

**SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL: A
DRAMATIC POEM, THE MERMAID
OF GALLOWAY, THE LEGEND OF
RICHARD FAULDER, AND
TWENTY SCOTTISH SONGS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649124497

Sir Marmaduke Maxwell: a dramatic poem, The mermaid of Galloway, The legend of Richard Faulder, and Twenty Scottish songs by Allan Cunningham

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Cover @ 2017

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ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

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Sir Marmaduke Maxwell
1825

SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL,

A DRAMATIC POEM;

THE MERMAID OF GALLOWAY;

THE LEGEND OF RICHARD FAULDER;

AND TWENTY SCOTTISH SONGS.

BY

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

The native legends of thy land rehearse;
To such adapt thy lyre. *Collins.*

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

TAYLOR AND HESSEY, FLEET-STREET.

1822.

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1722

P R E F A C E

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

THE scene of the following Dramatic Poem is laid in the beautiful but ruinous Castle of Caerlaverock, on the Scottish side of the sea of Solway; and the time of the story is the close of the Commonwealth under the second Cromwell. It is partly traditional and partly imaginary; and the manners, feelings, and superstitions, are those common to the Scottish peasantry.

The composition of a Drama on a classic model, and in pure and scholastic language, has not, and

1831014

could not be aspired at; but sympathy is not solicited for the circumstances under which public notice is courted. We care not to know of the impediments which are in the way of those who seek to give us delight; the vulgar wonder of a peasant writing verse has no share in the spell which is felt by the admirers of Burns.

I pretend not to have courted very assiduously the unities of time, place, and action; nor to have wholly disregarded them. The nature of a dramatic work requires some such limitation; criticism, neglecting to define it, has left it too exclusively perhaps at the will of the poet; but an ordinary fancy will not, I hope, refuse to stretch itself over three days and nights; nor let the little interest the story claims be dissolved like a witch's spell, because my native Nith sometimes interposes its waters between the persons of the Drama.

The day when dramatic literature threw a

charm over the multitude is, perhaps, gone past. Those who frequent our theatres go less to wonder and express delight, than to criticize and find fault; and the magnitude of our principal play-houses, meeting probably the popular taste for spectacle,—requires a play to the eye rather than to the heart. Knowledge has had its share in this downfall—superstitious beliefs and supernatural influences have vanished before instruction, and a limit has been assigned to the regions of invention. We do not feel like our ancestors the full force of that unearthly impulse which swayed Macbeth; the call from the other world which gave resolution to Hamlet: we believe not in the divining-rod of Prospero—nor expect to see the shadowy succession of Banquo's royal progeny arising at the call of an old woman on the heath of Fores.

Though this Dramatic Poem is not, perhaps, unfitted for representation, yet I did not write it

altogether with that view; my chief wish has been to excite interest in the reader by a natural and national presentation of action and character. That the ludicrous stands sometimes nigh the serious, and idle and capricious fancies mingle with matters of importance and gravity, is a charge which may be made, but it seems more the fault of the world than mine; such has human nature ever appeared to me.

Of the Ballads and Songs which close the volume, it is unnecessary to say much. They are taken almost at random from a mass of verse, which the leisure or idleness of many winter evenings accumulated. Several have already been printed in various lyrical publications, others appear now for the first time. If I have allowed the former to retain all the original remissness of melody and homely simplicity of manner and expression in which they found their way to the world it was not without consideration. I owe to

them some of the best friendships of my life ; and I am not certain but in their somewhat antique rudeness of manner which associates them with the elder lyrics of Scotland, lies the chief charm which they possess.

I cannot resist this opportunity of saying, that the Mermaid of Galloway has obtained some celebrity, from a painting by Mr. Hilton, R.A. in the gallery of Sir John Leicester.

London, March, 1822.

