are reconciled. Lewis’s title “Oberon’s HENCHMAN,” then, refers to the role Zelim plays as the little Indian boy before the action of Lewis’s ballad takes place.

In his critical edition of Lewis’s *Tales of Wonder*, Thomson argues that “Citing the Bard often figures as an attempt by authors to provide a legitimizing presence” for Romantic Gothicism (13), and Lewis invokes the presence of Shakespeare to no small degree in “Oberon’s

Henchman.” Yet this immortal playwright is not the only “legitimizing presence” in Lewis’s pastiche. Lewis’s preface to the poem also calls on the work of Dr. Samuel Johnson, well known and respected Shakespeare critic and editor of the 1765 *The Plays of William Shakespeare*. In his “Preface” to the *Plays*, Johnson criticizes Shakespeare’s blending of cultures and traditions: “He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expence [sic] not only of likelihood, but of possibility” (B1v). On one level, Lewis references this distinguished critic to justify his own act of restoring the fairy world to a more fitting locale, Scotland. (Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* takes place in Athens.) But, more significantly, Lewis also follows Shakespeare’s example in mixing Scottish folklore with classical allusions—regardless of Johnson’s objections. Lewis adds these Scottish and classical allusions to a veritable collage of other “customs, institutions, and opinions” from various literary traditions into his pastiche. This capriciousness with regard to style (and varied sources) typifies itself in Lewis’s portrayal of the spirit world. Harold F. Brooks, editor of the seminal Arden edition of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, says it simply: “Shakespeare weaves or fuses together material from a whole series of sources” (lxxxv), and Lewis follows his adoptive example.

Lewis does not simply employ characters and the art of adaptation from Shakespeare, he also reappropriates a few of his themes and motifs. One of the most prominent motifs of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, according to Brooks, is the unhealthy nature of “aberrant love,” exemplified by Titania’s fixation on the Indian boy. Titania’s love for the child, Brooks suggests, appears at first to be “a love entirely admirable: it merited all the sympathy won for it by her story of the boy’s mother. But now she ‘makes him all her joy’, arousing Oberon’s jealousy, and disrupting the vital alliance between him, as her husband and consort, and herself”

(xciii). Puck explains the effect their squaring (or quarrelling) has on the normally peaceful order of the fairy kingdom:

And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square; that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn-cups, and hide them there. (*MND* II.i.28-31)

Thus, Brooks suggests that Titania's obsessive love for the boy extends beyond herself as an individual and poisons the whole fairy realm. Brooks's reading of aberrant parental love begins and ends with an exploration of Titania's feelings for the boy; however, a closer look at the text reveals that Oberon also illustrates an obsessive love for the child. In fact, Puck's opening description of the scene relates Oberon's "passing fell and wrath / Because she [Titania] as her attendant hath / A lovely boy.../.../ And jealous Oberon would have the child" (II.i.20-4). The fairy king's willingness to upturn the lives of other characters in his obsessive crusade to claim the child is perhaps more destructive than Titania's love; she simply "Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy" (II.i.27). Amending Brooks's argument, one can argue that *both* characters' obsessive love for the child blind them to their responsibilities as spouses and as rulers in the fairy kingdom. As with Oberon's and Titania's parental fixations in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, we learn of Lewis's Brownie's aberrant love only after it has already wreaked havoc on the natural order. Rather than fulfill her duties in protecting the Bothwell sisters (and maintain the correct and healthy order), Lewis's Brownie instructs them to kill the spaniel they see by the River Clyde, whom she knows to be Zelim—the very man the sisters wish to reunite with. Her actions, driven by the obsessive and blinding nature of her love for Amiel, place all of the other players into a world of chaos and pain.

The aberrant love motif, Brooks argues, also presents itself in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the form of sexual infatuation. The four young lovers of Athens—Demetrius, Lysander, Hermia, and Helena—who fall prey to Puck's enchantment become the most obvious characters to display aberrant, or excessively doting sexual love for each other. At the start of the play, Hermia and Lysander love each other, but her father refuses to grant permission for them to marry. Rather, he chooses Demetrius to wed his daughter. This pleases Demetrius who has broken off his engagement with Hermia's childhood friend Helena because of his infatuation with Hermia. As a result of her father's obstinacy, Hermia and her lover Lysander flee into the Athenian woods, followed by the infatuated Demetrius. On his heels, however, chases the jilted Helena. Helena tells Demetrius after he once again refuses her love:

I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
 The more you beat me, I will fawn on you.
 Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
 Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
 Unworthy as I am, to follow you. (II.i.202-7)

This one-sided fixation, though unhealthy at the start of the play, is ultimately resolved by Oberon (who only intercedes after his own end has been met in obtaining the Indian boy). However, in this passage Helena's aberrant and self-deprecating love matches that which Demetrius feels for the similarly uninterested Hermia.

Lewis adopts both the pattern of aberrant sexual love and its symbol, the spaniel, in "Oberon's Henchman." As Helena begs to follow Demetrius as his dog, Zelim does the same to be with Lillia in "Oberon's Henchman." Although Zelim's love for Lillia is pure, rather than an aberrant, doting form, he does become the *object* of such love. Marion, Lillia's sister, confesses

her love for Zelim and jealously asks the Brownie to make him leave the one he loves: “teach [me] but some winning art / To rob my rival of this precious heart” (I.224-5). Her aberrant love, however, cannot be rewarded and Lewis warns others like her in his moral: “By *Marion* warned, ye virtuous maids and wives, / Court not your sister’s [sic] spouses for your lives!” (II.502-3). Lewis continues Shakespeare’s motif through his own use of the spaniel symbol: Oberon transforms the Brownie into a spaniel as a punishment for her transgression. As her crime (deceiving the sisters and occasioning Zelim’s death) manifests itself as a result of her aberration (an obsessive fixation on her son), her punishment symbolically befits the crime.

Notably, Oberon acts as the agent for correcting these amorously deviant behaviors in both works, though both times in effort to serve his own ends. In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Oberon ultimately ameliorates the doting, one-sided love exhibited by the four lovers. He restores balance to their relationships, reuniting both couples as they were before the start of the play, before Demetrius’s love strayed to Hermia. Although Shakespeare’s “jealous Oberon” functions in self-interest in his treatment of Titania’s fixation on the changeling child (II.i.24), his contribution to the happiness of the two young couples illustrates that egocentricity is not his sole motivation. Lewis’s Oberon, conversely, can only be characterized as antagonistic to the protagonists’ desires, and only for selfish reasons. He covets Zelim, and his demand that Zelim split his life between time with Oberon and time with his wife exemplifies the aberrant love present in Shakespeare’s play.

One could go so far as to view Lewis’s translation of Shakespeare’s aberrant love motif through a biographical lens. Lewis’s treatment of the subject may speak to his Lewis’s own experiences with love. Baron-Wilson’s *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis* focuses a great deal of attention on Lewis’s concern over his parents’ separation. As Titania focuses her

attention on the Indian boy instead of her consort Oberon, Lewis's own mother became involved in an (aberrant) extramarital affair. A letter from Lewis to his mother makes clear his ambivalence over her conduct:

I feel for you the greatest regard, the most eager desire to do any thing that can give you even the most trifling satisfaction; and, at the same time, I cannot help recollecting the pain and anxiety you have occasioned to my dear, my worthy father; and that it is owing to your conduct that my sisters are deprived of maternal care and attention, and of receiving the benefit of those little instructions and observations, so necessary to make young women accomplished, and which are in the power of a mother alone to point out to them with success. (Baron-Wilson 104)

As the antagonism between Titania and Oberon has disastrous effects on the fairy world, Lewis fears his parents' separation has created an equally unhealthy environment for his sisters' development. He may project his anxiety for young women without a mother figure onto his characters in "Oberon's Henchman." The three Bothwell sisters grow into adulthood without a mother figure, without a loving female who may have helped them in their plight. Instead, they turn to the Bothwell Brownie, a surrogate mother figure who uses their trust to achieve her own end, causing the sisters great pain in the process.

In another reading, one could view the unnamed Indian boy, who strictly functions as a plot device to invoke chaos in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as a much more important figure in Lewis's work. This boy causes both Oberon and Titania pain, as well as disrupts the relationship between Earl Bothwell and his three daughters. He also functions to destroy the bond between the Brownie and her son (a painful and unnatural separation), and between the Brownie and the

Bothwell sisters. Finally, Lewis's Zelim divides the sisters themselves. Thus, Zelim and his relationship with Lillia become the vehicles for destroying a myriad of relationships between various characters in "Oberon's Henchman." And although the Indian boy only begins to divide Oberon and Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, his character, as a representation of an unnatural obsession, becomes the earth-shattering force which decimates the world of Lewis's poem, even destroying Bothwell Castle itself. It is thus fitting that Zelim's tumultuous role should title the poem. Keeping Lewis's obsession with his parent's separation in mind, it would seem that Zelim works as the perfect symbol for a wedge between characters, or the very picture of aberrant love.

Lewis's biographer Macdonald devotes a chapter to describing Lewis's ambivalence towards both his mother and his father. Just as Zelim may serve as a symbol of Lewis's distaste for his mother's infidelity, other psychological issues seem to blossom in "Oberon's Henchman," representative of Lewis's own life. Macdonald pulls evidence from Baron-Wilson's account to support his theory that Lewis's relationship with his mother appeared to feature an inversion of the typical parent/child roles. Macdonald quotes John Bowlby, to explain that a child who feels abandoned by a parental figure will often take on a protective, parental role rather than a more traditional dependent role: "it is common for a person to develop intensely anxious and possessive attachment behaviour simultaneously with bitter anger directed against the attachment figure, and often to combine both with much anxious concern about the safety of that figure" (14). Correspondence between Lewis and his mother, reprinted in Baron-Wilson's work, seems to support Macdonald's argument. Lewis's attempt to function as caretaker to his mother is a frequent subject of his letters, as with this example:

The little presents I have occasionally made you, have been merely what I have either spared from my pocket-money, or by fortunate success at play (which, however, I use but seldom), and have been enabled to dispose of in the manner which was most agreeable to me. None can be more agreeable than that of giving you satisfaction, and supplying you with conveniences which you may happen to want. But had I a fixed income, I should be happy to be considered merely as your banker; and would sacrifice to you not only what might be wanted for pleasure, but what would be absolutely necessary. (Baron-Wilson 62-3)

Lewis clearly considered himself a provider for his mother, even if he disagreed with the behavior she modeled for his sisters.

Macdonald also argues that Lewis's role-reversal extended to a fear that he would die before his mother: "In a letter of 1810, Lewis assumed the pose of a parent preparing to remember her in his will. Even as a child, according to Baron-Wilson, he had imagined dying before her: 'Mamma,' said the child one day, 'if I were to die, wouldn't you be sorry? Wouldn't you cry, and say, Poor little Mat! he's gone—poor little boy!—*he loved me!*'" (16). Evidence exists that Lewis had a preoccupation with the idea of the grieving mother who survives her child. Macdonald provides another example: "On a visit to Weimar (to learn German, in 1792), his imagination was seized by a story about a guilty mother who had lost her son; Byron later reported that he told it so often he almost came to believe it" (17). Thomas Medwin writes Lord Byron's account of the story:

Every night, at the same hour, he heard or thought he heard in his room, when he was lying in bed, a crackling noise like that produced by parchment, or thick paper. This circumstance caused enquiry, when it was told him that the sounds

were attributable to the following cause: —The house in which he lived had belonged to a widow, who had an only son. In order to prevent his marrying a poor but amiable girl, to whom he was attached, he was sent to sea. Years passed, and the mother heard no tidings of him, nor the ship in which he had sailed. It was supposed that the vessel had been wrecked, and that all on board had perished. The reproaches of the girl, the upbraidings of her own conscience, and the loss of her child, crazed the old lady's mind, and her only pursuit became to turn over the Gazettes for news. Hope at length left her: she did not live long, — and continued her old occupation after death. (230-1)

Macdonald suggests that Lewis's fixation on this particular story of a grieving and guilty mother relates directly to Lewis's ambivalence regarding his own estranged mother. Though Macdonald calls this obsession an "indirect" expression of his own feelings, we can see a much more direct version of Lewis's ambivalence and fixation with the guilt-ridden mother in the plot of "Oberon's Henchman."

As becomes clear only after Black Margaret follows the Brownie's command and mortally wounds Zelim in his spaniel form, Lewis's Brownie is a grieving mother herself. Driven by the grief she feels over the unnaturally early death of her only son, Amiel, the Brownie instructs the three Bothwell sisters to kill Zelim, the huntsman whose spear killed Lord Bothwell, bringing about the death of Amiel. The Brownie intentionally brings about the pain of others, and yet Lewis—just as ambivalent toward his pernicious Brownie as toward his own mother—seems to be sympathetic to her sinister motivations. As the Brownie tells her story of protecting Earl Bothwell, her actions, though perhaps not morally upstanding, are at least justified by her exposition. She, unlike the mother described in *Medwin*, who had become a

fixation for Lewis, has done no wrong in raising her son. In fact, her lengthy descriptions paint her as the ideal caretaker for both Lord Bothwell and Amiel:

I loved...as mothers love!—then judge, how deep
 My grief to lose, how warm my wish to keep!
 Judge with what love, what fear, what zeal, what care,
 By day, by night, I watched my Castle's Heir!
 If in the arms of sleep the babe was locked,
 A viewless guard, his wicker couch I rocked;
 And closed his nodding nurse her careless eye,
 My rushing wings soon made her slumbers fly. (II.217-24)

The Brownie's description of her care for both Lord Bothwell and, indirectly, her son Amiel continues for a total of thirty-one lines (II.217-47). The length and detail of this passage alone support the theory of Lewis's preoccupation with motherly love; this passage focuses solely on the Brownie's description of loving, "*as mothers love!*" (italics mine). Another fourteen lines of text (II.139-52) spotlight how the pain of losing her only son has altered the Brownie's once-lovely features. Twelve additional lines (II.179-90) allow her simply to describe the depth of love she felt for her boy:

Witness the joy, with which (my travail past)
 First to my swelling heart I held him fast,
 And wept, and smiled, and kist him o'er and o'er;
 And thought, with every kiss I loved him more,
 And him with every kiss grown fairer than before!— (2.186-90)

These extensive passages are both more lengthy and more emotionally impactful than any description of sexual love between Zelim and Lillia—the two other characters most likely to be deemed protagonists. Lewis’s Brownie takes her maternal love seriously: she comforts the children from their every woe and uses her fairy magic to ensure that every moment will be more joyful than the last. Her parenting goes beyond ideal; it—for Lewis—represents the perfect form of motherly love. Thus, from lines 119 through 299 of part two (a total of 180 lines), Lewis either describes her appearance or allows her to speak for herself, recounting her grave story. At her son’s death, her torment knows no bounds, and she shows outward signs of the very same madness which overcomes the ghostly mother from the story which Lewis repeatedly told.

Lewis seems further sympathetic to the Brownie’s plight by his interweaving the verses of “Tiney’s Petition” between those of the main text (providing the Brownie with another chance to speak an impressive 78 lines).²⁷ This placement for “Tiney’s Petition,” although distracting for the reader, serves as an opportunity for the Brownie to demonstrate her remorse. Yet, Lewis also clearly feels empathetic towards Lillia and Zelim, and recognizes the grief which Titania and Oberon also share over Zelim’s death. Through evidence of his empathy for various characters, we can assume that Lewis must not wholly support the Brownie’s choices. This evidence—both his sympathy for her grief, and his recognition of other characters’ pain—suggests that Lewis feels the same ambivalence toward his Brownie that he feels for his own mother.

Whether Lewis had his own mother in mind when he allowed the Brownie to speak through his verse we can never know; however, we can return to the Brownie’s tortured cry, “I

27. See Appendix A for more information on the original formatting of “Tiney’s Petition.”

loved...as mothers love!," for another clue. The plural here suggests that it is not only one fairy mother's form of love, but a ubiquitous, cross-cultural, archetypal love shared by all mothers. Yet, we know from biographers that Lewis's own mother showed no such zeal. Correspondence between Lewis and his mother illustrate a tumultuous relationship between the two, including one verbal altercation which, Macdonald argues, perfectly displays Lewis's ambivalence toward his mother. Following Lewis's letter regarding her "conduct" and what model it set for his sisters, his mother apparently responded with a threat that she would rescind her affection for him. Baron-Wilson provides Lewis's pained response:

you owned that you had done wrong, but said that I ought not to think so; you declared my head was better than my heart, and that I ought to follow blind affection instead of common sense; you wished me to consider your provocations (which must be *obscure* to every body but yourself) as glaring, and your errors (which are *clear* to every body) as trifling; and in short, you conclude by saying, that if I did not believe your conduct to be perfectly blameless, you would throw away all affection for me, and never care any further about me" (110-1).

Lewis's response illustrates his uneasiness about his mother's powerful position to either give or withdraw maternal love. Although he provides for her, sending her "little presents," and fears the grief she will feel at his death, he very clearly resents her "provocations" and "errors" and feels genuinely vulnerable to her threat. His love, fear, and loathing toward his mother can be seen in equal parts in his treatment of the Bothwell Brownie and in her punishment by Oberon.

Macdonald explores Lewis's evident ambivalence in a discussion of the "erring woman" in Lewis's work, a motif wherein young women pay dearly for even the slightest transgression: "The erring women in Lewis's works are unusually numerous and often sympathetic but always

sternly disciplined; the frequency with which they recur suggests a preoccupation that Lewis was never able to work through” (19). “Oberon’s Henchman” shows this motif in the punishments of the three sisters as well as the Brownie, and uses the fairy king Oberon as the vehicle for these disciplines. Although the three Bothwell sisters have no idea the spaniel they have been ordered to slay is actually a transformed Zelim, Oberon reacts to their crime as though they purposefully murdered him. His words make clear his feelings: “Sisters, your rash feet stay!—In vain ye fly / Ere morning dawns, your forms shall meet the eye / Hard as your hearts, which bade my Henchman die” (2.350-2). Though their only meditated transgression is killing a dog, which they have been instructed to kill, still he describes their hearts as “hard,” stone-like. In reality, the sisters mourn Zelim’s death just as Oberon does, yet they pay a high price: they are forever transformed into stone. As argued above, the Brownie’s motivation for tricking the girls comes from her status as a grieving mother, yet she also serves as an ineffectual surrogate mother for the sisters, and occasions the grief felt by both Oberon and Titania, Zelim’s parental figures. For this transgression, she is punished, yet not as severely as the sisters. In his sympathy for the Brownie, which represents the ambivalence he feels toward his own mother, Lewis turns the Brownie into a dog, a form which still enables her to have human interaction and from which she may eventually escape her enchantment.

These biographical details enrich an understanding of Lewis’s primary source material. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in itself, after all, shows in Titania’s love for her Indian boy a mother-figure’s devotion to her child and that mother-figure’s eventual reconciliation with a father figure, Oberon. While these psychodynamics inform Lewis’s treatment of motherhood in his play, his pastiche also invokes and transforms Shakespeare’s play in other ways. Lewis’s portrayal of his fairies is perhaps one of the most significant adaptations from *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream. A discussion of the fairy kingdom as a whole is the most fitting place to start. Where Shakespeare addresses the distinction between malevolent spirits and those who attend Oberon's court, Lewis sees no such stark contrast. Puck from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* expresses his fear of night's creatures:

night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
 And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
 At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
 Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
 That in crossways and floods have burial,
 Already to their wormy beds are gone;
 For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
 They willfully themselves exile from light
 And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night. (III.ii.379-87)

Puck's concern about these malevolent spirits prompts Oberon to clarify the distinction between those "damned spirits" and the fairies themselves:

But we are spirits of another sort:
 I with the morning's love have oft made sport,
 And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
 Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
 Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
 Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams. (III.ii.388-93)

Shakespeare's fays associate themselves with "the morning's love" and play in the sunlight until the night begins to fall—a far cry from those spirits in the previous passage who "willfully

themselves exile from light.” This passage serves as a particularly germane inspiration for Lewis’s “Oberon’s Henchman,” in which Lewis provides a much more evanescent line between malevolence and beneficence. Still, critics have argued that Shakespeare’s fairies may be a bit more ornery than some directors have represented them. Brooks claims that “The fairies of the *Dream* are not the wisps of gossamer who stream through Reinhardt’s film version. Partly perhaps in reaction to such notions of them, some recent critics have read into the play a subtext hinting at dark potentialities in their natures and their power: sinister, even malevolent” (cvii). Certainly Puck, who delights in his manipulations, holds some potential for nefarious behavior, and Oberon’s jealousy paints him as less than angelic. Brooks quotes this insightful observation from operatic composer Benjamin Britten²⁸: “I have always been struck by a kind of sharpness in Shakespeare’s fairies” (cviin2).

Lewis echoes the conversation between Puck and Oberon about the dual nature of the fantastic realm in a telling speech by Margaret. When we first meet the three Bothwell sisters, Margaret warns the other two that they must hurry if they want to reach Maudlin’s cabin without exposing themselves to night’s dangers. Her speech describes in length the frightening spirits they may face, and it concludes with acknowledging those “others,” who “gentler, sweeter tasks pursue” (I.91).²⁹ From Margaret’s speech it would seem that Lewis’s preternatural beings fall into two specific categories of good and evil; however, a closer examination of the ballad as a

28. Britten composed the score to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, an opera adapted from Shakespeare’s work by the same name. The opera premiered in June of 1960 at the Aldeburgh Festival in Suffolk, England.

29. Margaret’s whole speech runs from lines 71 to 99. Margaret also mentions fairies hiding in “acorn-cups” and “plunder[ing] the wild bee,” both activities related to Shakespeare’s fairies in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. These allusions, though uncredited by Lewis, further illustrate Shakespeare’s work as the primary source of inspiration for Margaret’s speech.

whole, and not simply Margaret's speech, reveals that Lewis blurs the line between good and evil. Lewis, like Britten, seems to have recognized Shakespeare's fairies' edge and their lack of emotional restraint. Lewis allows his sprites the freedom to wantonly reveal their true, tempestuous natures.

We can also look to some of Lewis's previous work as a basis for examining his treatment of fantastic beings in "Oberon's Henchman." Lewis uses his own adaptation of a quotation from *Macbeth* as an epigraph to his *Tales of Wonder*: "Black spirits and white, / Blue spirits and grey, / Mingle, mingle, mingle, / Ye that mingle may!" (Thomson 13). Where Shakespeare sees black and white as relatively unique identities—while still allowing his "good" characters a few flaws—Lewis sees a "mingling" or stormy gray area, capable of any extreme.

Indeed, Lewis's poem seems to pull from both lightness and darkness simultaneously. For example, the Bothwell sisters must find the grotesque witch Maudlin and utilize dark magic to summon the "strangely radiant" and protective Brownie (II.120). In another example, Lewis's alternating strains of verse juxtapose Oberon's apocalyptic tempest during the night followed by a peaceful morning on the banks of the Clyde. Even the Advertisement "To M. G. Lewis" which Lewis includes in his prefatory material for the poem in *Romantic Tales* suggests that both darkness and light must exist simultaneously. Lady Douglas flatters Lewis in her request for the story of the three sister stones, calling him "Laureate of that nether king / Whose birth-day odes hobgoblins sing" while also admitting, "Nor less in whiter magic wise, / Taught by the softest sylph that flies" (1-2, 11-2). She calls for a ballad that mingles both sides of magic, combining both within Lewis's realm of creativity, and he evidently obliges with "Oberon's Henchman." Thus in this ballad Lewis expands his exploration of the supernatural realm beyond simply the Gothic to include fays who not only "glide with corse-lights church-yard paths along," but also

“quaff in acorn-cups the nectarine’s dew” (I.83, I.92). Perhaps in doing so Lewis was attempting to demonstrate to his readers that he has a much greater range than what could be expected from his primary reputation as the Gothic “Laureate.”

In his portrayal of the spirit realm of “Oberon’s Henchman,” Lewis emphasizes the grey-area of his fays to express the quicksilver, mercurial nature of the spirit realm. As the fays shift from one extreme to another, Lewis does the same with his poetical style. Thus, as Oberon shifts from protective father-figure to enraged tyrant, summoning the name of the Daemogorgon, Lewis slides from playful to tragic to parodic, calling on the nature of his pastiche to support such vacillations. Lewis’s translation of Oberon’s character fits this image of “mingling” between black and white spirits. Lewis creates a much less sympathetic character than the Oberon Shakespeare portrays in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: In “Oberon’s Henchman,” Lewis emphasizes his volatile rather than his empathetic nature. Brooks describes Shakespeare’s Oberon as the four young lovers’ mentor: “What he does is benevolent from the first in intention, and eventually in result” (cvi). Yet, Brooks also concedes: “This Oberon is obviously not a perfect being, though he is capable, when he has obtained his end, of pitying Titania in her delusion, before freeing her from it. Just as obviously, he is not a creature of gauzy charm” (cvii). Although admittedly driven by selfish desires, Shakespeare’s Oberon ultimately brings about joy and connects lovers. Lewis’s Oberon, conversely, destroys nearly every loving relationship depicted within the poem. Yet, Oberon is also the *only* main character to survive the ballad. And though it is he who guides Zelim’s spear into the heart of Earl Bothwell, Oberon never faces any punishment from other characters for his crime except in his loss of Zelim (which he of course avenges with swift and powerful retribution). In darkening the character of Oberon, Lewis complicates the essence of the spirit world in a way that Shakespeare does not.

Lewis's inspiration for the character of Oberon comes not only from Shakespeare's pen, but also from that of the German poet Christoph Martin Wieland. A young Lewis traveled to Germany in the year 1792, because his father wished him to prepare for life as a diplomat. Here he began the painstaking undertaking of learning German: "I am knocking my brains against German as hard as ever I can: I take a lesson every morning; and as I apply very seriously, am flattered with the promises that I shall soon speak very fluently in my throat, and that I already distort my mouth with extremely tolerable facility" (qtd. in Peck 11).³⁰ Lewis's hard work paid off (he became so adept that he, along with William Taylor of Norwich, became known as the leading authorities of German literature for English writers) and within months he began a translation of Wieland's difficult verse work *Oberon*.³¹ Although no manuscript exists of Lewis's project, we certainly see traces of his diligence in the body and spirit of "Oberon's Henchman."

30. Peck's quotation comes from the Forster Collection at Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

31. Peck confirms that no copy has been found of Lewis's translation. Lewis was not the first to attempt the translation of *Oberon* into English. Scholar William A. Colwell cites three separate translations, including John Quincy Adams's translation from 1800, William Sotheby's (the only one published) in 1798, and James Six of Canterbury's evidently written some time before 1784 (Colwell 576-7). Colwell's report fails to acknowledge additional unpublished translations by Lewis and by Samuel Taylor Coleridge—although this is most likely a result of Coleridge's never completing the daunting task (Beyer "Coleridge, Weiland's *Oberon* and *The Ancient Mariner*" 401-2; see also Beyer's "Coleridge, Weiland's *Oberon* and *The Wanderings of Cain*," which expands on his previous thesis detailing Wieland's influence on Coleridge's work.).

In Wieland's *Oberon*,³² the fairy king befriends the protagonist Sir Huon and provides him with enchanted gifts to help him complete his quest. One such gift is an ivory horn which Huon wears around his neck, an echo of which Lewis places around Zelim's neck in "Oberon's Henchman." By blowing a soft, musical note through this enchanted horn, Huon can cause his enemies to move about in a frenzied dance, allowing him to take the upper hand in battle. (Lewis's Oberon provides a horn to Zelim to be worn in his spaniel form; the horn gives a warning blast to let Zelim know when he is in danger.) Wieland's Oberon assists the Christian Huon in his quest for the pagan princess Rezia (who later adopts Christianity and becomes Amanda). The good fairy king Oberon blesses their relationship, but warns the pair to marry in Rome before they consummate their union:

"And deep, O Huon! grave it in your brain!
 Till good Sylvester, pious father, sheds
 Heaven's holy consecration on your heads,
 As brother and as sister chaste remain!
 Oh! May ye not, with inauspicious haste,
 The fruit forbidden prematurely taste!
 Know, if ye rashly venture ere the time,
 That Oberon, in vengeance of your crime,

32. William Taylor's *Historic Survey of German Poetry* addresses Wieland's predecessors in his creation of *Oberon*: "The plot or story of Oberon is drawn from the old French romance entitled *Histoire de Huon de Bordeaux*, of which the original author is unknown" (404n3), dating to the first half of the thirteenth century, and based in-part on the historical life of ninth century French noblemen. According to Taylor, Lord Berner's 1534 translation of the romance "first introduced the character of Oberon to the notice of the English poets" (404n3).

Leaves you, without a friend, on life's deserted waste!" (VI.ix)

A hint of Oberon's impetuous temper underscores his warning to the lovers. While the couple follows Oberon's command, he promises to remain friend and guardian to them; however, the two forget (or ignore) his warning and engage in a physical union. Evidence of Oberon's power and mercurial nature then come into play: he challenges the pair with unbearable hardships, and they must earn back his protection through abstinence and toiling work. Once they prove their loyalty to Oberon's rules, he again provides the assistance necessary to restore them to a happy life together. Lewis elevates the fiery nature displayed by Wieland's Oberon in his own "Oberon's Henchman" by having him punish the sisters with a severity unjustified by their crime. More significantly, Lewis uses his knowledge of Wieland's *Oberon* to illustrate his own understanding of the spirit world: it is a place of both beauty and joy, which can turn to tragedy on a whim.

Oberon's emphasis in the passage above on chaste love and the sanctity of a Christian union seems hardly a likely inspiration for the Laureate of the nether king, yet Lewis brings a discussion of religion into his pastiche. We know from Lewis's biographers that Lewis had great respect for Wieland's work. Peck reports that Lewis even sent a sample of his translation of Wieland's *Oberon* into English to the original poet, "to be considered, he modestly explains, not as worthy, but merely as a mark of his respect for the author of the original" (Peck 13). While Lewis may have revered Wieland's work with the fairy world, he certainly diverges in opinion on what role religious moralizing has in fairy lore. Wieland's heavy-handed moralistic intrusion aligns the fairy king Oberon with Rome, an obviously Catholic connection. Thematically significant is Oberon's refusal to support the young lovers Huon and Amanda unless they abide by the rules of the Roman Catholic Church and deny themselves a physical relationship until

after their marriage. Lewis's presentation of religion in "Oberon's Henchman," however, turns such religious moralizing on its head. The monks in Blantyre Priory assume the Bothwell sisters have been punished by God for their religious apathy; however, Lewis uses dramatic irony to illustrate the monks' misunderstanding. Moreover, their applause of the Prior's "Twas the Saint's will; so benedicite!" illustrates the holy men's ignorance of the nature of the spirit kingdom. They fail to see the capricious nature of this other world, and tend to moralize rather than appreciate the fairy realm for its complexities. Though Lewis holds Wieland in deference, he simply cannot resist some playful caricature of the religious men in "Oberon's Henchman."

Lewis continues his treatment of Blantyre Priory with a nod to the classical tradition. "Oberon's Henchman" offers a number of epic conventions such as Lewis's invocation of the muse ("Now sing, my Muse, but sing it soft and low" [I.61]), and—to provide some commentary on the church—the Greek-inspired personification of Heresy:

But when proud Heresy, on earth to dwell,
 At Luther's call forsook her native hell,
 That Harpy's breath soon poisoned Scotland's gale;
 And pious clouds no more had power to veil
 Rome's venerable weakness—Impious hands
 Then seized on cloistered gems and Abbey lands;
 Cancelled the bonds by dying misers given
 To buy with worldly wealth a right to Heaven; (II.438-45)

Lewis presents Heresy much as she would be depicted in Greek epics; she, personified and renamed Harpy, wreaks havoc on the human world. In any other fairy tale this intrusion of a Classical allusion to comment on the Protestant Reformation would seem odd, but it suits

Lewis's malleable pastiche. This versatile allusion—befitting Lewis's penchant for duality—strikes both ways: he censures the Catholic Church for its sale of indulgences (“bonds by dying misers given / To buy with worldly wealth a right to Heaven”) while simultaneously blaming the Reformation for poisoning Scotland.

It has been previously noted that Lewis mocks the monks of Blantyre Priory; yet this condemnation is tempered by Lewis's ambivalence toward Christianity. Aside from his dual swipe at the excesses of Catholicism and Protestantism, Lewis's first purpose for including the previous passage is one of exposition. In explaining how the Blantyre Priory fell into disuse, he also explains how, with the priory's fate, the Bothwell sisters' story was lost: “her sons disperst, the crumbling Fane / Saw in her grassy cloisters silence reign. / Bothwell's Three Ladies shared the Priory's lot” (II.456-8). Lewis even personifies the priory as a mother whose “sons disperst” (once again illustrating Lewis's ambivalence toward mothers, as he both mocks and laments the fate of the priory). Simultaneously he seems to mourn the loss of Blantyre Priory, Bothwell castle and the old superstitions. Without the monks at Blantyre Priory to whisper the Bothwell sister's names, they fall out of consciousness, “Their memories, nay, their names are now forgot” (II.459). Stern religious moralizing and the bold line between good and bad—as evidenced in Wieland's *Oberon*—are replaced with Lewis's emphasis on the capriciousness of the spirit world, which disregards such distinctions. Thus, although Lewis's discussion of Blantyre Priory is largely parodic, he also laments its loss. Lewis's use of the classical Harpy suggests that once-kind clergymen were made greedy (by a creature of the spirit realm), and that the Harpy's breath poisoned a more magical age.

From the Classical tradition Lewis also summons the Dæmogorgon. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, this demon, also spelled *Demogorgon*, is “the name of the great

nether deity invoked in magic rites,” and has been referenced in a number of classic works including Boccaccio’s *Genealogia*, Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Dryden’s *The Spanish Friar*, and later in Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*, among others. David Masson’s detailed notes to Milton’s *Paradise Lost* trace the Dæmogorgon as being first named by fourth century Christian writer Lactantius, but mentioned by ancient poets as a creature whose very name makes the ground tremble when mentioned aloud (420). Other writers associate the deity with chaos and nighttime, as does Lewis in Margaret’s early speech to her sisters. Lewis’s reference to the demon here both alludes to Classical works before his and gives more resonance to the Gothic nature of “Oberon’s Henchman.” Although Lewis’s representation of the Classical Dæmogorgon seems to faithfully mimic earlier invocations of the demon, the reference shows some subtle differences from earlier texts. Lewis, unlike the Classical poets, shows no fear in spelling out the spirit’s name. Indeed, Lewis seems to delight in dropping this demon’s name as it gives Oberon’s threat a great deal of gravity. Oberon’s invocation of the Dæmogorgon further illustrates the dynamic nature of Oberon’s character. Although as king he represents the magic of the fairy realm, his connections with the darker shades make it impossible to classify him as a creature strictly beneficent *or* malevolent; rather, he exhibits characteristics of both.

In addition to pulling from the Classical tradition, Lewis also pulls from the Scottish folk tradition in his composition of the pastiche. Most of his use of Scottish folklore draws on the fantastical beings popular to the area. The simplest of these references to discuss is the “kelpie.” According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the kelpy or kelpie is “the Lowland Scottish name of a fabled water-spirit or demon assuming various shapes, but usually appearing in that of a horse; it is reputed to haunt lakes and rivers, and to take delight in, or even bring about, the drowning of travelers and others.” However, “in Scotland the kelpie was sometimes held to

render assistance to millers by keeping the mill going during the night” (*OED*). Thus, in Scotland, where “Oberon’s Henchman” takes place, this fantastical being is not only malicious, but also beneficent. Lewis follows this tradition in the text of “Oberon’s Henchman,” as the kelpies help prepare Zelim for the grave. These beings participate beautifully in Lewis’s pastiche as an illustration of the inherently dual nature of the supernatural realm.

The most significant transformation from Scottish culture into Lewis’s “Oberon’s Henchman” is his depiction of the Bothwell Brownie. Lewis’s version of the Brownie is unlike most other works or folklore which include this mythical being. Traditionally in Scottish folklore the Brownie is depicted as male, and dirty in appearance. He wears brown, tattered clothing, and has a dull brown complexion. Walter Scott’s *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* provides the following description: “This spirit was easily banished, or, as it was styled, hired away, by the offer of clothes or food ; but many of the simple inhabitants could little see the prudence of parting with such a useful domestic drudge, who served faithfully, without fee and reward, food or raiment. Neither was it all times safe to reject Brownie’s assistance” (352-3). The passage proceeds to describe how a young man’s household’s Brownie destroyed his brew when the man refused to put away his bible, “which was Brownie’s eyesore and the object of his wrath” (353). Traditionally, the Brownie served without any desire for compensation, and often found the notion of any recompense insulting. His only desire was to serve his family well. And yet, Lewis’s Brownie takes an entirely altered form, one which clearly illuminates Lewis’s fay’s mercurial character. Although her “soft sweet tones” pervade the air in Maudlin’s hut, her message itself is dark as she directs the sisters to slay a spaniel (I.312). Lewis only reveals her form once the sisters have killed Zelim, and the Brownie’s very appearance suggests her dual nature: “a form they see / So strangely radiant, and so lovely

dread” (II.119-20). Lewis simultaneously depicts his Brownie as beautiful and terrible, suggesting her ability to easily fill the role of beneficent spright or vengeful spirit. Unlike the Brownie of Scottish folklore, Lewis’s Brownie radiates light and crowns her head with water lilies, yet the depiction of her beauty transforms into an image much more frightful: “Wild and dispersed her air-born tresses streamed; / And in her pearly hand a javelin gleamed, / Whose blood-impurpled barb whene’er she eyed, / She gave an elritch cry” (II. 149-52). These lines contrast with the “soft sweet tones” which earlier characterized the Brownie, leading one to see clearly her double nature. And when she speaks to the sisters “in sounds angry, yet sweet,” her voice conveys conclusively her quicksilver essence (II.156). Lewis’s translation from the Scottish folk tradition creates a Brownie who should be a protecting household spirit but instead delights in her revenge.

As Lewis takes characters, motifs, or ideas from the previously discussed sources, including Shakespeare, Wieland, and the Classical and Scottish literary and cultural traditions, he treats all of these allusions with a respectful gravity, even though he often departs from their traditional roles. However, other narrative elements within the text of “Oberon’s Henchman” are of a decidedly less serious nature. Though a pastiche can be a collage of differing source material, or a vehicle to pay homage to authorial ancestors—and as we have seen, Lewis’s ballad easily encompasses both definitions—another distinct capacity of the pastiche remains to be explored in detail: parody. Lewis’s inclusion of “Tiney’s Petition,” a comical verse address to Lady Douglas in the voice of her dog Tiney, within the text of “Oberon’s Henchman,” for example, suggests his refusal to take the ballad completely seriously.³³ Many of these

33. See Appendix A for more information on the placement of “Tiney’s Petition” within the original 1808 publication of “Oberon’s Henchman.”

lighthearted elements at first glance appear to be Lewis's attempt to protect his work from potential criticism. In the preface, Lewis carefully notes that his pastiche includes many references to local events and which "must unavoidably appear as blemishes" to the unacquainted reader ("Preface" 78). Lewis further suggests that the details which relate the poem to Shakespeare may interest readers more than the poem would by its own "slender merits" (78). These pretences of modesty suggest that Lewis was preoccupied with how his poem might be received by readers and critics.

However, Lewis's apparent modesty contrasts with elements of parody within the pastiche, a form not uncommon in Lewis's body of works. Thomson's edition of *Tales of Wonder* explores an earlier work by Lewis, "The Grim White Woman," as the perfect example of Lewis's take on Gothic parody, characterized by the "mingling of combustible horror effects....with a ridiculously perfunctory moral" (124n1). An exploration of Lewis's 1803 manuscript of "Oberon's Henchman" certainly seems to support this notion of parody; Carnochan and Donaldson classify the deleted 1803 notes as "pseudo-Gothic slapstick" (353). Examples of Lewis's farcical take on the Gothic in "Oberon's Henchman" range from the macabre (Maudlin's stirring the cauldron with a dead man's arm) to the completely ludicrous (such as the suggestion that Maudlin's cauldron "now serves Lady Douglas for a Tea-Kettle"). Lewis also includes his "ridiculously perfunctory moral" in "Oberon's Henchman," suggesting a snug fit into the category of Gothic parody.

Within the text of "Oberon's Henchman" exists another fascinating piece of evidence which may provide a more honest portrayal of Lewis's opinion on criticism:

My earth-born verse it more befits to show;

From this wild tale what useful truths may flow;

And try (while now my Muse in maniac's gown
 Binds the last straws on her fantastic crown)

From critic-wrath my idle rhyme to save

By moral meaning and instruction grave. (italics mine, II.492-7)

Lewis appears to suggest in this passage that the most useful thing he can do at the close of his pastiche, the thing that critics would most appreciate, would be to provide a somber moral.

However, although he claims to protect himself “From critic-wrath,” Lewis actually makes a mockery of his own moral—and the critical insistence for such a thing—by making it ludicrous:

MORAL

Let none, who read the tale of *Margaret's* ire,

E'er kill a puppy to revenge a sire!

By *Marion* warned, ye virtuous maids and wives,

Court not your sister's spouses for your lives!

And ye, who love as *Lillia* loved, and fain

Would bind your husband's hearts with lasting chain;

But fear, their eyes should prettier babies see

In other eyes than yours, learn this from me:

—“*Firm to one love man's truant thoughts to bind,*

Chain his wild will, and fix his vain loose mind,

[From sage Confucius this receipt I quote]

“*One means alone is certain—CUT HIS THROAT.*” (II. 500-11)

In providing this absurd moral, which completely fails to take the poem's complexity into account, Lewis essentially ridicules his own previous notion of providing “grave” instruction.

Still, Lewis's reductive moral may parody more than the Gothic tradition. Lewis's moral questions the very notion that a human being could provide a moral based on events within the capricious spirit world. Essentially, Lewis mocks those critics who would insist that a work of the fairy world must have a moral; they, unlike Lewis, clearly cannot understand the richly imaginative nature of the marvelous.

Each of these elements of Lewis's pastiche works to build his characterization of the fairy realm as a quicksilver place where events can shift from joyful to tragic in one swipe of the poet's pen. The pastiche form works beautifully to demonstrate the parallels between style and content: Lewis, like his characters Oberon and the Brownie, also refuses to draw the distinction between "Black spirits and white." Rather, he insists on a mingling—sometimes harmonious, sometimes jarring—of genres and traditions into his depiction of the fairy world. The conclusion of the poem finally demonstrates Lewis's connection between his style and the spirit realm.

Yet once methought, as all alone I strayed,
 (While on the Clyde's smooth bosom trembling played
 The golden moonshine; all was calm around,
 And hushed the midnight air) I caught a sound
 So sweet...so strange...so pure from touch of earth..
 To call it *music*, were to wrong its worth. (II. 480-5)

As he wanders in the moonlight by the Clyde, Lewis as the narrator in "Oberon's Henchman" hears "a sound / So sweet...so strange...so pure from touch of earth" (II.484). Lewis describes this sound as both "sweet" *and* "strange," providing a key in linking the mercurial nature of the spirit world and Lewis's own medley of sources and inspirations. Inspired by both the sweet and the strange elements of the sound from Oberon's realm, Lewis also makes his pastiche both

sweet and strange—paying tribute to his sources and inspirations, while simultaneously interweaving parodic and Gothic elements.

This passage beautifully displays the simple and Romantic lyricism of Lewis's verse, which echoes the ethereal mood of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Brooks notes that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* "both in form and feeling...is the most lyrical of all Shakespeare's plays....The reflections upon imagination and dreaming, the evocation of fairyland, [and] of the moonlit wood... are often lyrical in feeling" (li). Lewis's verse captures this same beauty, illustrating that although other parts of the poem work to achieve different purposes, Lewis's meandering lyrical verse still finds enchantment in its representation of the supernatural. As Oberon banishes the Brownie from the fairy world, Lewis himself seems to be leaving his preternatural world behind. The publication of "Oberon's Henchman" in *Romantic Tales* marks Lewis's own farewell to composing verses on the marvelous.³⁴ His aside within the body of the

34. After the publication of *Romantic Tales* Lewis's focus primarily shifted to playwriting, and more significantly, away from Gothic elements and into a study of human beings. Only one other work by Lewis, the drama *One O'Clock!*, emphasizes the spirit world. *One O'Clock!* is the 1811 musical rendition of an earlier melodrama also of Lewis's own composition, *The Wood Daemon* (1807). According to Lewis's biographer Louis F. Peck: "*The Wood Daemon* has been recognized as a good example of Lewis's tendency to add to traditional Gothic paraphernalia properties of an alien world--wood spirits, zephyrs, fiends, and the like" (96). Thus, even though *One O'Clock!* comes to the Lyceum Theatre after the publication of "Oberon's Henchman" in *Romantic Tales*, the play was based on the work *The Wood Daemon*, which predates *Romantic Tales*' publication in 1808. Moreover, although *One O'Clock!* does contain features of the preternatural, Lewis's transition away from the ballad form and into drama is a significant change for this Gothic balladeer. (See Peck's *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis* or D.L. Macdonald's *Monk Lewis* for complete chronologies including all of Lewis's published works.)

poem, “(while now my Muse in maniac’s gown / Binds the last straws on her fantastic crown),” provides significant insight on this topic (II.494-5). Lewis allows his Muse one final romp in her “maniac’s gown,” and gives her leave to complete the task of designing “her fantastic crown.” That crown now finished with the completion of “Oberon’s Henchman,” Lewis’s Muse may finally rest from her long focus on the marvelous.

As his muse completes her task, Lewis also bids adieu to his verses on the fantastic. Thus, he utilizes his pastiche in a final way: to acknowledge his indebtedness to both his contemporaries and his ancestors whose verse and prose have helped him to paint the world of the preternatural. One significant and extended example which illustrates Lewis’s sampling of other works is a long anaphora delivered by Oberon which functions as a list for Lewis to pay tribute to those writers who have served as influences in his composition of “Oberon’s Henchman”:

By that dread forfeit, which to hell we owe!
 By the fond tears, which Kenna’s doomed to shed,
 When Spring’s first snow-drop pictures Albion dead!
 By the cross road, where (spite of Elfin din)
 Bold Janet watched and won her loved Tam Lin!
 By the blest sounds in ears of Paynims poured,
 Which saved young Huon from the Caliph’s sword!
 By the green cup which changed to whinstone blue,
 Soon as St. Clair had roused our sleeping crew!
 By Edwin’s joy, when from my roof he fell,
 And bade his shape’s disgrace for aye farewell!

By the lost ring, which made the marble Dame
 To Rupert's hand assert her midnight claim!
 By the witch-elm, where erst was sleeping seen,
 And by my spells enslaved, King Orfeo's Queen!
 By that strange volume, whence the goblin Page,
 On spell surprising, roused dead Michael's rage!
 By the black drops from Sorcerers' veins that flow,
 To sign their compact with the Powers below!
 By all the sprights of earth, air, fire, and sea!
 And by *that* name³⁵ so awful e'en to *me*,
 I swear (and swearing, thrice I sign my breast,
 And thrice I bow me, North, South, East, and West,) (II.311-33)³⁶

Each of the sources in Oberon's anaphoric list deals, at least in some way, with the realm of the fantastic—although not directly with the plot of “Oberon's Henchman.” Oberon begins his curse of the Bothwell Brownie by reminding her of the tradition from which she comes (“By that dread forfeit, which to hell we owe!” [II.311]) and continues to reference tales pertaining to fairy lore from a variety of writers, until he finally concludes his anaphoric homage with a bow to “North, South, East, and West” (II.333). Just as Oberon recognizes the literary tradition from whence he comes, so too does Lewis recognize that same tradition which fostered the poetic creation of “Oberon's Henchman.” In this passage, Lewis nods his awareness of and appreciation for those whose works have inspired him. Lewis further nods to each geographical direction in effort to

35. The Dæmogorgon

36. See the text for explanatory notes on each of these allusions.

include those sources and inspirations which hitherto remain unnamed.³⁷ Thus, as Lewis's poetic imagination has tapped into Oberon's spirit realm, his creation of "Oberon's Henchman" as a pastiche allows him a long and gracious verse farewell to the marvelous. In doing so, Lewis pays his respect to those whose work has fostered his own, and yet, even directly after this most serious tribute, he manages to give a playful wink with "Tiney's Petition." Considering each of these seemingly incongruous elements, Lewis's pastiche proclaims itself every bit as mercurial and beguiling as the actions of his fantastical characters.

37. Lewis's inclusion of so many outside sources within "Oberon's Henchman" may have led *Notes and Queries* critic Stephen Jackson to question who (between Lewis or fellow writer James Montgomery) originally penned a line which Jackson asserts occurs "verbatim" in both "Oberon's Henchman" and Montgomery's *The World Before the Flood*. See Appendix B for Jackson's argument and additional discussion.



Fig. 3. *This is Bothwell Castle (at Night)* (2010) Xxxrmt

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

This edition uses as the copy text the third volume of *Romantic Tales*, printed by Daniel Nathan Shury at 7 Berwick Street, for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme of Paternoster-Row, London. This is the earliest publication of *Romantic Tales*, listing 1808 as its publication date. The following year (1809) saw a publication of *Romantic Tales* in two volumes in New York (printed for M. and W. Ward). Although two other editions calling themselves Lewis's *Romantic Tales* were published in London in the 19th Century, both included only a small selection from the original four volume edition; both included only three works: "My Uncle's Garret Window," "The Anaconda," and "Amorassan."³⁸ These two other London editions, published in 1838 and 1848 (by William Smith, 113 Fleet Street and Chapman and Hall, 186 Strand, respectively) illustrate the publishers' specific interest in Lewis's work with the German literary canon. As the 1848 text is the last edition of *any* text of Lewis's *Romantic Tales*, and 1809 (the New York edition) the last date "Oberon's Henchman" was a part of any published text, the original 1808 publication seemed the logical choice for this edition's copy text.

I have, however, taken into consideration the work of W. B. Carnochan and David W. Donaldson, who published a description of an 1803 edition of the poem occurring only in

38. The 1838 and 1848 editions were both printed by Bradbury and Evans, Whitefriars, and both feature the same Advertisement dated August 1838: "The tales of which this volume is composed are adaptations from the German. They were originally published, with several others, about the year 1808. They deserve to be better known, and therefore are reprinted in the present form." The later edition (1848) is part of The Cabinet Classics series which also includes titles by William Cowper, Sir Walter Scott, Robert Burns, and Charles Lamb, among others.

manuscript.³⁹ As I explain earlier in this introduction,⁴⁰ the 1803 MS is a hand-in-inked presentation copy, apparently intended to be a gift for Lady Douglas. The footnotes from the MS (as described by Carnochan and Donaldson) are typically more playful in nature from their stripped-down counterparts in the 1808 edition of the poem published in *Romantic Tales*. As this current edition contains biographical information on the recipient of the original “Oberon’s Henchman,” and intends to contextualize the poem within Lewis’s personal life and relationship with Lord and Lady Douglas, I have restored what I could of Lewis’s original glosses. Lewis’s Preface explains his reasoning for some of these modifications between the 1803 manuscript and its 1808 publication in *Romantic Tales*:

It was composed to amuse a person [Lady Douglas], from whom during many years I have experienced much kindness, and whose friendship and regard I value very highly: In consequence, many passages relate to accidental occurrences in society (to explain which would be totally uninteresting to the public) and which therefore will not merely lose what little value they might originally possess, but must unavoidably appear as blemishes. (78)

Although the public may not have appreciated these “accidental occurrences in society” in 1808, a recent critical interest in Lewis’s work suggests that the public may be interested now in repairing these “blemishes.” In restoring Lewis’s 1803 glosses, I hope to enliven the poem with

39. For additional information regarding the 1803 manuscript, see W. B. Carnochan and David W. Donaldson’s “The Presentation Copy of ‘Monk’ Lewis’s ‘Oberon’s Henchman’, 1803” (*The Book Collector* 30.3, 346-59).

40. See the section entitled “Lady Douglas and the Creation of ‘Oberon’s Henchman’” in this edition.

some of its original buoyancy, as well as add context to his relationship to the residents of Bothwell Castle.

While on the subject of buoyancy, I must explain another of my editorial decisions for this critical edition: the matter of placement for “Tiney’s Petition.” In both the 1808 London edition and the 1809 New York edition of “Oberon’s Henchman” in *Romantic Tales*, the central narrative of the poem breaks to include the text of a much more playful epistolary poem written in the voice of the dog Tiney to her master Lady Douglas. On each page that includes “Tiney’s Petition,” two lines of the central poem (Oberon’s transformation of the Brownie) are followed by a bold line denoting a separation, and then the text of “Tiney’s Petition.” Although the juxtaposition of both texts on the same page adds gaiety to the nature of “Oberon’s Henchman” as a whole, it makes for a particularly distracting roadblock in the text. In this edition, a reader may jump to the end of the body of “Oberon’s Henchman” to find “Tiney’s Petition” if she wishes to read it at this point in the plot, as Lewis intended, although she is not forced to do. In transporting the verses of “Tiney’s Petition,” this edition allows the reader a more linear reading of the poem overall with each supplementary section appearing whole and uninterrupted.

OBERON'S HENCHMAN:

OR,

The Legend of

THE THREE SISTERS.



INSCRIBED

To the Rt. Hon. LADY DOUGLAS.



—“Hence, ye profane! I feel a former dread;
A thousand visions float around my head!
See! moats and bridges, walls and castles rise!
Ghosts, fairies, dæmons, dance before my eyes.”—
CRABBE.

VOL. III.

L

Fig. 4. Title page of “Oberon’s Henchman” from *Romantic Tales*. First edition (1808)

PREFACE⁴¹

This Romance contains the History of the Indian Boy, for whom Oberon and Titania quarrel in the “Midsummer’s Night’s Dream;”⁴² and as it thus possesses a slight connection with Shakespeare, it will probably be read with a greater share of interest, that it could possibly excite by its own slender merits. It was composed to amuse a person, from whom during many years I have experienced much kindness, and whose friendship and regard I value very highly: In consequence, many passages relate to accidental occurrences in society (to explain which would be totally uninteresting to the public) and which therefore will not merely lose what little value they might originally possess, but must unavoidably appear as blemishes. The particular view also, with which the Poem was written, confined my scene to the banks of the Clyde; and many of my friends, who have perused these verses in manuscript, have censured me for removing the Indian Boy to Scotland, when Shakespeare had placed him in the neighbourhood of Athens. I confess, however, that on this head they have not convinced me. As the kingdom of Oberon is bounded by no assigned limits, I see no reason, why he should not be supposed to visit occasionally his Scottish dominions, when his favourite Henchman would naturally follow in his train; and if any censure is to be past respecting this point, I have Dr. Johnson’s⁴³ authority for

41. Reprinted from *Romantic Tales* Vol. 1, “Preface,” pg. xxi-xxiii.

42. Although he copies passages perfectly from the play, Lewis tends to write “*Midsummer’s Night’s Dream*” instead of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, the proper title for the play.

43. Lewis here refers to literary critic Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-84), whose 1765 edition of *The Plays of William Shakespeare* is recognized as “one of the monuments of 18th-century criticism” (Walsh 225). Lewis references the following passage from Johnson’s preface to the 1765 edition:

suggesting, that the impropriety consists in Shakespeare's having mixed Fairies with Theseus and Hippolita, when the Grecian Deities were the supernatural agents most suitable to be introduced. Many other defects have been pointed out to me; but they are too glaring, and the public is too quick-sighted, to make it necessary to specify them here.

M. G. Lewis.

He [Shakespeare] had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expence not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults *Pope* has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find *Hector* quoting *Aristotle*, when we see the loves of *Theseus* and *Hippolyta* combined with the *Gothick* mythology of fairies. (Johnson B1v)

The introduction of this edition considers Lewis's invocation of Dr. Johnson in further detail.

OBERON'S HENCHMAN;
 OR,
 THE LEGEND OF THE THREE SISTERS

—
 Inscribed

To the Rt. Hon. Lady Douglas.
 —

—“Hence, ye profane! I feel a former dread;
 A thousand visions float around my head!
 See! moats and bridges, walls and castles rise!
 Ghosts, fairies, daemons, dance before my eyes.”—Crabbe.¹

1. This epigraph comes from Reverend George Crabbe's poem "The Library," originally published in 1781 (546-7, 450-1). Lewis truncates Crabbe's original passage, cutting out the middle two lines which read "Hark! Hollow blasts through empty courts resound, / And shadowy forms with staring eyes stalk around" (548-9). Directly following the lines comes the passage Lewis uses from "The Library" on the title page of each of the four volumes of *Romantic Tales*:

Ah! happy he, who thus in magic themes
 O'er worlds bewitched in early rapture dreams,
 Where wild enchantment waves her potent wand,
 And Fancy's beauties fill her fairy land. (Crabbe 566-9)

ADVERTISEMENT²

On opposite banks of the Clyde, in Lanerkshire, North Britain, are situated the remains of Bothwell Castle, and of Blantyre Priory. There too are still seen three isolated stones, known by the name of “*The Three Sisters*.” Curiosity respecting the cause of their bearing the above appellation, induced a Lady (during my residence at Bothwell Castle) to address me in the following lines; and it must be unnecessary to inform any reader of taste, that I found it impossible to refuse a request urged in a manner so persuasive and so flattering.

To M. G. Lewis.³

Oh! Laureate of that nether king,
Whose birth-day odes hobgoblins sing!
Toasted by....We'll not whisper whom,
Whene'er a Vampyre quits the tomb!
Consulted....We'll not fancy where,

The epigraph featured in this edition is faithful to the 1808 printing of “Oberon’s Henchman” in *Romantic Tales*; however, Lewis used an entirely different epigraph in his 1803 manuscript. The following passage from Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* originally graced the poem:

Ferd: “May I be bold to think these Spirits?
Pros: “Spirits, which by mine art
I have from their confines called to enact
My present Fancies!” (IV.i.119-22).

(See the introduction of this edition for a discussion about this and other changes between the 1803 and 1808 editions of “Oberon’s Henchman.”)

2. Lewis’s text.

3. Although there is no document to support it, we may assume that this verse request was composed by Lady Douglas.

Whene'er a broomstick wings the air!
 Well taught....no matter by what master,
 What crimson spirits in the blast are,
 What grim-white-woman woods contain,⁴
 And what damp devil dwells in rain! 10
 Nor less in whiter magic wise,
 Taught by the softest sylph that flies,
 All frolic ridings fresh and new
 From Oberon's court, or Ariel's crew!⁵
 Oh! tell us (for thou sure must know) 15
 Why rise yon crags in mystic row?
 Why form they thine own number, *three*?
 Why *Sister* termed is each? Why *She*?
 In that dark age thy science reaches,
 Were these three babes? three queens? three witches? 20
 Three wicked nuns, who veils renounced?
 Three fairies by Titania trounced?
 Three love-sick maidens drowned in Clyde?

4. "The Grim White Woman" is a ballad by Lewis, published in *Tales of Wonder*, Volume 1. That the author of this verse request for Lewis's storytelling knew of his previous work is obvious, and her allusion to examples of Lewis's Gothic parody suggests that this is what she wished to see in "Oberon's Henchman" as well.

5. Both Shakespearean fairy characters, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, respectively. We know from Lady Louisa Stuart's *Memoire* that Lady Douglas read and loved Shakespeare (96), perhaps adding evidence that she is the writer of this request.

Or three she-thieves to gallows tyed?

Oh! gentle Bard, when pilgrim here is, 25

Supply some tale to stop his queries,

To force the tender tear, or make

His manly heart within him quake.

Whate'er thy small familiar still

Stowed snug in thine enchanted quill. 30

Shall prompt of piteous, dire, or dread,

I'll swear—"Just so my Gran'num said!

The facts, by all tradition thundered,

Are gospel held throughout the hundred.

My worthy friend, Matt Lewis, madam, 35

Took them from me, just as I had 'em;

And (wond'rous, if one did not know him)

Past haste composed this charming poem!"

The poem's *charms* a truth confest

Stamp straight authentic all the rest; 40

And not an F. A. S.⁶ disowns

The Legend of the Sister-Stones.

Sept. 22, 1800

6. F.A.S. stands for a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. The Society is "charged by its Royal Charter of 1751 with 'the encouragement, advancement and furtherance of the study and knowledge of the antiquities and history of this and other countries'" ("About").

EXTRACTS FROM THE MIDSUMMER'S NIGHTS DREAM,
REFERRED TO IN THE COURSE OF THIS POEM.⁷

[PUCK] —The King doth keep his revels here to night;
Take heed, the Queen come not within his sight,
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely Boy, stolen from an Indian King:
She never had so sweet a changeling!
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild:
But she perforce with-holds the loved Boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.⁸

[OBERON] —Why should Titania cross her Oberon?

I do but beg a little changeling Boy
To be my Henchman.

[TITANIA] —Set your heart at rest;

7. This section is the work of Lewis, not of the current editor. Lewis's reproductions of the passages are true to the various editions of Shakespeare's text, with the exception of a few punctuation marks (none of which alter meaning) and in some instances contracting words, and in others, expanding words which were contracted. To be true to Lewis's text (as it is the primary focus of this edition), I have copied these passages from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* exactly as they appear in the 1808 edition of *Romantic Tales*.

8. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II.i.18-27. Spoken by Puck before Oberon and Titania enter the scene.

The fairy land buys not the child of me.⁹

—

[OBERON] —When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
 And she in mild terms begged my patience,
 I then did ask of her her changeling child,
 Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
 To bear him to my bower in fairy land—
 And now I have the Boy.—¹⁰

9. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II.i.119-22. Titania continues to describe her relationship with the Indian Boy's mother, eventually telling Oberon: "And for her sake do I rear up her boy, / And for her sake I will not part with him" (II.i.136-7). For more on Titania and Oberon's relationship, and their quarrel about the Indian boy, see the introduction of this edition.

10. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* IV.i.56-61.

TO SHAKESPEARE¹¹

Lord of the song! whose locks boon Nature, granting
 Her gifts profuse, with sun-like Aureol crowned,¹²
 Thy laurelled harp enchanted and enchanting
 Ne'er shall my feeble touch presume to sound.
 Reverent I pace thy elfin haunts around; 5
 And where my raptured eye thy footstep traces,
 With rhymes of power I greet the wizard ground,
 But cautious shun those genius-hallowed places,
 Where Fancy's wand has showered her wildest loveliest graces.

 Flow, Avon,¹³ flow, nor dread to hear thy billows 10
 Reverberate notes, which Shakespeare's lute prophane:
 Still, silver cygnets,¹⁴ haunt your favourite willows,
 No lay of mine shall mar your Poet's strain.
 Yet though the mulberry cup no more contain
 That precious wine which erst¹⁵ so richly blest it, 15

11. Lewis's verse address "To Shakespeare" is comprised of three Spenserian stanzas. In thus structuring this address, Lewis nods to Spenser's epic work on the fantastic: *The Faerie Queene*. This structure illustrates yet again that Lewis's pastiche attempts to recognize and venerate his progenitors in fairy-lore.

12. An Aureol, or aureole, is a halo of light around a glorious figure's head (*OED*).

13. The Avon River courses through Stratford-upon-Avon, birthplace of Shakespeare.

14. Cygnets are young swans (*OED*).

Though thin the streams which now its bosom stain,
 Still shall this thought with secret charms invest it;
 —“Once mighty Shakespeare’s self against his full lip prest it.”—

Oh! list my lay!—As soft and sad I breathe it,
 As moonlight stealing o’er the summer wave! 20
 Oh! bring my lyre!—Lo! hands unseen enwreath it
 With flowers, and glittering forms in sunshine lave!¹⁶
 Those fairy sweets I strow on Zelim’s grave;
 And while my verse the love-lorn griefs discloses
 Of One, most fond, most true, most fair, most brave, 25
 Clouds of ambrosial sighs, showers of immortal roses
 Shall bless the spell-bound sod, where the bright boy reposes.

*Holland House*¹⁷, May 3, 1808.

15. At one time (*OED*).

16. Bathe (*OED*).

17. The Holland House is the home of Lady and Lord Holland in Kensington, London, which became a great gathering place for writers and other great minds of the era. (For a thorough discussion about the persons who frequented the halls at Holland House, see Lloyd Sanders’s *The Holland House Circle*.) Lewis was a college friend of Lord Holland (both attended Christ Church, Oxford), and his continued correspondence with the couple, according to Lewis’s biographer D.L. Macdonald, is how we know much about Lewis’s personal life (139). Macdonald also records that Lewis appealed to Lord Holland for some help revising “Oberon’s Henchman” before the release of *Romantic Tales* in 1808 (168).

OBERON'S HENCHMAN;

OR,

THE LEGEND OF

THE THREE SISTERS

BOOK THE FIRST.

—“Mourn, Nature, mourn!”—what shrieks invade the air?

Titania weeps, and rends her radiant hair:

Droops every elf, fades every magic flower,

And Zephyr¹⁸ fans with sighs the immortal bower.

—“Mourn, Nature, mourn!” exclaims the sorrowing Fay!

“In showers of tears, melt, silver clouds, away!

Your emerald light, ye glow-worms, cease to pour,

Titania joins the green-sward dance¹⁹ no more:

Hush, ye wild bees, in vain your warblings rise,

Titania's ear now loves no sound but sighs;

10

Moon, veil thy light; birds, wake no song of joy;

Die, Joy, and Light, with my sweet Indian Boy!

“When his queen-mother to my guardian care

Consigned the child, was ever child so fair?

While bloomed his charms within my bowers divine,

18. The personified west wind, “or the god of the west wind” (*OED*).

19. Dance on green, grassy turf (*OED*).

Was ever mother's love more fond than mine?
 Winged with delight each roseate moment flew,
 No harm he dreaded, and no care he knew,
 Till Oberon's partial love, or jealous rage,
 Claimed the sweet changeling for his Henchman-Page. 20
 Well could'st thou tell, when forced with thee to part,
 What pangs, my Zelim,²⁰ rent my boding²¹ heart!
 What tears I shed! what wrath and envious spite
 (Ere I would yield thee from my doating²² sight)
 From my stern Lord I bore, yet held my sufferings light!
 Still when he sued, I made this firm reply;
 —'Not fairy-land of me that Boy shall buy!'²³—
 Still when that firm reply his anger drew,

20. Shakespeare never names the Indian boy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; this is a name Lewis himself gives to the character.

21. Portending, ominous (*OED*). Titania dreads something terrible will happen to her changeling child, Zelim.

22. Harold F. Brooks argues that one of the principal themes of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is represented by the "aberrations of love itself," such as the dotage characters bestow upon others who are unable to return their love for one reason or another (cxxxii). See the introduction to this text for how Lewis transforms this motif.

23. v.[*vide*, see] *Midsummer's* [sic] *Night's Dream*, Act II [Lewis's 1808 note]. The actual line, spoken by Titania, is as follows: "Set your heart at rest: / The fairy land buys not the child of me. / His mother was a votress of my order" and continues on to tell of the Indian boy's story (*MND* II.i.121-3). This is her response to Oberon's "I do but beg a little changeling boy / To be my henchman" (II.i.120-1).

I met his frown unmoved; for oh! I knew
 Great though *his* care, far greater mine would be; 30
 Well though *he* loved, he loved thee not like me!
 “His power prevailed—oh! thence my woes I date,
 His love was fatal as the fiercest hate!
 ’Twas in his train, that luckless night you roved,
 When Lillia²⁴ first was seen, and seen was loved;
 And twas with *him*²⁵ to hunt you sought the wood,
 Which soon you purpled with Earl Bothwell’s blood.
 What though (when hurled the Thane²⁶ his well-aimed spear,
 Incensed that in his bounds you chased the deer)
 The hand of Oberon caught the flying dart, 40
 And bade yours pierce the stormy tyrant’s heart?
 Had’st thou been still *my* charge, I had not there
 Bounded my friendship and confined my care!
 I had not granted, that an earthly bride
 Should e’er have slumbered by the Henchman’s side:
 I had not yielded, that his time should be
 Six months with Lillia past, six months with me:²⁷

24. Lillia, introduced later, is one of the eponymous “three sisters”

25. Oberon

26. Lord Bothwell

27. Titania refers to Zelim’s marriage to Lillia, daughter of Lord Bothwell. Six months after their wedding, Zelim returns to the fairy kingdom. To insure that Zelim does not return to

And when the Clyde he sought, while midnight reigned,
 (In altered form, for so our laws ordained)
 To view the tower where Lillia wept forlorn, 50
 I had not trusted the cairn-goran horn.²⁸
 No, Zelim, no! where-e'er you strayed, your Queen
 Had watched your footsteps still, a guard unseen,
 By day, by night, in forest, or in field;
 Your call to answer, and her aid to yield,
 These arms your shelter, and this heart your shield!
 "Vain, vain regrets!—Fled is Titania's joy,
 And Clyde now rolls o'er my sweet Indian Boy!"—
 Grief choaked her voice—and why she wept and sighed,
 How Zelim loved, and how through love he died,²⁹ 60
 Now sing, my Muse,³⁰ but sing it soft and low;

his wife while he is supposed to spend his time in the fairy kingdom, Oberon places an enchantment which turns Zelim into a spaniel if he strays from the forest to look up at Bothwell Castle.

28. The cairn-goran is the Scotch topaze [Lewis's 1808 note]. Lewis uses the word "cairn-goran," but it is better known as "cairngorm": "a precious stone of a yellow or wine-colour" particular to the Highlands (*OED*). Zelim wears an enchanted golden trumpet around his neck while in the form of the spaniel which blasts a warning sound if he finds himself in danger. Lewis's horn, an allusion to Wieland's *Oberon*, helps to classify the poem as pastiche. In using the "cairn-goran" horn, Lewis venerates both Wieland and the Scottish cultural tradition.

29. His marriage to Lillia ultimately leads to Zelim's death.

30. By invoking the Muse, Lewis mimics one of the conventions of classical epic poetry.

List, Lady,³¹ list the tale—a tale of woe!

The midnight moon, which tinged with silver light
 Bothwell's white rocks, (for Bothwell once was white,)
 Beheld Three Sisters, charged with many a weed³²
 Of mystic power, from yonder castle speed.
Black Margaret's eyes glared with vindictive flame;
 Pale seemed the next, who bore *Brown Marion's* name;
 While frequent sighed the third; *Fair Lillia* she,
 The last and loveliest of the sister-three.

70

—“Speed, Sisters, speed!” Black Margaret cried; “the hour
 Is near, when mandrakes shriek,³³ and spells have power.
 The moon-light feast and green-sward dance are o'er;
 The shadowy tribes³⁴ attend their king no more;
 But each, as humour sways, his pastime makes,

31. The lady here is Lady Douglas, for whom Lewis originally wrote “Oberon's Henchman.”

32. Article (*OED*)

33. According to the *OED*, the mandrake is a “poisonous and narcotic Mediterranean plant” which “was formerly credited with magical and medicinal properties esp. because of the supposedly human shape of its forked fleshy root, being used to promote conception, and was reputed to shriek when pulled from the ground and to cause the death of whoever uprooted it (a dog being therefore traditionally employed for the purpose).”

34. Fairies

His dreaded round till Dæmogorgon³⁵ takes,
 And drives the Fays, who lag till morning breaks.³⁶
 Now some, who haunt strong forts, or castles high,
 Warn the scared Thane with shrieks, that danger's nigh:

35. A demon, for more on the Dæmogorgon in "Oberon's Henchman," see this edition's introduction.

36. v. Dryden's ["Tale of the Flower and the Leaf" [Lewis's 1808 note]. This is a work translated by Dryden from the original Middle English poem "The Floure and the Leafe," which was falsely attributed to Chaucer in Thomas Speght's edition of Chaucer's Collected Works from 1598 (see *The Floure and the Leafe and The Assembly of Ladies* edited by D. A. Pearsall for a wealth of information, as well as an annotated edition of the poem). Dryden's translation references the Dæmogorgon as a sort of watchman of souls, or fairies, who once were human, but are not yet ready to ascend to heaven:

Fair daughter, know,
 That what you saw was all a fairy show,
 And all those airy shapes you now behold,
 Were human bodies once, and clothed with earthly mould;
 Our souls, not yet prepared for upper light,
 Till doomsday wander in the shades of night;
 This only holiday of all the year,
 We privileged in sunshine may appear:
 With songs and dance we celebrate the day,
 And with due honours usher in the May.
 At other times we reign by night alone,
 And posting through the skies pursue the moon;
 But when the morn arises, none are found;
 For cruel Demogorgon walks the round,
 And if he finds a fairy lag in light,
 He drives the wretch before, and lashes into night. (480-95)

Some flit the sluttish housewife's couch around, 80
 And pinch and plague her while in slumber bound:
 Or lead with meteor-fires the pilgrim wrong;
 Or glide with corse-lights church-yard paths along;
 Or from its cradle steal the new-born heir
 To place some Fairy's idiot offspring there;³⁷
 Or lure young wanton Knights to join their band,
 And live the pleasant life of Elfin land,
 Till seven swift years elapsed (so legends tell)
 Their souls discharge King Oberon's debt to hell.³⁸ 90
 But others, gentler, sweeter tasks pursue—
 These quaff in acorn-cups the nectarine's dew;³⁹

37. The term “changeling child” typically refers to the fairy child left in the human child's place; however, Shakespeare uses the term to refer to his Indian boy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, who is a human child in the fairies' possession. (See Brooks 27n23.)

38. vide the Tale of Tam Lin [Lewis's 1808 note]. Lewis's version of this old Scottish ballad was published in his *Tales of Wonder*, Vol. 2. Tam Lin, a spirit or fairy, expresses to a maiden, Janet, that the Queen of the Fairies (unnamed in this ballad) liked him so well that when he “fell,” she carried him away to the fairy kingdom “to dwell in yon green hill” (“Tam Lin” 96). According to a legend Lewis provides in his headnote to the ballad, once every seven years, one of the fairies is sent to hell to pay a “tiend” or toll (100). Tam Lin fears he will be sent, as “Seven years, alas! are nearly gone,” and convinces the maiden to break the spell of his enchantment, returning him to a living knight once again, consequently invoking the wrath of the Fairy Queen (91).

39. An allusion to Puck's description of the fairies: “all their elves for fear / Creep into acorn-cups, and hide them there” (*MND* II.i.30-1).

While *those*, by fire-flies borne, through æther soar;
 Or secret Ocean's coral groves explore;
 Or plunder the wild bee;⁴⁰ or gild their plumes
 With gleams of moonshine; or condense perfumes,
 Of power in spells, from flowery banks; or play
 (Close hid in heather bells) a thousand frolicks gay,
 And bid the wings of Love waft their blithe hours away!

“Yet whether earth, or air, or fire, or sea

100

Detains her now, how-far-so-e'er she be,
 Those mystic rhymes, which Maudlin⁴¹ knows to sing,
 Soon Bothwell's Brownie to our aid shall bring:
 Nor doubt, that guardian spright our suit will hear
 (If true our mother's tale) with gracious ear.
 Oft have I heard her say, whene'er her pains
 Had given a child to Bothwell's race, that strains
 Of music (soon as tolled the midnight bell)

40. Another allusion to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Bottom, in the presence of Titania, orders the fairy Cobweb to “get you your weapons in hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag” (IV.i.10-13).

41. Maudlin is a witch who lives near Bothwell Castle. Her name (as it signifies one who is overly sentimental or emotional) does not seem to appropriately characterize her; however, Maudlin can also refer to a type of plant, *Achillea Ageratum* or "Sweet Maudlin." This name can place her into context with the natural world of the fairies, much like Shakespeare's fairy names "Peaseblossom," and "Mustardseed." Lewis provides no insight on the matter.

By her, and her alone, were heard to swell,
 And straight mysterious sleep on all her damsels fell.
 Then saw she by the lamp's blue glimmering light
 A dame of beauteous form and pigmy height
 Approach the cradle where the infant lay,
 With looks of love its new-born charms survey.
 Its pillow strew with flowers of fairy land,
 And cross its forehead with her silver wand.
 With lips diffusing rose-balm next she kist
 Its tender chest; then on its baby wrist,
 Murmuring strange words, she bound a golden hair,
 Spread her green winds, and straight was lost in air. 120
 Still by that mystic twine our wrists are bound:
 Speed, Sisters, speed! dead silence reigns around;
 Closed is each prying eye and curious ear.—
 Stay, Sisters, stay! Lo! Maudlin's hut is here.”—
 Its lowly roof and porch of rustic form
 With straw well thatched against the winter storm,
 Hard by the Clyde,⁴² embosomed deep in the wood.
 And far from public gaze the cottage stood.
 Two chambers dark with smoke composed the abode,
 Where housed familiar many a bloated toad;

42. The River Clyde, beside which Bothwell Castle sits.

And many a viper foul and odious eft⁴³
 Their secret haunts at midnight oft had left,
 Compelled by charms in slime a deadly gall
 To smear Hell's secrets on the wizard wall.⁴⁴
 Here sang no bird; here bloomed nor shrub, nor flower;
 But all those plants, which boast such baleful power
 As turns to poison Heaven's salubrious dew,
 In rank luxuriance round the hovel grew.
 Nor sun, nor moon e'er pierced these shades profound;
 But owls, and bats, and birds of fatal sound 140
 Still brooded on the trees which gloomed around,
 And while their screams alarmed the adjacent groves,
 Now fiercely fought, and now pursued their loathsome loves.
 The murderer, whom no mortal power dismayed,
 Had feared to cross by night this haunted glade;
 The bandit, though by hunger tortured sore,
 Had feared to lift the latch of Maudlin's door;
 That door at Hallow-e'en on Caithness⁴⁵ hewed,

43. "A small lizard, or lizard-like animal" (*OED*).

44. This cottage still exists, though with some alterations; the toads have been turned out, and the walls having been white-washed, retain but few traces of the labours of the efts and vipers [Lewis's 1808 note].

45. An obscure term meaning wretchedness or misery, usually spelled *caitiffness* or *caitiveness* (*OED*).

With Kraken's⁴⁶ foam, and Sorcerer's blood imbrued,
 Whose planks no earthly strength could hope to break,
 Nor e'er could earthly hands its fastenings shake,
 Save those whom Maudlin taught a secret spell
 Of fearful power!—Black Margaret knew it well!
 With practiced hand the spell-fraught-lock she prest,
 Thrice kissed the threshold, and thrice smote her breast!⁴⁷
 Slow turned the door; and void of doubt or dread,
 Forward the elder twain⁴⁸ adventurous sped,
 While trembling Lillia followed where they led.

Her long lank fingers wreathed in mystic guise,
 Haggard her looks, her limbs of giant size, 160
 Maudlin, the mistress of this drear abode,
 Knelt on the floor with rue and nightshade⁴⁹ strowed,
 Watching a cauldron, whose blood-tinctured flame
 Illumed with sullen glare that ghastly dame.
 And still she cast the fire its favourite food,

46. An enormous mythical sea-monster.

47. This lock still guards the cottage door, and retains its magic virtues [Lewis's 1808 note].

48. The elder two sisters, Margaret and Marion.

49. Rue is an evergreen shrub used for medicinal purposes, and nightshade is a plant known for being poisonous or narcotic, depending on the exact species (*OED*).

Hallowed tre-foil,⁵⁰ witch-elm,⁵¹ and row'n-tree wood,⁵²

Which when she saw the ungodly flames destroy,

Harsh hollow laughter spoke her impious joy.

50. v. Leyden's Tale of "The Elf King" [Lewis's 1808 note]. Leyden's ballad was published in Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*, Vol. I. In Leyden, the trefoil, of the shape of three overlapping circles, has magical properties which protect its bearer from spells.

51. A species of Elm also known as witch hazel or Scots elm (*OED*).

52. v. the old ballad of "The Laidly Worm" [Lewis's 1808 note]. Lewis's gloss linking "row'n-tree wood" to "The Laidly Worm" most likely refers to the wood's supposed power over witches: "witches have no power/ Where there is rown-tree wood" (Frasier 175). Perhaps this is a mistake on Lewis's part, as it conflicts with Maudlin's characterization as a wood-witch.

Lewis may have used "The Laidly Worm" as more of an inspiration than just a source for "rown-tree wood." Thomas Evans, compiler and editor of *Old Ballads* (1784) attributes the composition of "The Laidly Worm" to "the old mountain bard Duncan Frasier, living in Cheviot" in the year 1270. The ballad tells the story of a princess, Margaret, whose stepmother—a witch—turns her into a dragon, or "worm." After Margaret's brother, Childy Wynd, restores her to her human form (by kissing her thrice as a dragon), he exacts his revenge on the queen:

Woe be to thee, thou wicked witch,
An ill death may'st thou dee;
As though my sister hast likened,
So likened shalt thou be.

I will turn thee into a toad,
That one the ground doth wend;
And won and won shalt though never be,
Till this world hath an end. (177)

This punishment, a *contrapasso* themed transfiguration, may at least be a partial influence for the Brownie's punishment later in Lewis's "Oberon's Henchman."

Round her strong loins a tattered plaid was cast,
 Whose folds loose fluttering in the northern blast, 170
 Streamed like a maniac's and her girdle scorned
 With brazen knobs of lion-heads adorned;
 For at this hour when life she first obtained,
 Lord of her fate's ascendant Leo reigned.⁵³
 O'er her lank cheeks the staring bones stood far;
 Her meager breasts showed many a mystic sear,
 Whence gore had gushed for spells, or in strange guise
 Whence imps had nurture sucked—her blood-shot eyes
 Rolled ceaseless round, and scowled with fiend-like glare.

Her scant remains of coal-black matted hair 180
 In wild neglect down her bare shoulders hung;
 And while blaspheming rhymes she hoarsely sung,
 She gnashed her yellow teeth, and lolled her spiteful tongue.

The Sisters entered—nought the Wood-Witch said,
 But on her pale thin lip in silence laid
 One shriveled finger—on the flames she threw
 Their proffer'd herbs, then clasped her hands anew,
 While round the cauldron nine-times-nine she paced;

53. This line refers to Maudlin's Zodiac sign, Leo, meaning she was born in either late July or August. Lewis probably knew that Lady Douglas's July 26th birthday also made her a Leo. See the introduction of this text for a comical footnote Lewis had here in his 1803 manuscript of the poem.

Next magic circles nine-times-nine she traced,
 And with a dead-man's arm the hell-broth stirred, 190
 Thrice wildly shrieked, and spake a dreadful word;
 A word, whose import split the rocks around,
 And made deep groans of horror cleave the ground!
 But what she spake (unmeet for Christian ear)
 'Twere sin for *me* to say, 'twere sin for *you* to hear.

—“Now then draw near, my daughters!” Maudlin cried:

“That hair which round your wrists the Brownie tyed,
 Unbinding,⁵⁴ in yon blazing cauldron throw,
 And as it burns, what secret each would know,
 Let each declare, nor doubt the event”—She said, 200
 And first Brown Marion thus the Hag obeyed.

—“I love, but love in vain!—A hopeless flame
 Burns in my heart for one....I must not name!
 Another boasts his hand, and charms his eye:
 For her alone he lives, for her well pleased would die!⁵⁵

54. By removing the Brownie's hair from around their wrists, the sisters essentially remove themselves from her protection.

55. “*Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens,*” Horace [Lewis's 1808 note]. This quotation, which concludes Horace's Ode IX, can translate into English as “'Tis with thee that I would live—gladly I with thee would die” (Horace 290). Although Lewis prefaced *The Monk* with verses of his own creation in the style of Horace, he illustrated no overwhelming expertise with Latin poetry. Macdonald notes: “Lewis is recorded as reading no Ovid, only a little Horace (two books of the *Odes* in his first year [at Christ Church College, Oxford]) and no other Latin

And when with gasping breast and streaming hair
 I clasp his knees, and sue in fond despair,
 He pleads my rival's rights, my rival's charms,
 Mocks my complaints, and flies my folding arms!
 Small o'er man's eye or soul I own my power;
 Nor gracious form is mine nor princely dower,
 While many a bard fair Lillia's praises sounds,
 And rich-born Margaret rules through Bothwell's bounds.⁵⁶
 Yet, guardian-spright, teach but some winning art
 To rob my rival of this precious heart;
 Let me but see his brilliant eyes confer
 Those looks on *me*, which now he pours on *her*;
 Then shall Brown Marion in his dear embrace,
 Though low her fortunes, and though coarse her face,
 All other wealth, all other charms despise, 230
 Rich in *his* love, and beauteous in *his* eyes.
 O'er all but him may powerful Margaret reign;
 Round all but him may Lillia wind her chain;

poetry" (98). Later, Lewis wrote to Scott about his "terrible want" of "a good translation of Horace's *Canidia*" to complete his collection of works which would become *Tales of Wonder* (Peck 120); however, a translation of *Canidia* never made it into the collection. These details suggest that Lewis was incapable of producing a "good translation" of his own. Yet, even with his limited exposure to Horace's work, Lewis cannot resist the temptation of adding this influential Classical source to his pastiche.

56. Margaret is the eldest sister; thus she inherits the Bothwell estate.

To them wealth, power, and beauty I resign,
 This my sole prayer—‘Let that one heart be mine!’⁵⁷—

Here Marion ceased—next Lillia silence broke,
 And thus in faltering sounds the beauty spoke:
 —“I love, and am beloved! through Bothwell’s glade,
 Led by the moon’s pale light, as late I strayed,
 And mourned my father’s loss, amazed I stood
 To hear a huntsman’s horn alarm the wood!
 And lo! a youth, the loveliest e’er I viewed,
 Close to my path a milk-white hart pursued.
 With Indian plumes his silver casque⁵⁸ was gay,
 And gems of price blazed on his bright array.
 Round his full lips wantoned sweet smiles: his eyes
 Blue, mild, and brilliant, shone like summer skies:
 Fresher his cheeks than blush of morning glowed;
 And wild, and free his chesnut ringlets flowed,
 All gemmed with dew-drops, which a rainbow gleam
 Caught from the lovely moon-shine’s lucid stream.
 He saw me!—From his steed he sprang, and swore
 He ne’er for woman burned with love before,

57. This line’s punctuation has been modernized. The 1808 edition uses double quotation marks to delineate Marion’s quotation within her longer speech (“This my sole prayer—“Let that one heart be mine!”—”) and provided no ending punctuation to close her dialogue.

58. Helmet (*OED*)

Yet from that hour but lived, my beauty to adore!
 I asked not, whence he came, and whither roved;
 I only asked him, if *in truth* he loved:
 Nor wealth the Huntsman sought, nor regal power;
 He sought a *heart*; 'twas Lillia's only dower!
 Awhile his suit I struggled to deny;
 But who could long unmoved hear Zelim sigh? 200
 Awhile did Margaret her consent refuse;⁵⁹
 But who could long resist, when Zelim sues?
 His hand was mine, my bliss compleat!—But soon
 (Scarce since our bridal-night, six times the moon
 Had filled her circle,) Lo! the Huntsman left
 Lillia to mourn, of all she loved bereft!
 Whither he went, in vain I prayed him tell:
 Mournful his head he shook, and sighed 'Farewell',⁶⁰
 Yet vowed, his heart for me should faithful burn,
 Kist off my tears, and promised quick return. 270
 Two months are past; he comes not back!—I throw
 From Bothwell-towers my eyes in vain below.
 In vain those towers I climb at break of morn;

59. With neither of the sisters' parents alive, Margaret acts as guardian for Lillia.

60. This line's punctuation has been modernized. The 1808 text applies double quotation marks around "Farewell" which have been altered to singular quotation marks in this edition, signifying that this quotation appears within a larger quotation.

Night comes, and still unheard is Zelim's horn!
 Alas! where strays he? bears him land or sea?
 Still does he live, and lives he still for me?
 Perhaps, forgetful of his purer flame,
 Some foreign wanton's arts, some lovelier dame....

Hence, jealous fears! oh! rack no more my breast!

Lull, guardian-Brownie, lull those fears to rest! 280

Teach me the means for aye⁶¹ man's heart to bind,
 Charm his palled⁶² eye, and chain his wandering mind:
 Faithful and fond her Huntsman-love restore
 To Lillia's arms, and Lillia asks not more!"—

'Twas Margaret's turn—her dark eyes flashing fire,
 —“Revenge!” she cried, “I blood for blood require!

These whining girls who prate of love-sick pains,
 Of passion unrepaid, and faithless swains,⁶³
 Must sure forget, that Blantyre's chapel⁶⁴ owns
 (Oh! grief of hear!) our murdered father's bones! 290

Unknown whose javelin gave his breast the wound,
 The high-soul'd Thane in his own woods was found
 All bathed in blood! No art could life recall!

61. “For aye” is a phrase meaning “for ever, to all eternity” (*OED*).

62. Bored, jaded. (*OED*).

63. A male wooer or lover (*OED*).

64. Blantyre Priory was located close to Bothwell Castle in South Lanarkshire, Scotland.

No word he spake; no eye beheld him fall;
 No trace was left to guide my sacred hate,
 And show, on whom should burst the storm of fate.
 In vain my spies have traversed land and sea:
 Now, Guardian-Brownie, now I fly to thee!
 If (as our annals tell) our favoured race
 Still found thy succour,⁶⁵ and still shared thy grace, 300
 Oh! hear my prayer, nor let the assassin boast,
 —‘Vainly for vengeance wails Earl Bothwell’s ghost!’—
 Spill but his blood by whom my sire’s was spilt;
 Give but some clue to track this son of guilt;
 And though that moment, when *his* dying groan
 Shall charm mine ear, be doomed to hear my own,
 I’ll strike my poniard to his heart, and cry,
 —‘Revenge is mine!’—kiss my good steel, and die!’—
 Ere yet she ceased to speak, wide yawned the ground;
 The cauldron sank, and all was dark!—the sound 310
 Of winds came rushing on the blast; and lo!
 In soft sweet tones these words were heard to flow,
 —“Where Blantyre’s sacred spires ascend (what time
 Rings through the echoing aisles the midnight chime)
 A beauteous Spaniel oft is seen to stray,

65. Aid, assistance (*OED*).

Nor quits the river's bank, till breaks the day.

Damsels, that Spaniel seized, that Spaniel slain,

Gives each her wish—I may not more explain,

Nor further aid....but morning bids me fly!

I know that footstep; Dæmogorgon's nigh! 320

Swift strides the Fiend along, and swift each fay

Flies from his brandished scourge⁶⁶—away, away!

Sisters, farewell; the Spaniel's life pursue!

Success be yours, for *mine* depends on you."⁶⁷—

Hushed is the voice, and ceased the charm—the room

Again the cauldron's lurid flames illumine:

From Margaret's hand her meed⁶⁸ the witch receives,

And now with gladsome haste each Sister leaves

That heaven-aborred abode—the sky was fair:

Bright shone the morning star; refreshing air 330

Played on their cheeks with magic vigils wan,

While through the dew-sprent paths so light they ran,

They skimmed the lawn, yet scarcely bent its flowers,

And reached, as matins⁶⁹ rung, their native towers.

66. Whip (*OED*).

67. This is the voice of the Bothwell Brownie, not of the wood-witch Maudlin. Her final words, "Success be yours, for *mine* depends on you" foreshadows later events.

68. Payment (*OED*).

69. Bells indicating the first mass of the day at Blantyre Priory.

BOOK THE SECOND.

Two nights beneath that rock, whence Blantyre sees
 Clyde's winding course, concealed by sheltering trees,
 Now vainly watched the Sisters—On the third
 (Soon as the midnight hymn to rise was heard)
 Sudden with horns and hounds the green-wood rang,
 And the rock opening, forth a Spaniel sprang.
 Large yellow spots adorned his milk-white coat;
 His long ears swept the earth; and round his throat,
 A bright cairn-goran horn was loosely tyed
 By golden chains—he sought the river's side, 10
 And oft essayed the further bank to gain,
 Where Bothwell stood, but still essayed in vain.
 At length with piteous whine, and drooping air
 He left the hopeless task; in mute despair
 Prone on the sand his wearied limbs he laid,
 And with fixt longing eyes that tower surveyed,
 Whence Lillia bade her Huntsman-love adieu,
 And as he went, still parting kisses blew.

Then high beat Margaret's heart! she thought he slept,
 Her poniard drew, and near him softly crept; 20
 Already aimed her hand the stroke of death;
 When, lo! the horn (waked by no mortal breath)

Sent forth a piercing blast, and quick as thought
 [S]urprised and scared his rock the Spaniel sought.

Black Margaret foamed with rage; while Marion strove
 To lure the trembler back.—With signs of love
 Rich cates⁷⁰ she proffered of delicious smell,
 And wooed him kindly to forsake his cell.

Nor seemed her gifts the Spaniel to despise;

Awhile he viewed the maid with doubting eyes, 30

Then ventured forth *one* paw (for still he feared);

Another soon; at last his *tail* appeared!

And now in fancy Margaret grasped once more

Her destined prey; when louder than before

Again the horn poured forth its boding sound!

Again the Spaniel fled, again had found

His safety in the rock, when—“Stay! oh! stay!”—

Fair Lillia’s silver voice was heard to say:

“Stay, Spaniel, stay! what fear’st thou, pretty thing?

Why fly thy friends? why scorn the gifts they bring? 40

No ruthless scourge,⁷¹ no hostile wolf is near;

Kind hearts and guardian hands alone are here:

And wilt thou leave thy rock, and dwell with me,

70. Delicacies (*OED*).

71. Here, a cruel tyrant.

My food thy food, my bed thy bed shall be.

Come, Spaniel, come! by day my steps attend,

And guard by night thy mistress and thy friend.

Come, Spaniel, come! I'll wash thy silky coat

With mine own hands; and still thy milk-white throat

A glittering band shall for a collar wear,

With Lillia's name embossed in Lillia's hair.

50

Alas! the summer's pleasant time is past;

Chill falls the dew; and ah! how keen the blast

Well by thy shivering limbs I see confest!

Come, Spaniel, come, and warm thee...on my breast!"—

She ceased, nor was't in vain her music flowed.

The enraptured Spaniel left his safe abode,

And where she sat, still near and nearer drew,

Though still the guardian horn so loudly blew,

That with the sound hill, dale, and water rung!

But nought the Spaniel heard, save Lillia's tongue;

60

But nought the Spaniel saw, save Lillia's charms,

Crept to her feet, and leapt into her arms.

—"The prize is ours!" cried Margaret.—Swift she drew

Once more her steel, and tow'rds him straight she flew,

Who, all forgot but lovely Lillia, still

Eyes her with looks, which spoke such right good-will,

Such tender interest, and such fond delight,
 That Lillia's soul was melted at the sight!
 —“Hold! hold!” she cried; but ah! she cried too late!
 Margaret already signed her victim's fate;
 His heart already poured its precious tide!—
 The Spaniel groaned, licked Lillia's hand, and died.

70

Sisters, ye triumph!—Why then breaks no voice
 Night's silence with the signal to rejoice?
 Why drops from Margaret's hand her poniard? Why
 (While Marion's bloodless lip and lifeless eye,
 That strange despair has chilled her heart, proclaim)
 Does frantic Lillia shriek out *Zelim's* name?
 Alas! no Spaniel now deludes their sight!
 Broke is the Elfin spell! the lunar light
 Full on the victim pours its cruel gleam,
 And shows from *Zelim's* bosom flowed the stream,
 Which purples Margaret's steel—'twas he, whene'er
 From Oberon's court he strayed, compelled to wear
 That Spaniel-form, till twice three months were o'er,
 And time to Lillia should her love restore.
 'Twas he (though viewless chains to cross the flood
 Forbade, or reach the bank where Bothwell stood)
 Who nightly sought the adjacent shore, at least

80

With that so well-known tower his sight to feast, 90
 Whence Lillia looked her last farewell! 'Twas he,
 Whom most she wished, whom now most *grieved* to see!
 'Twas he, of all who e'er love's workship knew,
 Most fair, most brave, most tender, and most true!
 'Twas he, 'twas Lillia's life, and joy, and pride!
 Whom Lillia loved past all the world beside!
 Who but for Lillia *lived*....and now through Lillia died!⁷²

As when in Bothwell's modern halls (where now
 The Chief of Douglas reigns)⁷³ with clammy brow,
 Eyes widely stretched, pale cheek, and trembling knees, 100
 At midnight, if by chance some menial⁷⁴ sees,
 In blood-stained arms, with shadowy pomp and pride,
 Earl Archibald-the-Grim's tall spectre glide;⁷⁵
 Straight leaves the guiding lamp his clay-cold hand,
 His thickening blood congeals at Fear's command,
 And fixt by horror to his station fast,
 He stands a statue, till the vision's past:—

72. This line echoes Titania's lament at the start of the poem: "How Zelim loved, and how through love he died" (I.60).

73. Lord Archibald James Eduard Douglas, and Lady Frances Douglas, friends of Lewis.

74. Servant (*OED*).

75. One of the House of Douglas, Earl Archibald-the-Grim lived in the fourteenth century.

Thus long the Sisters stood, confused, amazed,
 And on the beauteous corse⁷⁶ despairing gazed
 In speechless trance!—but now once more they feel, 110
 Once more they speak!—they execrate the steel....
 The hand....the heart....but chief their curses light
 On the witch Maudlin and her treacherous spright.
 Their shrieks alarm the echoing shores of Clyde—
 —“The Brownie! the false Brownie!” wild they cried;
 Nor cried unheard—for lo! a watery ray
 Shot from the moon, and winged to earth its way.
 Again deep silence chains the Sister-three;
 For on that moon-beam borne, a form they see
 So strangely radiant, and so lovely dread, 120
 It chills their blood, and strikes their spirits dead.
 Through her fine limbs, air-woven, pure, and bright,
 The passing moonshine gleamed with golden light.
 Her robes, which graceful flowed adown her feet,
 (In eve-drops washed and bleached by starry heat,)
 Were glittering-white as Bothwell rocks; save where
 Loose from her shoulders streamed a plaid in air

76. Corpse.

Of Bothwell tartan;⁷⁷ but no mortal dye
 E'er poured such glorious colours on the eye:—
 The hues, which decked it, once had decked the sky. 130
 Its web was spun by glow-worms: Spring was seen
 To streak it with her earliest freshest green:
 From bright July was caught the noon-tide blue:
 May's loveliest morn had lent the aurora hue;
 While to afford these tints harmonious shade,
 Clear as they burn, and beauteous as they fade,
 Autumnal sun-sets on the texture shed
 Deep-glowing blushes of purpleal⁷⁸ red.
 Yet though aetherial charms, and fairy grace,
 Breathed through her form and beamed upon her face,
 What settled woe that lovely face betrayed! 141
 Round her sweet lips no laughing pleasures played;
 The rose that once had decked her cheek was gone,
 And on her eye-lids pearls of sorrow shone.
 Her emerald wings were closed and drooping! Dead
 The water-lillies seemed that wreathed her head,

77. Tartan is the material made of different colored fabrics which cross at right angles to form a pattern. Most surnames of the Scottish Highlands had a distinctive tartan at one time, although there is now no record of the Bothwell tartan in The Scottish Register of Tartans (National Archives).

78. Purple in color; this term is most commonly found in poetry (*OED*).

Mid whose closed leaves with coruscations⁷⁹ bright
 Innocuous flashing, glowed the northern light.

Wild and dispersed her air-borne tresses streamed;

And in her pearly hand a javelin gleamed, 150

Whose blood-impurpled barb whene'er she eyed,

She gave an elritch⁸⁰ cry, and turned her head aside.

Soon as that spot, which Zelim's heart had stained

With its best drops, the beauteous Vision gained,

With haughty glance the Sisters she surveyed,

And thus in sounds angry, yet sweet, she said.

—"Why rise these frenzied clamours? Why defame

These wrathful shrieks the Bothwell-Brownie's name?

What sought ye, unobtained? or what did I,

When asked in Maudlin's hut, untrue reply? 160

Black Margaret asked *revenge*; 'tis hers, for know,

'Twas Zelim's javelin laid Earl Bothwell low.

"That he, on whom her fond soul hung, might ne'er

Prove faithless to his vows," was Lillia's prayer:

And is't not heard? she views yon bleeding youth,

And doubts no more her Huntsman-lover's truth.

79. Quivering flashes of light; according to the *OED*, early uses of this term always referred to atmospheric phenomena. Noting the line below this one, Lewis appears to be familiar with the term's early usage.

80. "Weird, ghostly, unnatural, frightful, hideous" (*OED*).

And Marion (she, who still a guilty flame
 In secret nursed “*for one...she might not name;*”
 Who, spite of marriage vows, still doating hung
 On Zelim’s angel-face, and angel tongue), 170
 Can *she* with right these imputations throw,
 Taxing my want of faith?—Ungrateful, no!
 My word is kept, and thine the wished-for prize;
 ’Twas Zelim’s heart!—lo! at they feet it lies.
 —“Ye weep?—Oh! faster gushed my tears that night,
 (Cursed be its birth, for fatal was its flight,)⁸¹
 When, by the Elf-King guided, Zelim’s dart
 Winged its sure flight, to pierce your father’s heart;
 Nor pierced his heart alone.⁸² That ruthless blow
 In fairy-land gave costlier blood to flow, 180
 And bade a mother’s soul ache with immortal woe!
 Oh! Amiel, Amiel!—name most dear, most sad!
 I had a son....oh! grief to say, I *had!*
 How fair he was....no speech can e’er reveal;
 How dear he was....no heart but mine can feel.
 Witness the joy, with which (my travail past)
 First to my swelling heart I held him fast,

81. Zelim’s spear.

82. Zelim’s spear also indirectly pierced another heart: that of the Brownie’s son, Amiel.

And wept, and smiled, and kist him o'er and o'er;
 And thought, with ever kiss I loved him more,
 And him with every kiss grown fairer than before!— 190
 Be witness too my fears (oh! fears too wise!)
 When dread reflection placed before mine eyes
 This antient fairy-law⁸³ —‘a son whene'er
 Some Brownie in that point of time shall bear,
 When first her Castle's Heir salutes the light,
We to his fate that Brownie-child's unite.
 Whate'er of ill the Castle's Heir shall know,
 Alike the Brownie child shall feel the blow:
 Whate'er of good shall bless the Castle's Heir,
 That cup of joy the Brownie child shall share. 200
 Through life, (its beams if Fortune's sun reveal,
 Or hide its orb in clouds,) in woe or weal,
 In sickness or in health, in grief or joy,⁸⁴

83. This idea was suggested by an old tradition respecting certain fantastic Beings, whom the Germans denominate the Silent People [Lewis'sn 1808 note]. The silent people were deemed such because of their ability to move around without being noticed by humans. This “antient fairy-law” appears to be a very uncommon piece of fairy-lore. Much more common is the belief that fairies would kidnap human children and leave their own progeny in their place. These fairy children were commonly referred to as “changelings” and were said to look very much like the kidnapped human child, but were pale, sickly, and much more irritable.

84. This line mimics the traditional Christian wedding vows; many Gothic ballads juxtapose Christian imagery with that of the fantastic.

One thread shall guide each sympathetic boy.
 Then when Time's hand at length shall gently close
 The mortal's lids, and give the grave's repose,
 The Brownie child, with fears no more opprest,
 With lasting youth and lasting beauty blest,
 Shall inmate live for aye of fairy bowers,
 Partake our pleasures, and possess our powers. 210
 But ere that period, should untimely Death
 Cut short with spectre-hand the mortal's breath,
 Then too the grave'—my tongue denies to say
 What forfeit claims that law; for oh! the day,
 Which first on Amiel's eyes diffused its light,
 She the first sun-beams on Earl Bothwell's sight.

"I loved...as mothers love!—then judge, how deep
 My grief to lose, how warm my wish to keep!
 Judge with what love, what fear, what zeal, what care,
 By day, by night, I watched my Castle's Heir! 220
 If in the arms of sleep the babe was locked,
 A viewless guard, his wicker couch I rocked;⁸⁵
 And closed his nodding nurse her careless eye,
 My rushing wings soon made her slumbers fly.

85. The 1808 text reads "I viewless;" however, Lewis's list of errata included in Vol. 1 of *Romantic Tales* informs the reader of this change: "for I viewless read A viewless," thus I have corrected this error in the current edition (xxiv).

Then did he start when rung the midnight chime,
 To rest I charmed him with some magic rhyme.
 Did Winter frown? unseen, I round him cast
 My plaid to shield him from the piercing blast,
 Did Summer's dazzling sun too fiercely glare?
 My fanning pinions⁸⁶ cooled the sultry air. 230
 In chance or tourney if he urged his steed,
 I cleared each stone that might his course impede.
 In battle when he braved some feudal foe,
 My diamond shield received each dangerous blow.
 Did sickness grieve his frame, or care his soul?
 With precious balsam I enriched his bowl
 From Elfin-flowers exprest; and when he slept,
 If near his couch the hag-rid Night-mare⁸⁷ crept,
 I scared the fiend abhorred, and in her stead
 Bade roseate visions flit round Bothwell's bed. 240
 Then dared no torturing dream his mind invade:
 Quenched each fierce light, and brightened every shade,
 I drew enjoyments ne'er enjoyed before,

86. Wings (*OED*).

87. Lewis's personification of nightmare alludes to the succubus, a mythical female demon who would sit on a sleeping person's chest, causing the dreamer to feel a sense of suffocation. See Henry Fuseli's *The Nightmare* for a contemporary portrayal of the "night-mare" in art.

Recalled past pleasures, promised millions more,
 New friends, high power, land stretched from East to West,
 Foes yet unvanquished, loves yet unpossessed,
 Days of victorious toil, and nights of jovial rest.

“Oh! love too ill repaid! of! fruitless care!

Lo! Zelim’s javelin cuts the midnight air!

Can man’s, can fairy’s arm its flight arrest, 250

When *Oberon* guides the barb to Bothwell’s breast?

Oh! no!—the victim falls!—and hark!—a cry....

From fairy-land it came!—I speed!—I fly

As lightning fleet!⁸⁸—I find my broken rose

Thrown on the unworthy earth! How swiftly flows

From his deep-wounded breast the living flood!

Closed are his heavenly eyes; and bathed in blood,

His own dear blood, streams loose his golden hair

Contrasting with his cheek so pale, so fair!

Frantic I sink my darling child beside; 260

Strive with my lips to staunch that gushing tide;

And from all nature with vain prayers entreat

One breath of life, one spark of vital heat,

88. Moves swiftly, flies (*OED*).

To animate that Dear-one!⁸⁹ —At my cries
 Once more (alas! but once) he raised his eyes,
 And fixed them on my face! still, still I see
 Those eyes, which never more will look on me!
 Still, still I hear that voice, whose hollow strain
 Told me, I ne'er should hear his voice again!
 I shrieked!—I caught him to my heart!—'twas done!— 270
 Cold were his lips!—I had no more a son.

“And while such thorns were rankling in my breast,
 And while remembrance still denies me rest,
 (Retracing on my heart with anguish sore
 What once was mine, but must be mine no more,)
 Ye wonder, that with hate the wretch I viewed,
 Who stabbed that heart? that hating I pursued
 My just revenge? revenge too long delayed!
 In vain each snare I placed, each art essayed
 To work his harm, by whom my darling died; 280
 For still my subtlest snares that horn defied,
 Round Zelim's neck with anxious Oberon bound,
 Of dangers near to warn with guardian sound.

89. This last idea was borrowed from Schiller [Lewis's 1808 note]. Lewis probably alludes to Schiller's *The Robbers*, wherein Count von Moor laments the loss of his son Charles and begs of Franz (his other son) to “give me back my son” (Schiller 75). Franz's response “'Tis easier to murder a man than to bring him alive” is most likely the source of this allusion (75).

Thanks, Lillia! Margaret, thanks!—alone to you
 This praise I owe, that at my feet I view
 My foe stretched lifeless—come, thou fatal dart,
 Purpled so deep in streams from Bothwell's heart,
 Come! let my wrath efface⁹⁰ those hateful stains
 In the best blood, which flowed through Zelim's veins!
 Next of that blood three drops I'll catch, and tear 290
 Thus from his brow three locks of sunny hair,
 To burn upon the tomb where Amiel's laid,
 Offering most grateful to his bleeding shade.
 Now then I'll speed....But oh! what magic flame
 Bursts from the river's bed!—my conscious frame
 What terrors seize!—oh! whither shall I fly?
 Where hide me from the lightning of his eye?
 What cave will shelter....wretched, wretched elf!
 He comes! he comes!—'Tis he! 'tis Oberon's self!"—
 —“Yes, traitress, yes!” the King exclaimed (his hand 300
 Convulsed by passion shook his lilly wand;⁹¹
 Dark frowned his beauteous brow, and still the trace

90. Wash away.

91. An allusion to Wieland's *Oberon*. See the introduction of this edition for more on Wieland's influence on this ballad.

Of tears obscured the glories of his face).⁹²
 —“Yes, traitress, yes! ’tis Oberon’s self, and just
 Those fears, which bid thy ringlets sweep the dust.
 Dead is the youth (I weep that death to tell!)
 Whom Oberon and Titania loved so well;
 Dead, and through thee!—And could thy frenzy dream,
 Rebellious elf, thy Sovereign’s⁹³ tears should stream,
 And thou the cause remain unpunished?—No!—
 By that dread forfeit, which to hell we owe!
 By the fond tears, which Kenna’s doomed to shed,
 When Spring’s first snow-drop⁹⁴ pictures Albion dead!⁹⁵

310

92. The 1808 edition of *Romantic Tales* has these final two punctuation marks reversed (i.e. “face.”); the current editor modernized the punctuation in this instance for clarification.

93. The Brownie serves under the reign of Oberon and Titania.

94. Although the 1808 text shows *snow* and *drop* as two separate words, Lewis’s list of errata included in Vol. 1 of *Romantic Tales* informs the reader that this line should be read as follows: “*for snow drop read snow-drop,*” thus I have made such an emendation (xxiv).

95. v. Tickell’s “Kensington Gardens” [Lewis’s 1808 note]. E. Cobham Brewer provides this concise synopsis of the poem: “Kenna, daughter of king Oberon, who fell in love with Albion son of the island king. Oberon drove the prince from his empire, and when Albion made war on the fairy king, he was slain. Kenna then poured the juice of mōly over him, and the dead body was converted into a snowdrop. According to this fable, ‘Kensington Gardens’ is a corruption of Kenna’s-town-garden” (508).

By the cross road, where (spite of Elfin din)
 Bold Janet watched and won her loved⁹⁶ Tam Lin!⁹⁷
 By the blest sounds in ears of Paynims⁹⁸ poured,
 Which saved young Huon from the Caliph's sword!⁹⁹
 By the green cup which changed to whinstone blue,
 Soon as St. Clair had roused our sleeping crew!¹⁰⁰
 By Edwin's joy, when from my roof he fell,
 And bade his shape's disgrace for aye farewell!¹⁰¹

320

96. The copy text here shows *famed* rather than *loved*. I have substituted loved here by Lewis's direction per his list of errata: "*for famed read loved*" (*RT*, Vol.1, xxiv). Although not a huge change, this is the most significant correction Lewis makes to "Oberon's Henchman" in the whole list of these errata, as it slightly alters the original meaning.

97. v. The old Ballad of "Tam Lin" [Lewis's 1808 note].

98. Pagans.

99. Wieland's *Oberon* [Lewis's 1808 note]. Oberon gifts an enchanted horn to Huon, the sound of which makes Huon's enemies dance in a frenzy, thus incapacitating them.

Caliph is the "title given in Muslim countries to the chief civil and religious ruler, as successor of Muhammad" (*OED*).

100. Leyden's "Tale of the Elf-King" [Lewis's note]. St. Clair's wisdom breaks the curse of a "Goblin crew," thus changing a goblet's liquid from a dangerous ale to "murky midnight dew" (Leyden 59, 214).

101. Parnel's [sic] "Fairy Tale" [Lewis's note]. In Thomas Parnell's "Fairy Tale," a young man, Edwin, has a physical deformity; "a mountain back," or hunch (221). One night, he stumbles into the presence of Oberon and his crew who ask him why he came. Edwin truthfully responds that "'Twas grief, for scorn of faithful love, / Which made my steps unweeting rove / Amid the nightly dew" (222). For his honesty, the fairies allow him to stay, and one fairy Robin hoists Edwin up on a ceiling beam, where he spends the remainder of the night. When Edwin falls to the floor the next morning, his deformity is gone.

By the lost ring, which made the marble Dame
 To Rupert's hand assert her midnight claim!¹⁰²
 By the witch-elm, where erst was sleeping seen,
 And by my spells enslaved, King Orfeo's Queen!¹⁰³
 By that strange volume, whence the goblin Page,
 On spell surprising, roused dead Michael's rage!¹⁰⁴
 By the black drops from Sorcerers' veins that flow,
 To sign their compact with the Powers below!¹⁰⁵

102. "The Ring," a Ballad, by T. Moore, published in *Little's Poems* [Lewis's 1808 note]. Rupert places a wedding ring on a statue's marble finger, then comes back to find it gone. At midnight, the statue's spirit comes in the form of "a death-cold carcass" to lie in the bed between Rupert and his wife (Moore 144).

103. Old Romance of "Orfeo" [Lewis's 1808 note]. Lewis refers to a Middle English romance *Sir Orfeo*, based on the Greek legend of Orpheus and Eurydice; however, in this poem rather than hell, the queen is trapped in a fairy kingdom. (See Joseph Ritson's *Fairy Tales, Legends, and Romances* for more on *Sir Orpheo*, as well as for a copy of the poem in Middle English.)

104. W. Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel [Lewis's 1808 note]. Michael here refers to Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie, who is long since deceased during the story told in Sir Walter Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel. Michael's book of spells, recovered from his tomb after his death, is the source of much mischief when in the hands of the goblin page of one of the characters. The awakened and angry ghost of Michael Scott comes to reclaim the goblin in Canto Six. (For more on Scott, see *The Walter Scott Digital Archive* which provides criticism, information on the poem's reception, as well as electronic texts of many of Scott's works.)

105. In the 1808 edition, lines 328-9 were set in parentheses; however, Lewis's list of errata (Vol. 1 *Romantic Tales*) informs the reader to "omit the parenthesis" of these two lines (xxiv).

By all the sprights of earth, air, fire, and sea!¹⁰⁶ 330
 And by *that* name¹⁰⁷ so awful e'en to *me*,
 I swear (and swearing, thrice I sign my breast,
 And thrice I bow me, North, South, East, and West,)
 Thou ne'er shalt join our visionary band,
 Nor taste again the bliss of fairy-land,
 'Till twice three hundred years of pain are o'er,
 When cruel kindness shall thy form restore.¹⁰⁸
 Till then, a banished wretch, from clime
 In Spaniel-shape (memorial of thy crime),
 Stray thou unceasing!—Hence! my power obey! 340
 Hence!..thus I rend thy glittering wings away!
 Thus break thy silver wand, and thus with mine

106. Lewis illustrated his fascination of the four elements by including descriptions of elemental sprites in *The Monk*. Theodore explains to the nuns at St. Clare: “Every element possesses its appropriate dæmons,” and proceeds to characterize “The Earl, or Oak-King,” “The Water-King,” “The Fire-King,” and “The Cloud-King” (252-3). The elemental kings made their appearance in Lewis’s *Tales of Wonder*. On a side note, Leyden’s “The Elfin-King,” to which Lewis alludes above (II.319), was originally composed as “The Cloud King” to meet Lewis’s request; Lewis, however, disagreed with some of the characteristics Leyden gave to the Cloud King, but was pleased enough with it to include it in *Tales of Wonder*, albeit under a different name.

107. The Dæmogorgon

108. The 1808 edition of “Oberon’s Henchman” inserted “Tiney’s Petition” here. (See Appendix A.)

In Dæmogorgon's¹⁰⁹ name, a magic sign
 Trace on thy front—'tis done! the wizard spell
 Spreads o'er her form!—False Spright, a long farewell!
 Speak not!—thy arts are known, thy crime is clear;
 Unmoved thy tears I see, thy plaints I hear;
 Vain are thy murmurs, vain thy weak defence!
 Sylphs of the South-wind, rise, and waft her hence.

“Sisters, your rash feet stay!—In vain ye fly: 350

Ere morning dawns, your forms shall meet the eye
 Hard as your hearts, which bade my Henchman die.
 Ye rocks of Bothwell, greet no more the sight
 Arrayed in Virtue's livery, spotless *white*:
 Henceforth with blushing foreheads stain the flood.
 To pilgrim-eyes recalling Zelim's blood!
 And ye, proud towers, in crumbling fragments fall!
 Reign, Silence, reign through each abandoned hall,
 Save from some room of state when shrieks the owl,
 Or claps the bat her wing; or sabbaths foul 360
 When Beldames¹¹⁰ hold; or when some ghost in pain
 Lifts the shrill wail, and clanks the infernal chain.

109. Although in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare's Oberon says he and his fairies are “spirits of another sort,” his associating himself with the Dæmogorgon in Lewis's portrayal makes Lewis's Oberon himself decidedly more sinister (*MND* III.ii.388).

110. Here, witches.

“Rise, winds and waves, and roar, till breaks the day;
 Then die at once!—’Tis Oberon calls!—Obey!”—
 He ceased; and straight an earthquake rocked the ground:¹¹¹
 Loud thunders burst, blue lightning flashed around.¹¹²
 High swelled the river; soon its mounds it broke:
 Whirlwinds sprang loose, and many a groaning oak
 Fell victim to their rage!—Yet while each rock
 Re-bellowed to the tempest’s thundering shock,¹¹³ 370
 Still could the Monks in Blantyre Priory¹¹⁴ hear
 The falling Castle’s crash.—In awe and fear
 Those Heaven-vowed Fathers past the live-long night
 With prayers, and tears, and many a ghostly rite,
 Watching the sand-glass run with wistfull eye,
 And whispering,—“Jesu! sure, thy judging-day is nigh!”—¹¹⁵

111. For a lengthy but humorous note Lewis included in his 1803 manuscript of the poem, see the introduction of this edition.

112. See Appendix B.

113. *The Tempest* is the title of another of Shakespeare’s plays which features humans interacting with mythical creatures. This may be an allusion to the character Ariel from *The Tempest*, who summons a storm with his magic.

114. For more on Blantyre Priory, as well as additional attention Lewis has given to it, see “Bothwell’s Bonny Jane” in Appendix D.

115. The monks confuse Oberon’s power for the Christian Last Judgment, a telling misunderstanding which points to both the monks’ ignorance of the fantastic and to Lewis’s emphasis on the spirit world rather than on any religious doctrine.

But soon as blew the cock his clarion¹¹⁶ shrill,
 The storm expired at once!—The air was still,
 Fled every cloud; so gently sighed the breeze,
 It mocked the ear; and motionless the trees 380
 Slept with the sleep of death: no sound was heard,
 Save the light twittering of some matin¹¹⁷ bird,
 Or where soft gurgling loved the Clyde to pass,
 While Zephyr's wing scarce curled its liquid glass.

Stuck by this sudden change, their cloistered Fane¹¹⁸
 The Friars forsake: the river's bank they gain,
 And start, surprised to see a sanguine gleam
 From Bothwell's rocks reflected on the stream.
 Meanwhile, with anxious cries and wonder loud,
 Grouped on the further shore, the vassal-crowd 390
 Mourn o'er the Castle's wreck, and oft exclaim
 Some Margaret's, Marion's some, more Lillia's name.
 And now in haste they leap the shattered walls,
 Scale the split towers, and search the roofless halls:

116. Like the sound of a trumpet. According to the *OED*, *clarion* is frequently used in poetry to describe a rooster's wakening call, citing Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" as examples.

117. Morning bird.

118. Temple. *Fane* is also sometimes used as a synonym for fairy (*OED*); perhaps Lewis is punning here to further juxtapose fantastical beings with men of the cloth.

No traces of the Sisters meet their eyes!
 No voice but Echo's to their shouts replies!
 At length convinced too well their quest is vain,
 The crowd retires, and all their homes regain;
 Though marveling much, that none should missing be
 Of all the Castle's inmates, save those Three. 400

Not so the Prior; he shook his hoary head,
 And—"Much I fear," thus to his Monks he said,
 "Scorn of our order hath at length drawn down
 On those irreverent Dames St. Bothan's¹¹⁹ frown!
 Our chapel's floor, when mass was chaunted, ne'er
 Their knees in penance bent were known to wear;
 But aye at matin-chime and vesper-hour¹²⁰
 Their beads they told, each in her secret bower!
 Confession they disdained, and still as well
 Concealed their sins....as had they none to tell! 410
 They burnt no tapers at St. Bothan's shrine;
 Nor bade with gorgeous gifts his altars shine;
 Nor joyed to waste the pale lamp's midnight oil,

119. According to a gloss by Lewis on "Bothwell's Bonny Jane," (*Wonder*) St. Bothan is the patron saint of Bothwell. Thomson adds the following brief biographical sketch: "Bothan, or more commonly, Baithin was abbot and cousin of St. Columba. He succeeded St. Columba as abbot of Iona in Scotland in 597" (49n4)

120. Morning and evening prayers, respectively.

Plying their needles with unwearied toil
 Through zeal to deck with richly-wrought attire

St. Bothan's statue, or St. Bothan's Prior.

Their errors now....alas! *too late*, they see:

But hold! such crimes deserve no sigh from me:

"Twas the Saint's will; so *benedicite!*¹²¹"—

He said; the obedient Monks applauding heard, 420

And following facts stamped judgement on the word:

For when eve's balmy breath allayed the heat,

And o'er the waves of Clyde blew fresh and sweet,

As strayed the Prior along the winding shore,

Three crags he marked, which none e'er marked before,

A strange thought crost his mind!—he nearer came,

And on each rock impressed, a well-known name

Trembling he read!—at once the truth he guessed,

A pater-noster¹²² said, and signed his breast;

The back to Blantyre sped, and bade there be 430

An annual mass said for that Sister-three

So strangely snatched from life—the Monks obeyed;

And aye those annual rites were duly paid,

121. This is a blessing. Used in this case, the friar is represented as callous. This is also the blessing the corrupt friar uses on Jane in "Bothwell's Bonny Jane" from *Tales of Wonder*. Both uses are problematic in their representations of the friars as good men of the cloth.

122. Known more commonly as "The Lord's Prayer" or "The Our Father" today.

While Scotland's hardy sons and daughters fair
 Still owned obedience to St. Peter's chair,
 Bowed with due reverence to the priestly cope,
 And dreaded much the Devil, and more the Pope.¹²³
 But when proud Heresy, on earth to dwell,
 At Luther's call forsook her native hell,
 That Harpy's breath soon poisoned Scotland's gale; 440
 And pious clouds no more had power to veil
 Rome's venerable weakness—Impious hands
 Then seized on cloistered gems and Abbey lands;
 Cancelled the bonds by dying misers given
 To buy with worldly wealth a right to Heaven;¹²⁴
 And marred the bargains (maugre monkish complaints)¹²⁵
 Of sorrowing sinners and of would-be saints.
 Robbed of support, and viewed with general hate,

123. Scotland was Catholic until the Scottish Reformation of 1560, which coincided with the larger Protestant Reformation of Europe. Lewis's lines 434 through 457 describe how the Reformation had its hand in the fall of Blantyre Priory; and with the priory's loss comes the loss of the three sisters' story. See the introduction to this edition for more commentary on Lewis's message here.

124. No silver saints, by dying misers given
 Here bribed the wrath of ill-requited Heaven.

Eloisa to Abelard [Lewis's 1808 note].

This quotation comes from Alexander Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard," an epistle-style poem from Eloisa to her lover Abelard after they have been separated.

125. "Maugre monkish complaints" could be read "in spite of the monks' lamentations."

Monastic piles¹²⁶ then found one common fate,
 Wreck and contempt; and Blantyre with the rest, 450
 Beneath the tempest bowed her spiry¹²⁷ crest.
 No more with pealing anthems rang her choir,
 No more were masses said for souls in fire:
 No more his labour's fruit the peasant bore,
 A heard-earned offering, to the chapel's door;
 And soon, her sons disperst, the crumbling Fane
 Saw in her grassy cloisters silence reign.
 Bothwell's Three Ladies shared the Priory's lot;
 Their memories, nay, their names are now forgot:
 Though still those names each Sister-Crag displays, 460
 Seldom they draw the careless Traveller's gaze;
 Or (if he reads) the work he thinks them still
 Of love-lorn striplings from the neighboring Mill.¹²⁸
 Meanwhile, Clyde Kelpies¹²⁹ in their river's bed
 Dug Zelim's grave, and wreathed his beauteous head

126. Towers, or building strongholds. According to the *OED*, this usage is now obsolete, but once was specifically applied to a fortified house or tower on the Scottish boarder.

127. Tapering, in the shape of a spire (*OED*).

128. The Cotton Mill, near Bothwell [Lewis's 1808 note]. A "stripling" is a young man; thus, Lewis narrates that most travelers will think the names etched into the rocks will have been carved there by young men who work in the mill in honor of the women they love.

129. Water-Spirits [Lewis's 1808 note]. For more information on the kelpie, see the introduction of this edition.

With flowers unfading.—As in earth they lay
 The ill-starred youth, Spright, Spunkie, Elf, and Fay,¹³⁰
 Sigh o'er the corse a long, a last farewell.
 Raise the sad dirge, and sound the passing bell.
 Slow o'er that funeral spot Clyde's waters roll, 470
 To huntsmen fatal still, and called "*The Huntsman's Hole*."¹³¹
 Since then, to Bothwell's Lord though danger's near,
 No Brownie's warning strikes his startled ear:
 No circles now, with livelier verdure crowned,
 Betray, where Fairies formed the moonlight round.
 To climes far distant, and less guilty meads¹³²
 His phantom-train indignant Oberon leads,
 And all the fairy-people shun the flood,
 Whose streams were sullied with their Favourite's blood.
 Yet once methought, as all alone I strayed, 480
 (While on the Clyde's smooth bosom trembling played
 The golden moonshine; all was calm around,

130. A list of supernatural beings. A spright is often used synonymously for fairy, but can also mean disembodied spirit or goblin. (*OED*). A spunkie, also referred to as a will o' the wisp, is a spirit which held a light or lantern to lead travelers into bogs (*OED*). Fay is another word for fairy.

131. Not long ago, in attempting to pass the River on horseback, another huntsman perished in this very spot [Lewis's 1808 note]. The current editor unfortunately has found no record of this place.

132. Meadows (*OED*).

And hushed the midnight air) I caught a sound
 So sweet...so strange...so pure from touch of earth..
 To call it *music*, were to wrong its worth.
 But whether 'twas the ghost of bonnie Jane,¹³³
 Whose shadowy lute sent forth that plaintive strain;
 Or 'twas the charmed cairn-goran horn, which played
 Self-blown a requiem to its Master's¹³⁴ shade;
 Or rather was't the Indian Huntsman's knell 490
 By mermaids rung.....in sooth I may not tell.
 My earth-born verse it more befits to show;
 From this wild tale what useful truths may flow;
 And try (while now my Muse in maniac's gown
 Binds the last straws on her fantastic crown)
 From critic-wrath my idle rhyme to save
 By moral meaning and instruction grave.
 Oh! Lovely Sex, your gracious hearing lend;
 For *you* I sing!—Oh! Lovely Sex; attend!

133. This is a direct allusion to Lewis's own composition "Bothwell's Bonny Jane," written during his first stay at Bothwell Castle and published in *Tales of Wonder* in 1801. Lewis's "Bothwell's Bonny Jane" has the Bothwell Brownie calling out a warning as well: "thrice the Brownie shriek'd, 'Beware!'" (85). In this poem the heroine fails to heed her Brownie's warning and as a result she meets her death. For more on "Bothwell's Bonny Jane" and its relationship to "Oberon's Henchman," see Appendix D.

134. Zelim.

MORAL.

—————

Let none, who read the tale of *Margaret's* ire, 500
 E'er kill a puppy to revenge a sire!
 By *Marion* warned, ye virtuous maids and wives,
 Court not your sister's spouses for your lives!
 And ye, who love as *Lillia* loved, and fain¹³⁵
 Would bind your husband's hearts with lasting chain;
 But fear, their eyes should prettier babies see
 In other eyes than yours, learn this from me:
 —“*Firm to one love man's truant thoughts to bind,*
Chain his wild will, and fix his vain loose mind,
 [From sage Confucius this receipt I quote] 510
 “*One means alone is certain—CUT HIS THROAT.*”¹³⁶

135. Happily (*OED*).

136. Evidently a joke, and not a genuine teaching of the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius.

TINEY'S PETITION¹³⁷

The above prediction has long occupied the attention and excited curiosity of the antiquarian world; but all researches were made in vain, till its solution was given (very lately) in a petition laid by the Brownie herself at the feet of the present Lady Douglas; by whose favor she has been restored to Bothwell, though she still is concealed in Spaniel-shape, and has thought it prudent to assume the name of Tiney.

It may be necessary to add, that certain mysterious circumstances had induced a Lady to accuse Tiney in verse of being the identical Daemon, who, under the name of *Biondetta*, plays so conspicuous a part in "*Le Diable Amoureux*;" and the following lines were composed to rescue her character from this ungrounded imputation¹³⁸:

137. This introductory headnote was Lewis's footnote in the 1808 publication.

138. *Le Diable Amoureux*, by Jacques Cazotte (1772) is thought to be a particularly influential early Gothic text, which features a female demon who transforms herself first into a dog, and then into a servant girl to ensnare the hero, Don Alvare. See Joseph Andriano's *Our Ladies of Darkness: Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction* for further discussion of the demon Biondetta as an archetype which later appears in Lewis's work (specifically in *The Monk*).

TINEY'S PETITION,
 ADDREST TO
 THE RIGHT HON. LADY DOUGLAS.

— “Never since the middle summer's spring
 Met we on hill, in forest, dale, or mead,
 By paved fountain, or by rushy brook.

Midsummer's Night's Dream [sic]¹³⁹

Oh! Lady, list with gracious ear!
 Your Spaniel, filled with grief and fear,
 Thus humbly greets your highness:
 She heard this morning, much surprised,
 That Beelzebub is here disguised,
 And in whose form....but Tiney's!

Dear Lady, bid suspicion fly;
 These lips of mine ne'er breathed a lye;
 This breast ne'er harboured evil;
 Let no vain fears your fancy clog; 10
 Hear but my tale, and though no dog,
 You'll find, that I'm no devil.

139. Spoken by Titania to Oberon, (II.i.82-4). She explains that they have not met in happiness—they have been fighting—since about the first day of summer, around June 21st.

There was a time, though now you view
 Four legs, that Tiney played on two
 Each frolicksome vagary;
 On emerald pinions borne, she roved
 Mid'Bothwell's towers and shades beloved,
 And was their guardian Fairy:

Till Oberon, with resentment stung,
 (His binding spells forbid my tongue
 To tell that mystic story)
 Rent my charmed wings of glittering green,
 And lo! in Tiney's place was seen
 The dog, who whines before ye.

20

At Blenheim doomed to mourn her woes,
 There many a year her hairy nose
 Salt tears poor Tiney soaks in;
 For ah! no fay is Tiney now;
 Her only spell is—"Bow-wow-wow!"—
 Her only art is coaxing.

30

And now (if such your pleasure)
 By glow-worm light I soon again
 Shall frolic in Titania's train,
 And weave the mystic measure.

For know, when last her tranquil light
 The moon renewed, once more (his flight
 With hope and terror viewing)
 I saw the offended Fairy King
 His course o'er Clyde's blue waters wing,
 And pause o'er Bothwell's ruin.

60

In humblest guise, his heart to move,
 I dropt my tail; with signs of love
 I ventured next to shake it.
 The King with pity saw my pain;
 And he, whose magic formed my chain,
 Has taught me how to break it.

Now, Lady, learn the means to show
 My story's truth, and end my woe!
White Puss you've often read of;
 Treat *me* like *her!*—my form restore,

70

And kindly deign (I ask no more)

To chop my tail and head off.¹⁴⁰

Yet should I find this boon denied,

And still to gambol by your side,

Should Tiney's fate enslave her;

Though lost for aye her fairy skill,

She'll ne'er repine, possessing still

Enough to keep your favour.

¹⁴⁰ This refers to a story by Marie Catherine Jumel de Berneville, the Countess d'Aulnoy, "The White Cat." In this fairy tale, a young prince meets a small white cat who welcomes him into her castle and assists him on three different quests assigned to the prince by his father. The prince spends three years with the cat before she helps him complete his third quest: a beautiful princess to become his bride. The cat instructs the prince to cut her head and tail off, but does not tell him why. After granting her wish, he discovers that the cat is a beautiful young princess who was punished by fairies and transformed into the form of a cat. The fairy tale shares some obvious characteristics with Lewis's poem; however, transformation of humans into animal forms was by no means limited to these two works. Transformation is a common theme in folklore, and as Lewis prides himself in contemporizing aspects of the folklore and ballad tradition, it is no wonder he chooses to include this theme. Lewis may have known the story was a favorite of Lady Douglas. It was certainly a popular tale, "naturalized in the nurseries of Europe" ever since the story's publication in the 1600's ("D'Aulnoy" 694).

WORKS CITED

- “About the Society of Antiquaries.” *Societies of Antiquaries of London*. N.p. N.d. Web. 31 Aug. 2010.
- Andriano, Joseph. *Our Ladies of Darkness: Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1995. Print.
- “Art. XII. *Romantic Tales* by M. G. Lewis, Author of *the Monk*, *Adelgitha*, 4 vols. 12 mo.” *The Annual Review, and History of Literature; For 1808*. Vol. 7. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1809. 616-8. Print.
- Beyer, Werner W. “Coleridge, Wieland’s *Oberon* and *The Ancient Mariner*.” *The Review of English Studies* 15.60 (1939): 401-11. Print.
- . “Coleridge, Wieland’s *Oberon* and *The Wanderings of Cain*.” *The Review of English Studies* 16.63 (1940): 274-89. Print.
- Brewer, E. Cobham. “Kenna.” *The Reader’s Handbook of Allusions, References, Plots, and Stories*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1880. 508. Print.
- Brooks, Harold F., ed. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. By William Shakespeare. 1600. London: Thomson Learning, 2003. Print. The Arden Shakespeare.
- Brown-Wilson, Margaret. *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis: With Many Pieces in Prose and Verse, Never Before Published*. 2 Vols. London: Henry Colburn, 1839. Print.
- Carnochan, W. B. and David W. Donaldson. “The Presentation Copy of ‘Monk’ Lewis’s ‘Oberon’s Henchman’, 1803.” *The Book Collector* 30.3 (1981): 346-59. Print.
- Colwell, William A. “The First English Translation of Wieland’s *Oberon*.” *PMLA* 57.2 (1942): 576-82. Print.
- Crabbe, George. “The Library.” *The Life and Poetical Works of George Crabbe*. Ed. By “His

- Son." London: John Murray, 1901. 101-13. Print.
- "D'Aulnoy." *Chambers's Encyclopædia: A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge*. Ed. William Chambers and Robert Chambers. Vol. 3. London, 1893. 694. Print.
- D'Aulnoy, Contesse. "The White Cat." *Blue Fairy Book*. Ed. Andrew Lang. London, 1890. 137-52. Print.
- Dryden, John. "The Flower and the Leaf." *The Poetical Works of John Dryden*. Ed. George Gilfillan. Vol. 2. Edinburgh: Printed by Ballantyne and Company for James Nichol; London: James Nisbet and Co.; Dublin: W. Robertson, 1855. Print.
- Duce, Penny. "By Leaves We Live." *Textualities. Scottish Book Collector*. 2005. Web. 1 Sep. 2010.
- Frasier, Duncan. "The Laidly Worm" *Old Ballads, Historical and Narrative....* Ed. Thomas Evans. Vol. III. The Strand, 1784. 171-8. Print.
- Fuseli, Henry. *The Nightmare*. 1781. Oil on canvas. Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit.
- Horace. "Ode IX." *The Odes and Epodes of Horace: A Metrical Translation into English*. Trans. and ed. Lord Lytton. New York: Harper, 1870. 288-91. Print.
- Jackson, Stephen. "Parallel Passages." *Notes and Queries*. Ed. 5th Series. Vol. 1. No. 13. 28 March 1874.
- "John Pinkerton." *Scottish Poetry of the Eighteenth Century*. Ed. George Eyre-Todd. Vol 2. Glasgow: William Hodge & Co, 1896. 149-50. Print. Abbotsford Series of the Scottish Poets.
- Johnson, Samuel. Preface. *The Plays of William Shakespeare*. By William Shakespeare. Ed. Johnson. Vol. 1. London, 1765. A1r-E5r. Print.
- Lewis, M[atthew] G[regory]. *Romantic Tales*. 4 vols. London: Printed for Longman, Hurst,

- Rees, and Orme by D. N. Shury, 1808. Print.
- . *Romantic Tales*. 2 vols. New York: Printed for M. & W. Ward, 1809. Print.
- . *Romantic Tales* [containing only “My Uncle’s Garret Window,” “The Anaconda,” and “Amorassan”]. London: Printed for William Smith by Bradbury and Evans, 1838. Print.
- . *Romantic Tales* [containing only “My Uncle’s Garret Window,” “The Anaconda,” and “Amorassan”]. London: Printed for Chapman and Hall by Bradbury and Evans, 1848. Print.
- . “Tam Lin.” *Tales of Wonder*. 1801. Ed. Douglass H. Thomson. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2010. 216-22. Print. Broadview Editions.
- Leyden, John. “The Elfin-King.” *Tales of Wonder*. 1801. Ed. Douglass H. Thomson. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2010. 192-9. Print. Broadview Editions.
- Macdonald, D.L. *Monk Lewis: A Critical Biography*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2000. Print.
- MacCunn, Florence. “Frances, Lady Douglas” *Sir Walter Scott’s Friends*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1909. 187-204. Print.
- Mackie, Charles. *Historical Description of the Town of Dundee*. Glasgow, 1836. Print.
- Macpherson, Angus. *Handbook of Hamilton, Bothwell, Blantyre, and Uddingston*. Hamilton, UK, 1862. Print.
- Masson, David, ed. “Notes to *Paradise Lost*.” *The Poetical Works of Milton: General Essay on Milton’s English and Versification and Notes to the Poems*. By John Milton. Vol. 3. London: Macmillan, 1890. 375-558. Print.
- Medwin, Thomas. *Conversations of Lord Byron: Noted During a Residence with his Lordship at Pisa, in the Years 1821 and 1822*. London: Henry Colburn, 1824. Print.
- Montgomery, James. *Poetical Works of James Montgomery*. Ed. Rufus W. Griswold. Vol. 1.

- Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1856. Print.
- . *The World before the Flood: A Poem in Ten Cantos....* London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1813. Print.
- Moore, Thomas, ed. "The Ring" *The Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Little, Esq.* 14th. London: James Carpenter, 1819. 139-52. Print.
- National Archives of Scotland (NAS). *The Scottish Register of Tartans*. The Scottish Government. N.d. Web. 5 Aug. 2010.
- The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. Web. 5 Aug. 2010.
- Parnell, Thomas. "A Fairy Tale: In the Ancient English Style." *Select Works of the British Poets: With Biographical and Critical Prefaces*. Ed. John Aikin. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, 1820. 221-3. Print.
- Pearsall, D[erek] A[lbert], ed. *The Floore and the Leaf and The Assembly of Ladies*. Manchester, UK: Manchester UP, 1980. Print. Old and Middle English Texts Series.
- Peck, Louis F. *A Life of Matthew Gregory Lewis*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1961. Print.
- Pope, Alexander. "Eloise to Abelard." *The Works of Alexander Pope....* Ed. William Lisle Bowles. Vol. 2. London: J. Johnson, et al., 1806. 31-57. Print.
- Rev. of *Romantic Tales*, by Matthew Gregory Lewis. *Critical Review* 3rd (Dec 1808): 355-66.
- British Fiction, 1800-1829*. Cardiff University. Web. 15 Jun. 2010.
- Ritson, Joseph. *Fairy Tales, Legends, and Romances....* London: Frank & William Kerlake, 1875. Print.
- Rubenstein, Jill. Introduction. *Memoire of Frances Lady Douglas. By Lady Louisa Stuart*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic P, 1985. 1-27. Print.
- Sanders, Lloyd. *The Holland House Circle*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons; London: Methuen

- & Co., 1908. Print.
- Schiller, Friedrich. *The Robbers: A Tragedy*. Trans. Lord Alexander Fraser Tytler Woodhouselee. London: G. G. J. & J. Robinsons, 1792. Print.
- Scott, Frances [Lady Douglas]. *Manuscript Poems of Lady Frances Scott, later Frances, Lady Douglas, "Dalkeith Notebook."* N. d. [Though written sometime before 1783]. MS. Scottish Poetry Lib., Edinburgh.
- Scott, Walter. "Bothwell's Sisters Three. The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott. Oxford Complete Edition. Ed. J. Logie Robertson. London: Oxford UP, 1909. 695-6. Print.
- . *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1702-1807*. Ed. H. J. C. Grierson et al. London: Constable, 1932.
- . *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, Addressed to J. G. Lockhart, Esq.* London: John Murray, 1830. Print.
- . *Marmion*. Ed. Mary R. Willard. Chicago: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1899. Print. The Lake English Classics. [First published in 1808.]
- Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ed. Harold F. Brooks. 1979. London: Thomson Learning, 2003. Print. The Arden Shakespeare.
- . *As You Like It. The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller. New York: Penguin, 2002. 401-37. Print.
- . *The Tempest. The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller. New York: Penguin, 2002. 730-61. Print.
- Taylor, William. *Historic Survey of German Poetry*. Vol. 2. London: Treuttel and Würtz, Treuttel Jun. and Richter, 1829. Print.
- Thomson, Douglass H., ed. *Tales of Wonder*. By Matthew Gregory Lewis. 1801. Peterborough,

Ontario: Broadview, 2010. Print. Broadview Editions.

Walsh, Marcus. "Johnson, Samuel." *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*. Ed. Michael

Dobson and Stanley W. Wells. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. 225. Print.

The Walter Scott Digital Archive. Edinburgh University Library. Paul Barnaby, n.d. Web. 14

Aug. 2010.

Watson, J. Steven. Preface. *Memoire of Frances Lady Douglas. By Lady Louisa Stuart*.

Edinburgh: Scottish Academic P, 1985. ix-xxi. Print.

Xxxrmt. *This is Bothwell Castle (at Night)*. 18 July 2010. Photo. Online Image. Flickr. 21 Feb.

2011.

APPENDIX A

“TINEY’S PETITION,” AS IT APPEARED IN *ROMANTIC TALES* (1808)

Lewis interrupts his own ballad to provide a contemporary account of the Brownie’s fate. The page setup for the 1808 edition is certainly more confusing than necessary. As Oberon slowly casts his spell which transforms the Brownie, only two lines of his curse appear on each page. These lines are followed by a bold horizontal line below which several stanzas of “Tiney’s Petition” appear. (See Figure 5 for facsimiles of the original text.) Each page including verses from “Tiney’s Petition” continues with precisely this arrangement.

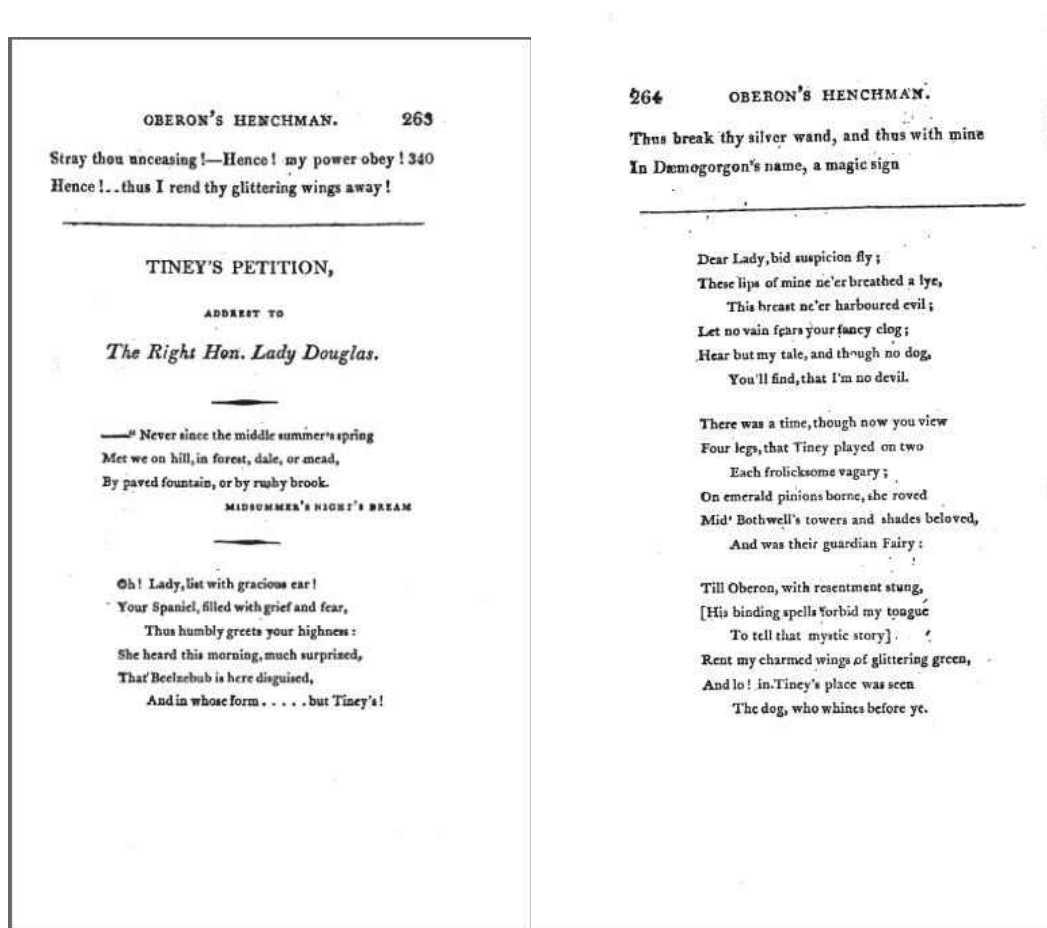


Fig. 5. The first and second pages of “Tiney’s Petition” as printed in *Romantic Tales*. First edition (1808).

Through a critical lens, the supplementary text of “Tiney’s Petition” functions to illustrate both the tumultuous nature of the spirit world and the overwhelming flexibility of Lewis’s pastiche—readers may chuckle at the absurdity of the dog’s verse address even as Oberon wickedly summons the Daemogorgon and banishes the Brownie from the fairy realm. Figure 6 below represents a chart of which lines each subsequent page of “Tiney’s Petition” includes in the first edition of *Romantic Tales*.

<p>263</p> <p>Stray thou unceasing!—Hence! my power obey 340 Hence!..thus I rend thy glittering wings away!</p> <hr/> <p>[Title page to “Tiney’s Petition” 1-6]</p>	<p>264</p> <p>Thus break thy silver wand, and thus with mine In Dæmogorgon’s name, a magic sign</p> <hr/> <p>[“Tiney’s Petition” 7-24]</p>
<p>265</p> <p>Trace on thy front—’tis done! the wizard spell Spreads o’er her form!—False Spright, a long farewell!</p> <hr/> <p>[“Tiney’s Petition” 25-42]</p>	<p>266</p> <p>Speak not!—thy arts are known, thy crime is clear; Unmoved thy tears I see, thy plaints I hear;</p> <hr/> <p>[“Tiney’s Petition” 43-60]</p>

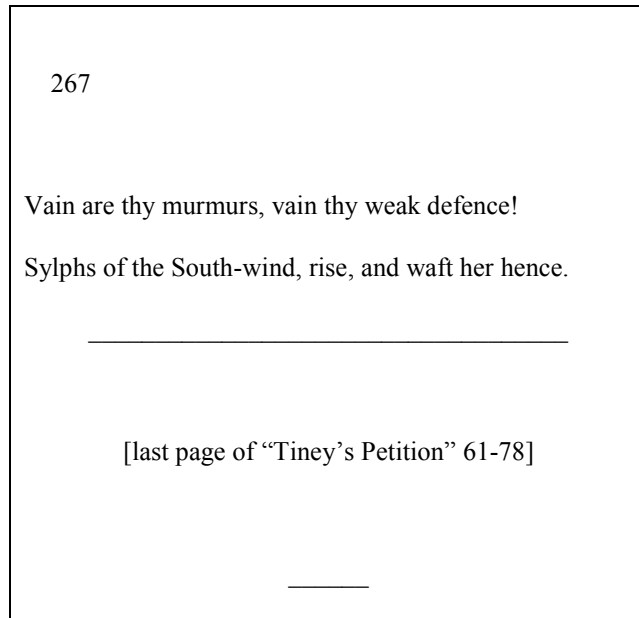


Fig. 6. Oberon's curse interrupted by "Tiney's Petition," as printed in *Romantic Tales* (1808).

APPENDIX B

A QUERY REGARDING PLAGIARISM

Nearly seventy years after the publication of Lewis's "Oberon's Henchman" in *Romantic Tales*, Stephen Jackson of *Notes and Queries* (1874) published an inquiry addressing "parallel passages" between Lewis's "Oberon's Henchman" and another work, *The World Before the Flood*, by James Montgomery. Below, Jackson discusses the potential for plagiarism:

A remarkable instance of plagiarism is found in the [sic] *World Before the Flood* of James Montgomery, or in M. G. Lewis's *Oberon's Henchman, or the Legend of the Three Sisters*. In these poems are two lines which are verbatim the same, viz: "He spake, and straight an earthquake heaved the ground; [/] The thunder roared, the lightning flashed around." I cannot say who is the plagiarist here. I have not the date of *The World Before the Flood*, nor of *Oberon's Henchman*; but I think that Montgomery's work was published before the *Romantic Tales* of Lewis, where *Oberon's Henchman* first appeared. (Jackson 246)

The editor of *Notes and Queries*, however, brackets an addendum to this article informing readers that "Lewis's *Romantic Tales* were published in 1808. Montgomery's *World before the Flood*, in 1812" (247). It would seem, therefore, that the editors intend to clear Lewis of these accusations even as they publish Jackson's article. Other proof verifies their suggestion.

As we know from the work of Carnochan and Donaldson, "Oberon's Henchman" Lewis completed his composition of "Oberon's Henchman" by the year 1803, although it had plenty of revisions before appearing in *Romantic Tales*. The earliest publication of Montgomery's *The World Before the Flood* is an 1813 publication (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown). Although a chance exists that Montgomery's work was composed before Lewis wrote

“Oberon’s Henchman,” and furthermore, a chance that Lewis happened to see Montgomery’s work in manuscript, the dates of publication appear to verify that this was not the case. These dates, although not proof, suggest Lewis that should not be found guilty of plagiarism in this instance.

Moreover, the passages are not “verbatim” as Jackson’s article asserts; in fact, the passages are more dissimilar than alike (and neither of which precisely matches Jackson’s quotation of the “plagiarized” passage”). Lewis’s passage reads: “He ceased; and straight an earthquake rocked the ground: / Loud thunders burst, blue lightning flashed around” (II.365-6). Montgomery’s line shows several differences: “Around its base, the foamy-crested streams / Flash’d through the darkness to the lightning’s gleams, / With monstrous throes an earthquake heaved the ground, / The rocks were rent, the mountains trembled round” (*Poetical* IV.48). Although both poems describe the physical manifestations of a tempest, Jackson’s use of the word plagiarism remains unfounded given the vast differences between the two texts.

APPENDIX C

CRITICAL RECEPTION

1. *Annual Review*, 7 (1808) 616-18.

‘Oberon’s Henchman, or the Legend of the Three Sisters,’ is an elegant and ingenious fiction. The advertisement states the origin of this jeu d’esprit: on opposite banks of the Clyde in Lanerkshire, North Britain, are situated the remains of Bothwell Castle, and of Blantyre Priory. There, too, are still seen three isolated stones known by the name of ‘*The three Sisters*.’ Curiosity respecting the cause of their bearing the above appellation induced a lady, we presume the right hon. Lady Douglas, to whom the poem is inscribed, to address Mr. Lewis, during his residence at Bothwell Castle, in some easy lines, enquiring the legend of these sister stones. Inspired by the flattering request, he has composed a little poem, the *scenery* of which is fanciful and picturesque. There is rather too much mechanism about the construction of the verse itself; a sort of measured, dancing-master step, which palls upon the ear. The death of Oberon’s Henchman who was slain in the shape of a spaniel, by three sisters, at the instigation of the witch Maudlin,¹⁴¹ produces that direful metamorphose of their persons which the *sister rocks* to this day indicate. (617)

2. *Critical Review*, 3rd ser. 15 (Dec 1808): 355–66.

We have said nothing hitherto about the several little poetical legends and romances which are interspersed through these volumes. But those of our readers who have seen

141. It is not the witch Maudlin but rather the Bothwell Brownie (whom Maudlin summons) who instructs the sisters to slay Zelim in his spaniel form.

Mr. Lewis's former poetical productions in 'the Monk,' the 'Tales of Wonder,' and other publications, will know exactly *what kind* of poetry they will meet with here; and we must confess that we have found nothing *so good in its kind*, as to merit our particular notice. 'Oberon's Henchman, or the legend of the three sisters,' is the most considerable of these pieces both for length and merit.—It is founded on the idea of Titania's Indian Boy, in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' a personage whom he has translated with some fancy and some pleasing description, to the banks of the Clyde, to 'Bothwell Castle, and Blantyre Priory.'—But, notwithstanding the occasional strokes of imagination and genius discoverable in the poem, we rather fear that the poor little changeling has suffered a great deal from the cold in migrating from Athens to Caledonia.

APPENDIX D

OTHER CONTEMPORARY LITERARY ATTENTION TO BOTHWELL CASTLE

1. “Bothwell’s Bonny Jane” by Matthew Gregory Lewis¹⁴²

Lewis’s poem “Bothwell’s Bonny Jane,” with which he began his collection *Tales of Wonder*, features a young woman from Bothwell Castle being tricked, kidnapped, and eventually murdered by a corrupt friar from the nearby Blantyre Priory. By the time Lewis was writing, however, the priory was already in ruins. The image of the corrupt monk frequently occurs in Lewis’s works, beginning with his infamous novel *The Monk*. This, Lewis’s first novel, features the corrupt and lascivious monk Ambrosio, and provided “Monk” Lewis his Gothic nickname. Lewis’s headnote for “Bothwell’s Bonny Jane” makes note of the Douglas family’s inhabitation of Bothwell Castle, although his relationship with Lord and Lady Douglas takes a much less prominent role in this earlier ballad than it does in “Oberon’s Henchman.”

Margaret Baron-Wilson calls “Bothwell’s Bonny Jane” a poem in the style of ancient Scottish ballad poetry: “Lewis, indeed, displays in his Scottish ballads, not only a just conception of the ancient style, but a perfect acquaintance with the national expression; attainments which, in Scott, were almost an attendant inheritance of birth and education; but, in Lewis, they were the results merely of a devoted attachment to a species of poetry possessing, in an eminent degree, the charms of the wild and marvellous [sic]” (95).

2. “Bothwell Bank” by John Pinkerton

142. For an authoritative edition of “Bothwell’s Bonny Jane” see Thomson’s recent critical edition of *Tales of Wonder*.

Perhaps the best known literary attention to Bothwell can be found in a song commonly referred to as “Bothwell Bank, Thou Bloomest Fair” or, simply, “Bothwell Bank” by noted historian and antiquary John Pinkerton (1758-1826). Pinkerton published the verses of “Bothwell Bank” as an ancient Scottish song in his *Select Scottish Ballads* in 1773. However, Pinkerton’s role as simple historian has been questioned by those who note his occasional tendency to pass his own work off as “ancient.” According to the editor of the Abbotsford Series of the Scottish Poets, George Eyer-Todd, “while extremely severe on others who ventured upon anything like literary deception, he [Pinkerton] was himself unable to resist the temptation of foisting some of his own compositions upon the public as antique” (“John Pinkerton” 149). Thus even though described by Pinkerton as an ancient ballad, some argue that he may have in fact created or perhaps modified these verses. A mention of the song “Bothwell’s Banks are Blooming Fair,” however, occurs in Richard Verstegan’s *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities*, published in 1655. This very early date clearly predates Pinkerton’s publication (and even his birth), and defends Pinkerton’s claim. The 1655 mention of the ballad, however, gives no indication of the verses at the time. Regardless of the identity the poet, however, the ballad was a relatively famous one in Scottish culture.

It is doubtful that Lewis, who showed a similar appreciation for the ancient Scottish ballad, would be unfamiliar with this particular work, especially given his familiarity with its setting. It is perhaps a stretch to suggest that this ballad served as an inspiration for Lewis’s “Oberon’s Henchman,” but the theme of love enduring after death as well as the site of the Clyde for this death, are similarities to Lewis’s story of Lillia and Zelim.

“Bothwell Bank”

John Pinkerton

On the blithe Beltane, as I went
 By mysel’ out o’er the green bent,
 Whereby the crystal waves of Clyde
 Through saughs¹⁴³ and hanging hazels glide,
 There, sadly sitting on a brae,¹⁴⁴ 5
 I heard a damsel speak her wae.

“O Bothwell bank, thou bloomest fair,
 But ah! thou mak’st my heart ful’ sair!
 For a’ beneath thy holts¹⁴⁵ saw green
 My love and I wad sit at e’en, 10
 While primroses and daisies, mixed
 Wi’ blue-bells, in my locks he fixed.

“But he left me ae dreary day,
 And haply now sleeps in the clay,
 Without ae sigh his death to rune, 15
 Without ae flower his grave to croun.

143. Willows [Eyer-Todd’s note].

144. A hillside.

145. Woods [Eyer-Todd’s note].

O Bothwell bank, thou bloomest fair,
 But ah! though mak'st my heart fu' sair."

3. "Bothwell's Sisters Three" by Sir Walter Scott

This poem is only a fragment by Sir Walter Scott, dated 1799. According to Florence MacCunn, Scott's historian, this ballad "was begun to please his kind hosts" at Bothwell Castle, Lord and Lady Douglas (201).¹⁴⁶ The title to this fragment by Scott recalls the title to Lewis's own

146. MacCunn also surmises that "[t]o this same listening party [Lord and Lady Douglas] he must have told the tale of that traveler of the fifteenth century who, in a town in the Holy Land, heard a woman singing to her babe in the Scottish tongue, "Bothwell's banks are blooming fair" (201). She refers to the story related in Richard Verstegan's *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities*, 1655. Although MacCunn's supposition seems baseless, we can find evidence of Scott's familiarity with both 15th and 16th century Scottish history and evidence of his awareness of the ballad "Bothwell's Bank" in his poem *Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field*.

Within the same stanza of *Marmion*, Scott alludes to the names "Douglas," "Archibald Bell-the-Cat," and "Bothwell"—a reference to the Douglasses of the late 15th and early 16th centuries (Mackie 150)—as well as to that ancient ballad "Bothwell's Bank":

He paused, and led where Douglas stood,
 And with stern eye the pageant viewed—
 I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,
 Who coronet of Angus bore,
 And, when his blood and heart were high,
 Did the third James in camp defy,
 And all his minions led to die
 On Lauder's dreary flat:
 Princess and favourites long grew tame,
 And trembled at the homely name
 Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat;

“Oberon’s Henchman, Or, The Legend of the Three Sisters.” Both poets being friends with each other and with the Douglasses who inhabited Bothwell Castle during these years, there is every likelihood that the “three sisters” of Scott would have in some way described the three sister stones at the bank of the Clyde beside Bothwell Castle. We know Lady Douglas was interested in hearing some story which would include a transformation of women into stones and that she appealed to Lewis to write such a ballad. That she also expressed this interest to Scott is likely given the close time period between this fragment (dated 1799) and Lewis’s first known copy of “Oberon’s Henchman,” decorated for and specifically addressed to Lady Douglas (dated 1803).

Regardless, however, of what goal Scott had in commencing work on “Bothwell’s Sisters Three,” what we have is essentially just a set up to a much longer, though obviously absent, poem. He does, however make reference to “Bothwell’s bonny Jean,” who makes the eponymous appearance as Jane rather than Jean in M. G. Lewis’s “Bothwell’s Bonny Jane,” which opened his *Tales of Wonder* in 1801, connecting the two “three sister” poems further.¹⁴⁷

The same who left the dusky vale
Of Hermitage in Liddisdale,
Its dungeons and its towers,
Where Bothwell’s turrets brave the air,
And *Bothwell bank is blooming fair*,
To fix his princely bowers. (italics mine, Canto 5. XIV)

Scott’s awareness of the house of Douglas, as well as of Bothwell Castle becomes clear through this passage. His familiarity also gives credence to the speculation that Lewis, close personal friend of Scott, was probably also quite familiar with the ballad “Bothwell’s Bank” as I argue in the previous section.

147. Angus Macpherson, who included in his *Handbook of Hamilton, Bothwell, Blantyre, and Uddingston* (1862) a few literary examples which convey the local color, including Lewis’s

Additionally, Scott's hint that "The Gothic muse the tale shall teach" of the three sisters' story has an obvious connection to the Gothic nature of Lewis's "Oberon's Henchman." These connections, although relatively small ones, are certainly enough to offer a modest speculation: Did Lady Douglas also ask Scott to explain the existence of Bothwell's sister stones? Did she request the same of Lewis only after Scott failed to complete the task? Although we may never answer these questions, Scott's fragment has earned its place in this appendix, if only to excite the reader's curiosity.

"Bothwell's Sisters Three"

Sir Walter Scott

When fruitful Clydesdale's apple-bowers

Are mellowing in the noon,

When sighs round Pembroke's ruin'd towers

The sultry breath of June,

When Clyde, despite his sheltering wood,

Must leave his channel dry,

And vainly o'er the limpid flood

The angler guides his fly,—

"Bothwell's Bonny Jane," and several excerpts from Scott, explains that the story of "bonny Jane" seems to be only "a domestic legend of the house of Douglas" (37).

If chance by Bothwell's lovely braes

A wanderer thou hast been,

10

Or hid thee from the summer's blaze

In Blantyre's bowers of green,

Full where the copeswood opens wild

Thy pilgrim step hath staid,

Where Bothwell's towers, in ruin piled

O'erlook the verdant glade,

And many a tale of love and fear

Hath mingled with the scene—

Of Bothwell's banks that bloom'd so dear,

And Bothwell's bonny Jean—

20

O, if with rugged minstrel lays

Unsated be thy ear,

And thou of deeds of other days

Another tale wilt hear,—

Then all beneath the spreading beech,

Flung careless on the lea,

The Gothic muse the tale shall teach

Of Bothwell's sisters three.

Wight Wallace stood on Deckmont head,

He blew his bugle round,

30

Till the wild bull in Cadyow wood

Has started at the sound.

Saint George's cross, o'er Bothwell hung,

Was waving far and wide,

And from the lofty turret flung

Its crimson blaze on Clyde;

And rising at the bugle blast

That marked the Scottish foe,

Old England's yeomen muster'd fast,

And bent the Norman bow.

40

Tall in the midst Sit Aylmer rose,

Proud Pembroke's Earl was he—

While—....