

# St. Swithin's Chair

By Sir Walter Scott

On Hallow-Mass Efe, ere you boune ye to rest,  
Ever beware that your couch be bless'd;  
Sign it with cross, and sain<sup>1</sup> it with bead,  
Sing the Aye, and say the Creed.

For on Hallow-Mass Eve the Night-Hag will ride,  
And all her nine-fold sweeping on by her side,  
Whether the wind sing lowly or loud,  
Sailing through moonshine or swathed in the cloud.

The Lady she sat in St. Swithin's Chair,  
The dew of the night has damp'd her hair:  
Her check was pale—but resolved and high  
Was the word of her lip and the glance of her eye.

She mutter'd the spell of Swithin bold,  
When his naked foot traced the midnight wold,  
When he stopp'd the Hag as she rode the night,  
And bade her descend, and her promise plight.

He that dare sit on St. Swithin's Chair,  
When the Night-Hag wings the troubled air,  
Questions three, when he speaks the spell,  
He may ask, and she must tell.

The Baron has been with King Robert his liege  
These three long years in battle and siege;  
News are there none of his weal or his woe,  
And fain the Lady his fate would know.

She shudders and stops as the charm she speaks:—  
Is it the moody owl that shrieks?  
Or is that sound, betwixt laughter and scream,  
The voice of the Demon who haunts the stream?

The moan of the wind sunk silent and low,  
And the roaring torrent had ceased to flow;  
The calm was more dreadful than raging storm,  
When the cold gray mist brought the ghastly form!

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<sup>1</sup> To make the sign of the cross for purpose of warding off evil influences.