

**THE POETICAL WORKS  
OF SIR WALTER  
SCOTT. VOL. VI**

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The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott. Vol. VI by Walter Scott

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**WALTER SCOTT**

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OF SIR WALTER  
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THE  
POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
SIR WALTER SCOTT.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

VOLUME VI.

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IMITATIONS  
OF THE  
ANCIENT BALLAD.  
FROM MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER.

VOL. VI.

1





## CHRISTIE'S WILL.

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IN the reign of Charles I., when the moss-trooping practices were not entirely discontinued, the tower of Gilnockie, in the parish of Cannoby, was occupied by William Armstrong, called, for distinction's sake, *Christie's Will*, a lineal descendant of the famous John Armstrong, of Gilnockie, executed by James V. The hereditary love of plunder had descended to this person with the family mansion; and upon some marauding party, he was seized, and imprisoned in the tolbooth of Jedburgh. The Earl of Traquair, Lord High Treasurer, happening to visit Jedburgh, and knowing Christie's Will, inquired the cause of his confinement. Will replied, he was imprisoned for stealing two *tethers* (halters); but, upon being more closely interrogated, acknowledged that there were two *delicate colts* at the end of them. The joke, such as it was, amused the Earl, who exerted his interest, and succeeded in releasing Christie's Will from bondage. Some time afterwards, a lawsuit, of importance to Lord Traquair, was to

be decided in the Court of Session ; and there was every reason to believe that the judgment would turn upon the voice of the presiding judge, who has a casting vote, in case of an equal division among his brethren. The opinion of the president was unfavourable to Lord Traquair ; and the point was, therefore, to keep him out of the way when the question should be tried. In this dilemma, the Earl had recourse to Christie's Will ; who, at once, offered his service to kidnap the president. Upon due scrutiny, he found it was the judge's practice frequently to take the air, on horseback, on the sands of Leith, without an attendant. In one of these excursions, Christie's Will, who had long watched his opportunity, ventured to accost the president, and engage him in conversation. His address and language were so amusing, that he decoyed the president into an unfrequented and furzy common, called the Frigate Whins, where, riding suddenly up to him, he pulled him from his horse, muffled him in a large cloak, which he had provided, and rode off, with the luckless judge trussed up behind him. Will crossed the country with great expedition, by paths known only to persons of his description, and deposited his weary and terrified burden in an old castle, in Annandale, called the Tower of Graham.<sup>1</sup> The judge's horse being found, it was concluded

<sup>1</sup> It stands upon the water of Dryfe, not far from Moffat.