

**LAYS OF THE  
SCOTTISH CAVALIERS,  
AND OTHER POEMS**

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Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers, and Other Poems by William Edmondstoune Aytoun

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**WILLIAM EDMONDSTOUNE AYTOUN**

**LAYS OF THE  
SCOTTISH CAVALIERS,  
AND OTHER POEMS**



TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
ARCHIBALD WILLIAM MONTGOMERIE,  
Earl of Eglinton and Winton, &c.,  
THE PATRIOTIC AND NOBLE REPRESENTATIVE OF  
AN ANCIENT SCOTTISH RACE,  
THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED  
BY THE AUTHOR.

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# CONTENTS

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## LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

	PAGE
EDINBURGH AFTER FLODDEN, . . . . .	1
THE EXECUTION OF MONTROSE, . . . . .	25
THE HEART OF THE BRUCE, . . . . .	47
THE BURIAL-MARCH OF DUNDEE, . . . . .	65
THE WIDOW OF GLENCOR, . . . . .	93
THE ISLAND OF THE SCOTS, . . . . .	113
CHARLES EDWARD AT VERSAILLES, . . . . .	137
THE OLD SCOTTISH CAVALIER, . . . . .	185

## MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

BLIND OLD MILTON, . . . . .	203
HERMOTIMUS, . . . . .	210
GENONE, . . . . .	209
THE BURIED FLOWER, . . . . .	226
THE OLD CAMP, . . . . .	237
DANUBE AND THE EUXINE, . . . . .	240

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS—(*Continued*)

THE SCHEIK OF SINAI, . . . . .	243
EPITAPH OF CONSTANTINE KANARIS, . . . . .	248
THE REFUSAL OF CLARON, . . . . .	249

## APPENDIX

EXAMINATION OF THE STATEMENTS IN MR MACAULAY'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND, REGARDING JOHN GRAHAME OF CLAVERHOUSE, VISCOUNT OF DUNDEE, . . . . .	251
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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

# EDINBURGH

AFTER

## FLODDEN

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THE great battle of Flodden was fought upon the 9th of September 1513. The defeat of the Scottish army, resulting mainly from the fantastic ideas of chivalry entertained by James IV., and his refusal to avail himself of the natural advantages of his position, was by far the most disastrous of any recounted in the history of the northern wars. The whole strength of the kingdom, both Lowland and Highland, was assembled, and the contest was one of the sternest and most desperate upon record.

For several hours the issue seemed doubtful. On the left the Scots obtained a decided advantage; on the right wing they were broken and overthrown; and at last the whole weight of the



battle was brought into the centre, where King James and the Earl of Surrey commanded in person. The determined valour of James, imprudent as it was, had the effect of rousing to a pitch of desperation the courage of the meanest soldiers; and the ground becoming soft and slippery from blood, they pulled off their boots and shoes, and secured a firmer footing by fighting in their hose.

"It is owned," says Abercromby, "that both parties did wonders, but none on either side performed more than the King himself. He was again told that, by coming to handy blows, he could do no more than another man, whereas, by keeping the post due to his station, he might be worth many thousands. Yet he would not only fight in person, but also on foot; for he no sooner saw that body of the English give way which was defeated by the Earl of Huntly, but he alighted from his horse, and commanded his guard of noblemen and gentlemen to do the like and follow him. He had at first abundance of success; but at length the Lord Thomas Howard and Sir Edward Stanley, who had defeated their opposites, coming in with the Lord Dacre's horse, and surrounding the King's battalion on all sides, the Scots were so distressed that, for their last defence, they cast themselves into a ring; and, being resolved to die nobly with their sovereign, who scorned to ask quarter, were altogether cut off. So say the English

writers, and I am apt to believe that they are in the right."

The combat was maintained with desperate fury until nightfall. At the close, according to Mr Tytler, "Surrey was uncertain of the result of the battle: the remains of the enemy's centre still held the field; Home, with his Borderers, still hovered on the left; and the commander wisely allowed neither pursuit nor plunder, but drew off his men, and kept a strict watch during the night. When the morning broke, the Scottish artillery were seen standing deserted on the side of the hill: their defenders had disappeared; and the Earl ordered thanks to be given for a victory which was no longer doubtful. Yet, even after all this, a body of the Scots appeared unbroken upon a hill, and were about to charge the Lord Admiral, when they were compelled to leave their position by a discharge of the English ordnance.

"The loss of the Scots in this fatal battle amounted to about ten thousand men. Of these a great proportion were of high rank; the remainder being composed of the gentry, the farmers, and landed yeomanry, who disdained to fly when their sovereign and his nobles lay stretched in heaps around them." Besides King James, there fell at Flodden the Archbishop of St Andrews, thirteen earls, two bishops, two abbots, fifteen lords and

chiefs of clans, and five peers' eldest sons, besides La Motte the French ambassador, and the secretary of the King. The same historian adds—"The names of the gentry who fell are too numerous for recapitulation, since there were few families of note in Scotland which did not lose one relative or another, whilst some houses had to weep the death of all. It is from this cause that the sensations of sorrow and national lamentation occasioned by the defeat were peculiarly poignant and lasting—so that to this day few Scotsmen can hear the name of Flodden without a shudder of gloomy regret."

The loss to Edinburgh on this occasion was peculiarly great. All the magistrates and able-bodied citizens had followed their King to Flodden, whence very few of them returned. The office of Provost or chief magistrate of the capital was at that time an object of ambition, and was conferred only upon persons of high rank and station. There seems to be some uncertainty whether the holder of this dignity at the time of the battle of Flodden was Sir Alexander Lauder, ancestor of the Fountainhall family, who was elected in 1511, or that great historical personage, Archibald Earl of Angus, better known as Archibald Bell-the-Cat, who was chosen in 1513, the year of the battle. Both of them were at Flodden. The name of Sir Alexander Lauder appears