

**THE LAY OF THE LAST  
MINSTREL: A POEM.  
[LONDON-1805]**

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The Lay of the Last Minstrel: A Poem. [London-1805] by Walter Scott

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L A Y  
OF  
THE LAST MINSTREL  
A POEM.

BY  
WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, PATERNOSTER-  
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*By James Ballantyne, Edinburgh.*

1805.



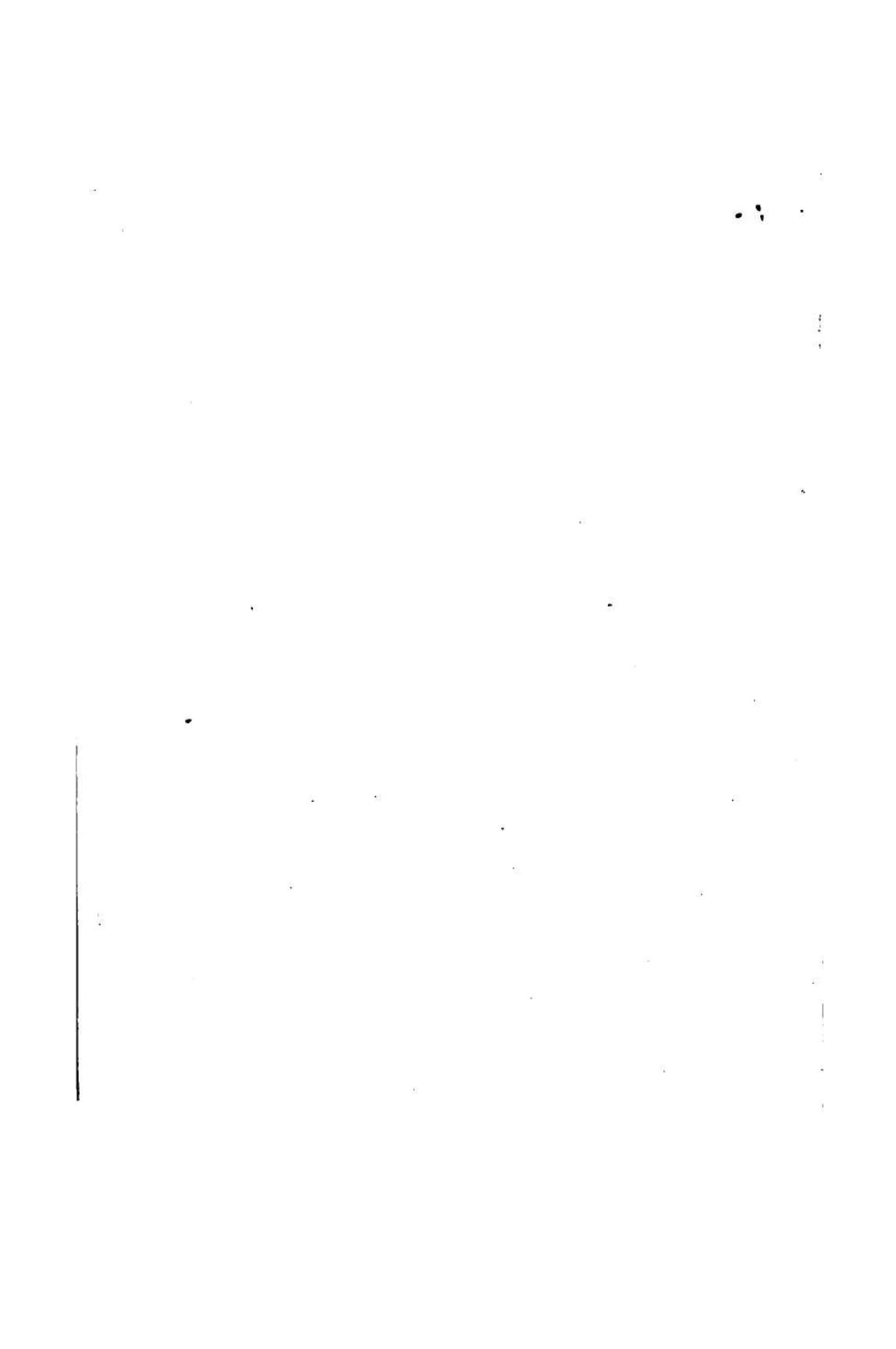
TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
CHARLES,  
EARL OF DALKEITH,  
THIS  
POEM  
IS INSCRIBED BY  
THE AUTHOR.





*THE Poem now offered to the Public is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants, living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author, than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the ancient metrical romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude in this respect than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorises the changes of rhythm in the text. The machinery also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old ballad, or metrical romance.*

*For these reasons, the poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the tale itself is about the middle of the 16th century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied by the action is three nights and three days.*



THE  
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THE LAST MINSTREL.

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CANTO FIRST.