

**ANNOTATED POEMS OF
ENGLISH
AUTHORS. THE LADY OF
THE LAKE. FIRST CANTO**

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Annotated poems of English authors. The lady of the lake. First canto by Sir. Walter Scott

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SIR. WALTER SCOTT

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THE

LADY OF THE LAKE

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ANNOTATED POEMS
OF
ENGLISH AUTHORS

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THE LADY OF THE LAKE
FIRST CANTO
BY SIR WALTER SCOTT



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Figure 1. The relationship between the number of species (S) and the number of individuals (N) for different species richness metrics. The top row shows S vs. N for species richness (S), species evenness (E), and species diversity (D). The middle row shows S vs. N for species richness (S), species evenness (E), and species diversity (D). The bottom row shows S vs. N for species richness (S), species evenness (E), and species diversity (D).

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

WALTER SCOTT (1771—1832) was the son of a Scotch barrister, or, as it is called in Scotland, a Writer to the Signet. The poet was born in Edinburgh, but his earlier years were passed in the neighbourhood of the Valley of the Tweed, and in sight of the English Border; and there, in the home of his grandfather, he became acquainted with many Border tales and ballads, and acquired a taste for antiquarian lore. He was educated at the Edinburgh High School, and afterwards at the University of the same city; but, like many other famous men, his place in class was somewhat low. He adopted his father's profession, and eventually received a legal appointment under the crown. In 1802 he published his first important work, called the 'Minstrelsy of the Border.' This was followed in 1804 by his edition of the ancient poem 'Sir Tristrem,' 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel,' published in 1805, and 'Marmion,' in 1808, established Scott's fame as a poet. 'The Lady of the Lake' appeared in 1810, and received on all sides the highest praise and popularity. His later poems, 'Don Roderick,' 'Rokeby,' 'The Lord of the Isles,' &c., showed a falling off in poetical power, and the author's fame as a poet began to wane. He then devoted his genius to prose composition, and the immortal 'Waverley Novels' were the result.

Scott was made a baronet in 1820. His later life was spent at Abbotsford—a beautiful seat in Roxburghshire—which the proceeds of his genius had enabled him to buy.

Here he died, in 1832, and was buried among the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey.

In the 'Lady of the Lake' the poet describes Highland character and life as they existed towards the close of the middle ages, by means of a narrative of one of James V.'s adventures. In the first canto, which is entitled 'the Chase,' he begins with a long account of a stag hunt in the Highlands of Perthshire. As the chase lengthens, the sportsmen one by one drop off, till at last, the king, who is the foremost horseman, is found alone, and his horse, worn out with fatigue, stumbles and falls dead. The lone huntsman pursues his way through a rocky ravine, till, ascending a craggy height, he sees, by the light of the setting sun, Loch Katrine stretched beneath him in all its beauty. After gazing in admiration upon the beautiful scene, he winds his horn in the hope of being heard by some of his companions, and to his surprise a little skiff guided by a young lady shoots out from the shadow of a tree, and approaches the shore. The lady, thinking it was her father's horn she heard, draws back in fear at the sight of a stranger, but, after receiving his explanation, rows him across the lake to her island home. There, her father being absent, young Ellen, as the lady is named, and the mistress of the mansion entertain the huntsman with true highland hospitality. He discloses his name and rank as 'The Knight of Snowdon, James Fitz-James,' and tries in every way, but in vain, to learn the names of his hosts. At length he retires to rest; but his sleep is disturbed by dreams so strange and fearful that he rises from his couch, and walks out into the moonlight to shake off the dread visions of the night. After quieting his disturbed mind, he returns to his bed, says a prayer, and sleeps till awakened in the morning by the crowing of the heath-cock.

With this the first canto ends.



'Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That cost thy life, my gallant gray!'

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO FIRST.

HARP of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-clim that shades Saint Fillan's spring,

1 Harp of the North. This is an invocation to ancient Scottish minstrelsy. The Highlanders of Scotland were from early times famous for their harp music, and many of their ballads, it is said, date from the third century, and were handed down orally from bard to bard. The 'Poems of Ossian,' published by James Macpherson in 1762-3, were said to be a collection of these. The Celtic race, to which the Highlanders belong, seem to have adopted the harp as their national instrument of music. In the Western Isles it was in common use up to the end of the sixteenth century, and to this day is the favourite instrument of the Welsh and Irish.

2 Witch elm; also spelt wych elm. This is the mountain