

**THE LAY OF THE LAST
MINSTREL. A POEM, IN
SIX CANTOS. EDITED BY
MARGARET ANDREWS ALLEN**

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The Lay of the Last Minstrel. A Poem, in Six Cantos. Edited by Margaret Andrews Allen by Sir Walter Scott & Margaret Andrews Allen

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SIR WALTER SCOTT & MARGARET ANDREWS ALLEN

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A Poem, in Six Cantos.

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT.

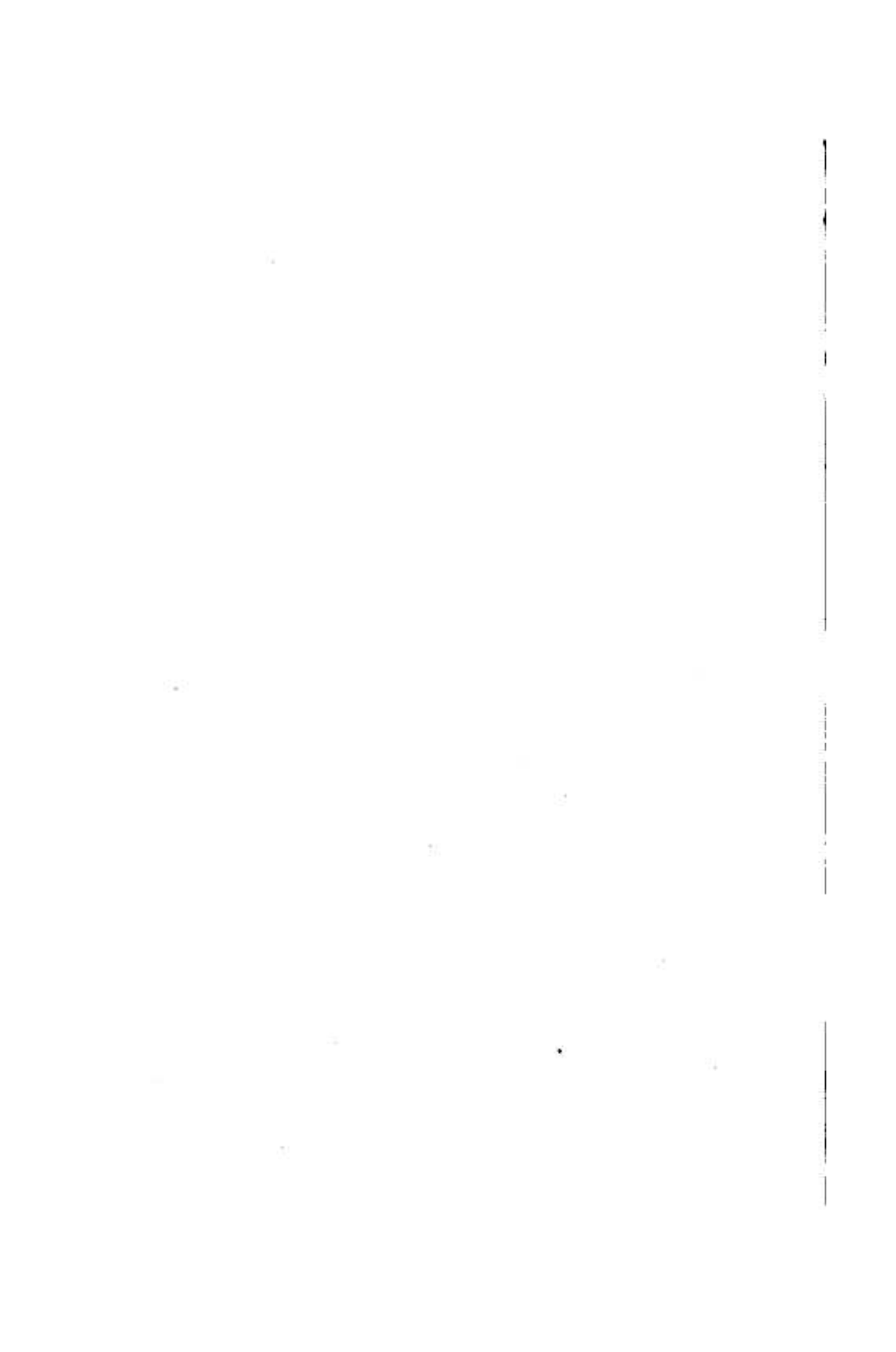
EDITED BY
MARGARET ANDREWS ALLEN.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY GINN AND COMPANY,
1888.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE text of the poem has been carefully compared with various editions of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," the earliest used being that of 1813. The notes are chiefly abridged from Scott's own, merely using such as are necessary to enable the reader to enjoy the poem understandingly, and are not intended for critical study.

The map gives the principal localities mentioned in the poem, with their relation to the more important cities, such as Edinburgh and Carlisle, and the adjacent counties of England.



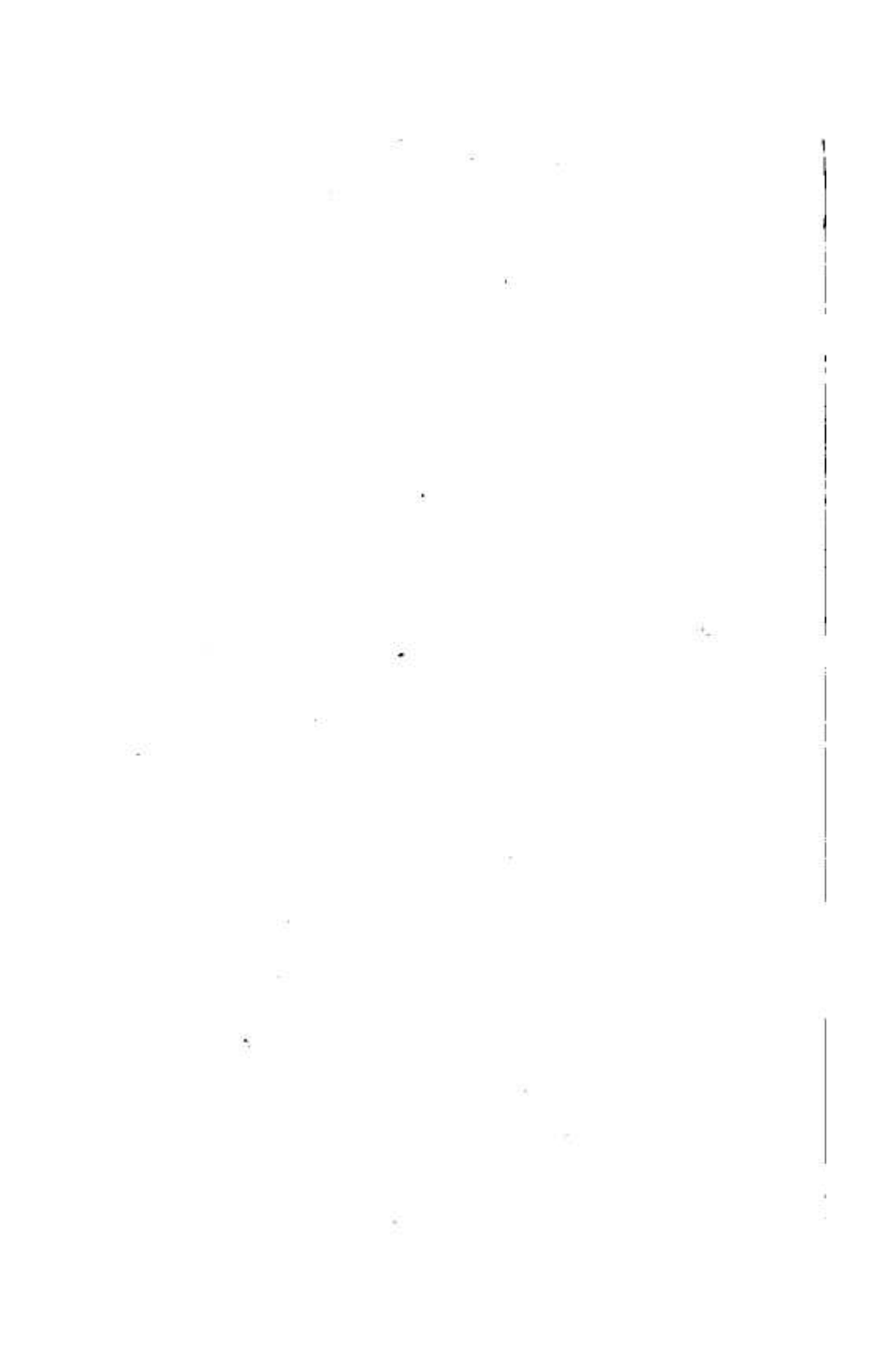
TO
THE RIGHT HONORABLE
CHARLES, EARL OF DALKEITH,

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, authorizes 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 sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied by the action is three nights and three days.



INTRODUCTION.

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old ;
His withered cheek, and tresses gray,
Seemed to have known a better day ;
The harp, his sole remaining joy, 5
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry ;
For, well-a-day ! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead ; 10
And he, neglected and oppressed,
Wished to be with them, and at rest.
No more, on prancing palfrey borne,
He carolled, light as lark at morn ;
No longer courted and caressed, 15
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He poured, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay :
Old times were changed, old manners gone,
A stranger filled the Stuart's throne ; 20
The bigots of the iron time
Had called his harmless art a crime.
A wandering harper, scorned and poor,
He begged his bread from door to door ;

And tuned, to please a peasant's ear, 25
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He passed where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower :
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye —
No humbler resting-place was nigh ; 30
With hesitating step, at last,
The embattled portal-arch he passed,
Whose ponderous grate, and massy bar,
Had oft rolled back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door 35
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well : 40
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree ;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb.

When kindness had his wants supplied, 45
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride ;
And he began to talk, anon,
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,

37. *Duchess.* Anna, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, representative of the ancient lords of Buccleuch and widow of James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685.

49. *Earl Francis.* Francis Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, father of the Duchess.