

Sheale was a Minstrel in the service of Edward, Earl of Derby, who died in 1574, celebrated for his bounty and hospitality, of whom Sheale speaks most gratefully, as well as of his eldest son, Lord Strange. The same MS. contains an "Epilogue" on the Countess of Derby, who died in January, 1558, and his version of Chevy Chase must have been written at *least* ten years before the latter date, if it be the one mentioned in the Complaynte of Scotland, which was written in 1548.

In the thirty-ninth year of Elizabeth, an act was passed by which "Minstrels, wandering abroad" were held to be "rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars," and were to be punished as such. This act seems to have extinguished the profession of the Minstrels, who so long had basked in the sunshine of prosperity. The name, however, remained, and was applied to itinerant harpers, fiddlers, and other strolling musicians, who are thus described by Puttenham, in his *Arte of English Poesie*, printed in 1589. Speaking of ballad music, he says, "The over busy and too speedy return of one manner of tune, doth too much annoy, and, as it were, glut the ear, unless it be in small and popular musicks sung by these *Cantabanqui* upon benches and barrels' heads, where they have none other audience than boys or country fellows that pass by them in the street; or else by blind harpers, or such like tavern minstrels, that give a fit of mirth for a groat; and their matter being for the most part stories of old time, as the Tale of Sir Topas, Bevis of Southampton, Guy of Warwick, Adam Bell and Clym of the Clough, and such other old romances or historical rhimes, *made purposely* for the recreation of the common people at Christmas dinners and bride-ales, and in taverns and alehouses, and such other places of base resort. Also they" [these short times] "be used in Carols and Rounds, and such like light and lascivious poems, which are commonly more commodiously uttered by these buffons, or vices in plays than by another person."

Ritson, whose animosity to Percy and Warton seems to have extended itself to the whole minstrel race, quotes, with great glee, the following lines on their downfall, which were written by Dr. Bull, a rival musician:—

"When Jesus went to Jairus' house,
(Whose daughter was about to die)
He turned the Minstrels out of doors,
Among the rascal company:
Beggars they are with one consent,—
And rogues, *by act of Parliament.*"