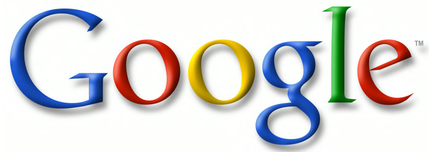

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NARRATIVE

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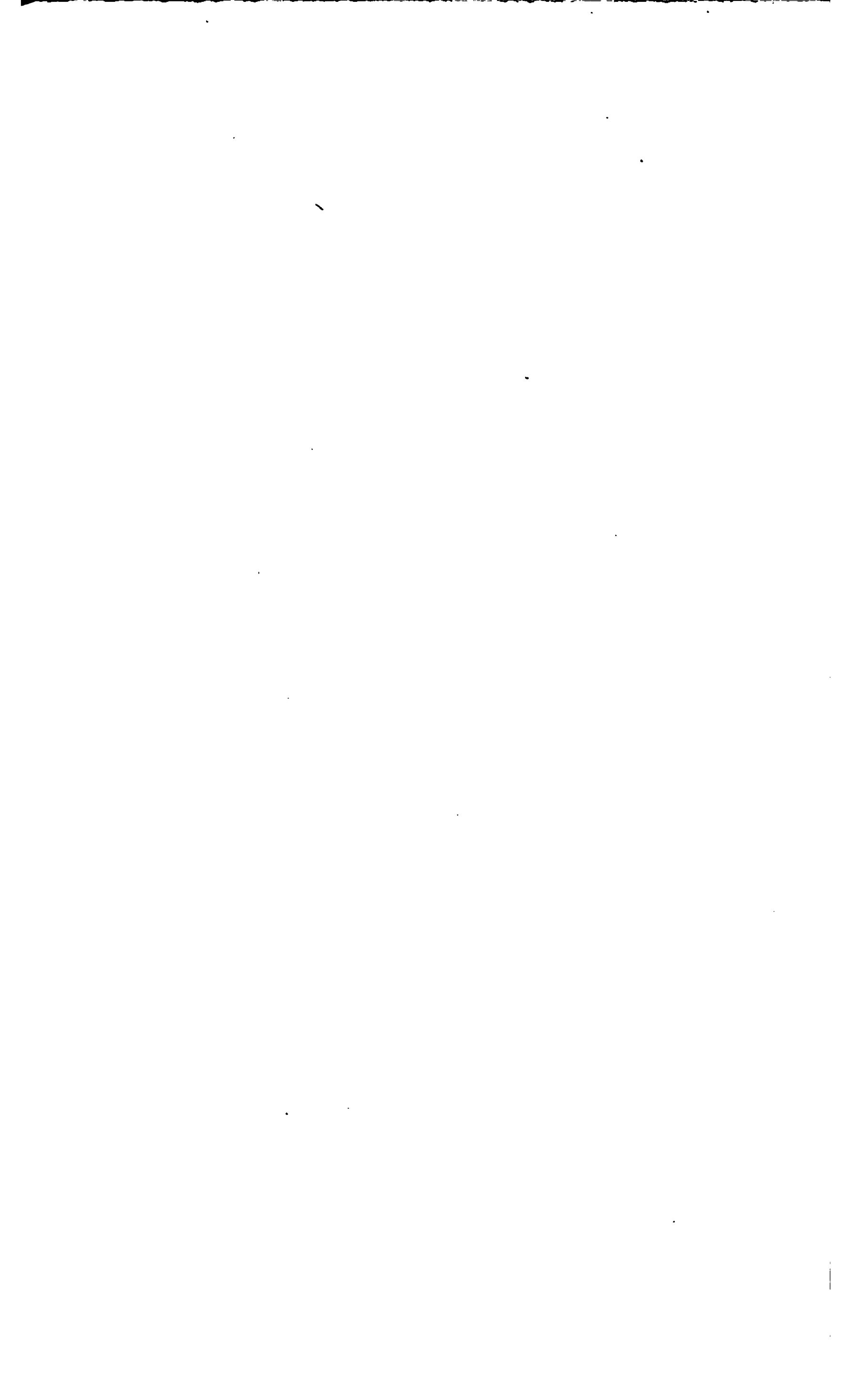

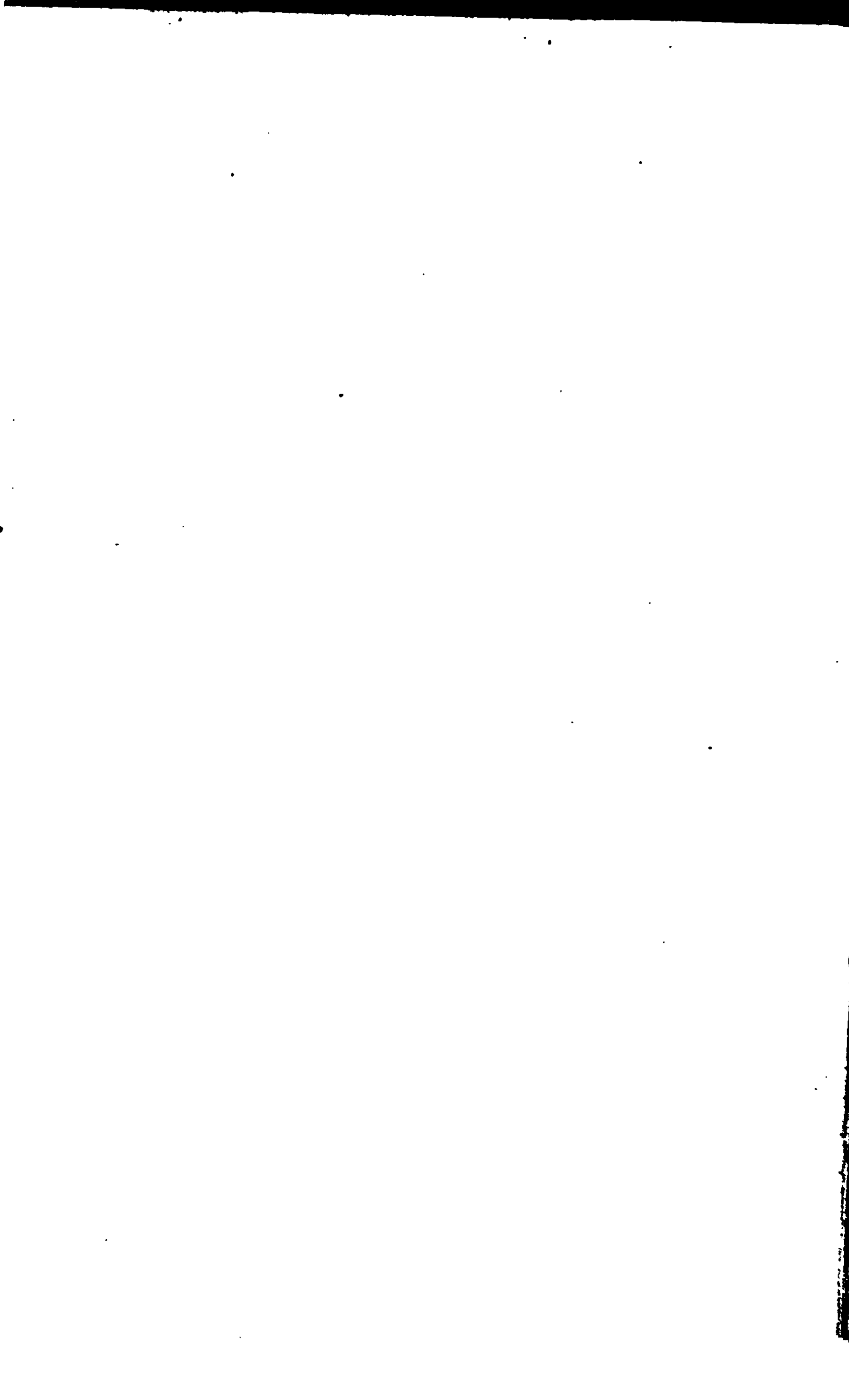

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SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART

VOL. II.

Chiefswood Cottage near Abbotsford.

For some years the Summer retreat of J. G. Lockhart Esq.re

EDINBURGH. PUBLISHED BY ROBERT CADELL

1848.

NARRATIVE

OF THE LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

BEGUN BY HIMSELF AND CONTINUED BY

J. G. LOCKHART, ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

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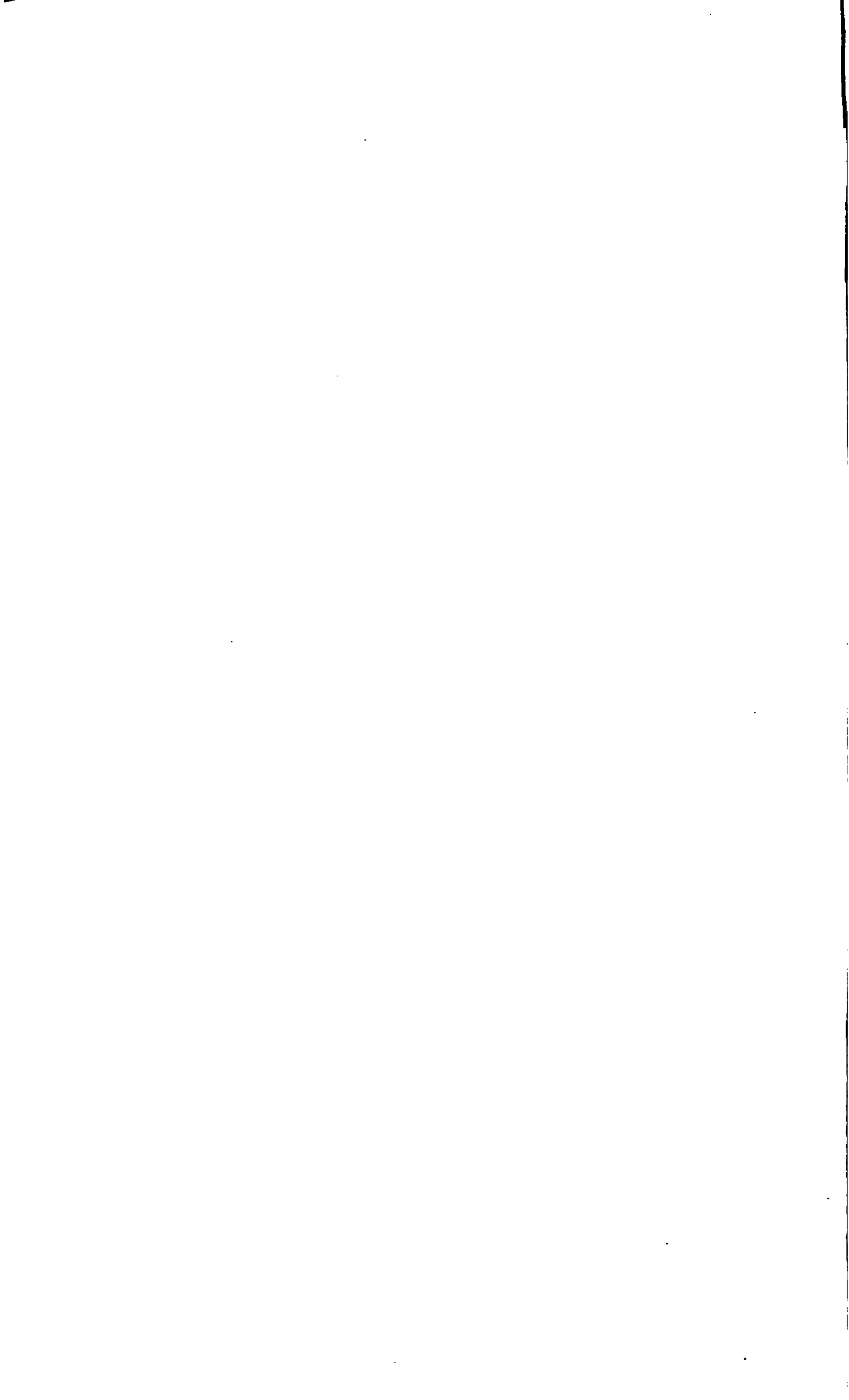


LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

CHAPTER I.

Sketches of Abbotsford—Illness and Domestic Afflictions—The Bride of Lammermoor—The Legend of Montrose—Ivanhoe.—1818–1819.

THE 12th of July [1818] restored Scott as usual to the supervision of his trees and carpenters; but he had already told the Ballantynes, that the story which he had found it impossible to include in the recent series should be forthwith taken up as the opening one of a third; and instructed John to embrace the first favourable opportunity of offering Constable the publication of this, on the footing of 10,000 copies again forming the first edition; but now at length without any more stipulations connected with the "old stock."

One of his visiters of September was Mr R. Cadell, who was now in all the secrets of his father-in-law and partner Constable; and observing how his host was harassed with lion-hunters, and what a number of hours he spent daily in the company of his work-people, he expressed, during one of their walks, his wonder that Scott should ever be able to write books at all while in the country. "I know," he said, "that you contrive to get a few hours in your own room, and that may do for the mere pen-work; but when is it that you think?"—"O," said Scott,

"I lie *simmering* over things for an hour or so before I get up—and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping, half-waking *projet de chapitre*—and when I get the paper before me, it commonly runs off pretty easily. Besides, I often take a dose in the plantations, and while Tom marks out a dyke or a drain as I have directed, one's fancy may be running its ain riggs in some other world."

It was in the month following that I first saw Abbotsford. He invited my friend John Wilson (now Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh) and myself to visit him for a day or two on our return from an excursion to Mr Wilson's beautiful villa on Windermere, but named the particular day (October 8th) on which it would be most convenient for him to receive us; and we discovered on our arrival, that he had fixed it from a good-natured motive. We found him walking at no great distance from the house, with five or six young people, and his friends Lord Melville and Adam Fergusson. Having presented us to the first Lord of the Admiralty, he fell back a little and said, "I am glad you came to-day, for I thought it might be of use to you both, some time or other, to be known to my old school-fellow here, who is, and I hope will long continue to be, the great giver of good things in the Parliament House. I trust you have had enough of certain pranks with your friend Ebony, and if so, Lord Melville will have too much sense to remember them."[1] We then walked round a plantation called *the Thicket*, and came back to the house by a formidable work which he was constructing for the defence of his *haugh* against the wintry violences of the Tweed; and he discoursed for some time with keen interest upon the comparative merits of different

[1] *Ebony* was Mr Blackwood's own usual designation in the *jeux d'esprit* of his young Magazine, in many of which the persons thus addressed by Scott were conjoint culprits. They both were then, as may be inferred, sweeping the boards of the Parliament House as "briefless barristers."

methods of embankment, but stopped now and then to give us the advantage of any point of view in which his new building on the eminence above pleased his eye. It had a fantastic appearance—being but a fragment of the existing edifice—and not at all harmonizing in its outline with the original tenement to the eastward. Scott, however, expatiated *con amore* on the rapidity with which, being chiefly of darkish granite, it was assuming a "time-honoured" aspect. Fergusson, with a grave and respectful look observed, "Yes, it really has much the air of some old fastness hard by the river Jordan." This allusion to a so-called *Chaldee MS.*, in the manufacture of which Fergusson fancied Wilson and myself to have had a share, gave rise to a burst of laughter among Scott's merry young folks, while he himself drew in his nether lip and rebuked the Captain with "Toots, Adam! Toots, Adam!" He then returned to his embankment, and described how a former one had been entirely swept away in one night's flood. But the Captain was ready with another verse of the *Oriental MS.*, and groaned out by way of echo—"Verily my fine gold hath perished!"[1] Whereupon the "Great Magician" elevated his huge oaken staff as if to lay it on the waggish soldier's back—but flourished it gaily over his own head, and laughed louder than the youngest of the company. As we walked and talked, the Pepper and Mustard terriers kept snuffing about among the bushes and heather near us, and started every five minutes a hare, which scudded away before them and the ponderous stag-hound Maida—the Sheriff and all his tail hollowing and cheering in perfect confidence that the dogs could do no more harm to poor puss than the venerable tom-cat, Hinse of Hinsfeldt, who pursued the vain chase with the rest.

At length we drew near *Peterhouse*, and found sober Peter himself, and his brother-in-law the facetious factotum

[1] See Blackwood for October 1817.

Tom Purdie, superintending, pipe in mouth, three or four sturdy labourers busy in laying down the turf for a bowling-green. "I have planted hollies all round it, you see," said Scott, "and laid out an arbour on the right-hand side for the laird; and here I mean to have a game at bowls after dinner every day in fine weather—for I take that to have been among the indispensables of our old *vie de chateau.*" But I must not forget the reason he gave me some time afterwards for having fixed on that spot for his bowling-green. "In truth," he then said, "I wished to have a smooth walk and a canny seat for myself within ear-shot of Peter's evening psalm." The coachman was a devout Presbyterian, and many a time have I in after years accompanied Scott on his evening stroll, when the principal object was to enjoy, from the bowling-green, the unfailing melody of this good man's family-worship—and heard him repeat, as Peter's manly voice led the humble choir within, that beautiful stanza of Burns's Saturday Night:—

> "They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
> They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim," &c.

It was near the dinner-hour before we reached the house, and presently I saw assembled a larger company than I should have fancied to be at all compatible with the existing accommodations of the place; but it turned out that Adam Fergusson, and the friends whom I have not as yet mentioned, were to find quarters elsewhere for the night. His younger brother, Captain John Fergusson of the Royal Navy (a favourite lieutenant of Lord Nelson's), had come over from Huntly Burn; there were present also, Mr Scott of Gala, whose residence is within an easy distance; Sir Henry Hay Macdougal of Mackerston, an old baronet, with gay, lively, and highly polished manners, related in the same degree to both Gala and the Sheriff; Sir Alexander Don, the member for Roxburghshire, whose elegant social qualities had been alluded to in a preceding chapter; and Dr Scott of Darnlee, a modest and intelligent gentleman,

who, having realized a fortune in the East India Company's medical service, had settled within two or three miles of Abbotsford, and, though no longer practising his profession, had kindly employed all the resources of his skill in the endeavour to counteract his neighbour's recent liability to attacks of cramp. Our host and one or two others appeared, as was in those days a common fashion with country gentlemen, in the lieutenancy uniform of their county. How fourteen or fifteen people contrived to be seated in the then dining-room of Abbotsford I know not—for it seemed quite full enough when it contained only eight or ten; but so it was—nor, as Sir Harry Macdougal's fat valet, warned by former experience, did not join the train of attendants, was there any perceptible difficulty in the detail of the arrangements. Everything about the dinner was, as the phrase runs, in excellent style; and in particular the *potage à la Meg Merrilees*, announced as an attempt to imitate a device of the Duke of Buccleuch's celebrated cook—by name Monsieur Florence—seemed, to those at least who were better acquainted with the Kaim of Derncleugh than with the *cuisine* of Bowhill,[1] a very laudable specimen of the art. The champaign circulated nimbly—and I never was present at a gayer dinner. It had advanced a little beyond the soup when it received an accompaniment which would not, perhaps, have improved the satisfaction of southern guests, had any such been present. A tall and stalwart bagpiper, in complete Highland costume, appeared pacing to and fro on the green before the house, and the window being open, it seemed as if he might as well have been straining his lungs within the parlour. At a pause of his strenuous performance, Scott took occasion to explain, that *John of Skye* was a recent acquisition to the rising hamlet of Abbotstown; that the man was a capital hedger and

[1] I understand that this now celebrated soup was *extemporized* by M. Florence on Scott's first visit to Bowhill after the publication of *Guy Mannering*.

ditcher, and only figured with the pipe and philabeg on high occasions in the after part of the day; "but indeed," he added, laughing, "I fear John will soon be discovering that the hook and mattock are unfavourable to his chanter hand." When the cloth was drawn, and the never-failing salver of *quaighs* introduced, John Bruce, upon some well-known signal, entered the room, but *en militaire*, without removing his bonnet, and taking his station behind the landlord, received from his hand the largest of the Celtic bickers brimful of Glenlivet. The man saluted the company in his own dialect, tipped off the contents (probably a quarter of an English pint of raw aquavitæ) at a gulp, wheeled about as solemnly as if the whole ceremony had been a movement on parade, and forthwith recommenced his pibrochs and gatherings, which continued until long after the ladies had left the table, and the autumnal moon was streaming in upon us so brightly as to dim the candles.

I had never before seen Scott in such buoyant spirits as he shewed this evening—and I never saw him in higher afterwards; and no wonder, for this was the first time that he, Lord Melville, and Adam Fergusson, daily companions at the High School of Edinburgh, and partners in many joyous scenes of the early volunteer period, had met since the commencement of what I may call the serious part of any of their lives. The great poet and novelist was receiving them under his own roof, when his fame was at its *acmé*, and his fortune seemed culminating to about a corresponding height—and the generous exuberance of his hilarity might have overflowed without moving the spleen of a Cynic. Old stories of *the Yards* and *the Crosscauseway* were relieved by sketches of real warfare, such as none but Fergusson (or Charles Mathews, had he been a soldier), could ever have given; and they toasted the memory of *Greenbreeks* and the health of *the Beau* with equal devotion.

When we rose from table, Scott proposed that we should

all ascend his western turret, to enjoy a moonlight view of the valley. The younger part of his company were too happy to do so: some of the seniors, who had tried the thing before, found pretexts for hanging back. The stairs were dark, narrow, and steep; but the Sheriff piloted the way, and at length there were as many on the top as it could well afford footing for. Nothing could be more lovely than the panorama; all the harsher and more naked features being lost in the delicious moonlight; the Tweed and the Gala winding and sparkling beneath our feet; and the distant ruins of Melrose appearing, as if carved of alabaster, under the black mass of the Eildons. The poet, leaning on his battlement, seemed to hang over the beautiful vision as if he had never seen it before. "If I live," he exclaimed, "I will build me a higher tower, with a more spacious platform, and a staircase better fitted for an old fellow's scrambling." The piper was heard retuning his instrument below, and he called to him for *Lochaber no more.* John of Skye obeyed, and as the music rose, softened by the distance, Scott repeated in a low key the melancholy words of the song of exile.

On descending from the tower, the whole company were assembled in the new dining-room, which was still under the hands of the carpenters, but had been brilliantly illuminated for the occasion. Mr Bruce took his station, and old and young danced reels to his melodious accompaniment until they were weary, while Scott and the Dominie looked on with gladsome faces, and beat time now and then, the one with his staff, the other with his wooden leg. A tray with mulled wine and whisky punch was then introduced, and Lord Melville proposed a bumper, with all the honours, to the *Roof-tree.* Captain Fergusson having sung *Johnnie Cope*, called on the young ladies for *Kenmure's on and awa'*; and our host then insisted that the whole party should join, standing in a circle hand-in-hand *more majorum*, in the hearty chorus of

"Weel may we a' be,
Ill may we never see,
God bless the king and the gude companie!"

—which being duly performed, all dispersed. Such was *the handsel*—(for Scott protested against its being considered as *the househeating*)—of the new Abbotsford.

Awakening between six and seven next morning, I heard the Sheriff's voice close to me, and looking out of the little latticed window of the then detached cottage called *the Chapel*, saw him and Tom Purdie pacing together on the green before the door, in earnest deliberation over what seemed to be a rude daub of a drawing; and every time they approached my end of their parade, I was sure to catch the words *Blue Bank*. It turned out in the course of the day, that a field of clay near Toftfield went by this name, and that the draining of it was one of the chief operations then in hand. My friend Wilson, meanwhile, who lodged also in the chapel, tapped also at the door, and asked me to rise and take a walk with him by the river, for he had some angling project in his head. He went out and joined in the consultation about the Blue Bank, while I was dressing; presently Scott hailed me at the casement, and said he had observed a volume of a new edition of Goethe on my table—would I lend it him for a little? He carried off the volume accordingly, and retreated with it to his den. It contained the Faust, and I believe in a more complete shape than he had before seen that masterpiece of his old favourite. When we met at breakfast, a couple of hours after, he was full of the poem—dwelt with enthusiasm on the airy beauty of its lyrics, the terrible pathos of the scene before the *Mater Dolorosa*, and the deep skill shewn in the various subtle shadings of character between Mephistophiles and poor Margaret. He remarked, however, of the Introduction (which I suspect was new to him), that blood would out—that, consummate artist as he was, Goethe was a German, and that nobody but a German would ever have provoked a comparison with

the book of Job, "the grandest poem that ever was written." He added, that he suspected the end of the story had been left *in obscuro*, from despair to match the closing scene of our own Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Mr Wilson mentioned a report that Coleridge was engaged on a translation of the Faust. "I hope it is so," said Scott: "Coleridge made Schiller's Wallenstein far finer than he found it, and so he will do by this. No man has all the resources of poetry in such profusion, but he cannot manage them so as to bring out anything of his own on a large scale at all worthy of his genius. He is like a lump of coal rich with gas, which lies expending itself in puffs and gleams, unless some shrewd body will clap it into a cast-iron box, and compel the compressed element to do itself justice. His fancy and diction would have long ago placed him above all his contemporaries, had they been under the direction of a sound judgment and a steady will. I don't now expect a great original poem from Coleridge, but he might easily make a sort of fame for himself as a poetical translator, that would be a thing completely unique and *sui generis*."

While this criticism proceeded, Scott was cutting away at his brown loaf and a plate of kippered salmon, in a style which strongly reminded me of Dandie Dinmont's luncheon at Mump's Hall; nor was his German topic at all the predominant one. On the contrary, the sentences which have dwelt on my memory dropt from him now and then, in the pauses, as it were, of his main talk;—for though he could not help recurring, ever and anon, to the subject, it would have been quite out of his way to make any literary matter the chief theme of his conversation, when there was a single person present who was not likely to feel much interested in its discussion.—How often have I heard him quote on such occasions, Mr Vellum's advice to the butler in Addison's excellent play of *The Drummer*—"Your conjuror, John, is indeed a twofold personage—but he *eats and drinks like other people!*"

Before breakfast was over the post-bag arrived, and its contents were so numerous, that Lord Melville asked Scott what election was on hand—not doubting that there must be some very particular reason for such a shoal of letters. He answered that it was much the same most days, and added, "though no one has kinder friends in the franking line, and though Freeling and Croker especially[1] are always ready to stretch the point of privilege in my favour, I am nevertheless a fair contributor to the revenue, for I think my bill for letters seldom comes under L.150 a-year; and as to coach-parcels, they are a perfect ruination." He then told with high merriment a disaster that had lately befallen him. "One morning last spring," he said, "I opened a huge lump of a despatch, without looking how it was addressed, never doubting that it had travelled under some omnipotent frank like the First Lord of the Admiralty's, when, lo and behold, the contents proved to be a MS. play, by a young lady of New York, who kindly requested me to read and correct it, equip it with prologue and epilogue, procure for it a favourable reception from the manager of Drury Lane, and make Murray or Constable bleed handsomely for the copyright; and on inspecting the cover, I found that I had been charged five pounds odd for the postage. This was bad enough, but there was no help, so I groaned and submitted. A fortnight or so after, another packet, of not less formidable bulk, arrived, and I was absent enough to break its seal too without examination. Conceive my horror when out jumped the same identical tragedy of *The Cherokee Lovers*, with a second epistle from the authoress, stating that, as the winds had been boisterous, she feared the vessel intrusted with her former communication might have foundered, and therefore judged it prudent to forward a duplicate."

[1] Scott's excellent friend Sir Thomas Freeling was Secretary of the Post-Office for a long series of years: Mr Croker was Secretary of the Admiralty from 1809 to 1827.

Scott said he must retire to answer his letters, but that the sociable and the ponies would be at the door by one o'clock, when he proposed to shew Melrose and Dryburgh to Lady Melville and any of the rest of the party that chose to accompany them; adding that his son Walter would lead anybody who preferred a gun to the likeliest place for a black-cock, and that Charlie Purdie (Tom's brother) would attend on Mr Wilson, and whoever else chose to try a cast of the salmon-rod. He withdrew when all this was arranged, and appeared at the time appointed, with perhaps a dozen letters sealed for the post, and a coach parcel addressed to James Ballantyne, which he dropt at the turnpike-gate as we drove to Melrose. Seeing it picked up by a dirty urchin, and carried into a hedge pot-house, where half-a-dozen nondescript wayfarers were smoking and tippling, I could not but wonder that it had not been the fate of some one of those innumerable packets to fall into unscrupulous hands, and betray the grand secret. That very morning we had seen two post-chaises drawn up at his gate, and the enthusiastic travellers, seemingly decent tradesmen and their families, who must have been packed in a manner worthy of Mrs Gilpin, lounging about to catch a glimpse of him at his going forth. But it was impossible in those days to pass between Melrose and Abbotsford without encountering some odd figure, armed with a sketch-book, evidently bent on a peep at the Great Unknown; and it must be allowed that many of these pedestrians looked as if they might have thought it very excusable to make prize, by hook or by crook, of a MS. chapter of the Tales of my Landlord.

Scott shewed us the ruins of Melrose in detail; and as we proceeded to Dryburgh, descanted learnedly and sagaciously on the good effects which must have attended the erection of so many great monastic establishments in a district so peculiarly exposed to the inroads of the English in the days of the Border wars. "They were now and then

violated," he said, "as their aspect to this hour bears witness; but for once that they suffered, any lay property similarly situated must have been *harried* a dozen times. The bold Dacres, Liddells, and Howards, that could get easy absolution at York or Durham for any ordinary breach of a truce with the Scots, would have had *to dree a heavy dole* had they confessed plundering from the fat brothers, of the same order perhaps, whose lines had fallen to them on the wrong side of the Cheviot." He enlarged too on the heavy penalty which the Crown of Scotland had paid for its rash acquiescence in the wholesale robbery of the Church at the Reformation. "The proportion of the soil in the hands of the clergy had," he said, "been very great—too great to be continued. If we may judge by their share in the public burdens, they must have had nearly a third of the land in their possession. But this vast wealth was now distributed among a turbulent nobility, too powerful before; and the Stuarts soon found, that in the bishops and lord abbots they had lost the only means of balancing their factions, so as to turn the scale in favour of law and order; and by and by the haughty barons themselves, who had scrambled for the worldly spoil of the church, found that the spiritual influence had been concentrated in hands as haughty as their own, and connected with no feelings likely to buttress their order any more than the Crown—a new and sterner monkery, under a different name, and essentially plebeian. Presently the Scotch were on the verge of republicanism, in state as well as kirk, and I have sometimes thought it was only the accession of King Jamie to the throne of England that could have given monarchy a chance of prolonging its existence here." One of his friends asked what he supposed might have been the annual revenue of the abbey of Melrose in its best day. He answered, that he suspected, if all the sources of their income were now in clever hands, the produce could hardly be under L.100,000 a-year;

and added—"Making every allowance for modern improvements, there can be no question that the sixty brothers of Melrose divided a princely rental. The superiors were often men of very high birth, and the great majority of the rest were younger brothers of gentlemen's families. I fancy they may have been, on the whole, pretty near akin to your Fellows of All Souls—who, according to their statute, must be *bene nati*, *bene vestiti*, *et mediocriter docti*. They had a good house in Edinburgh, where, no doubt, my lord abbot and his chaplains maintained a hospitable table during the sittings of Parliament." Some one regretted that we had no lively picture of the enormous revolution in manners that must have followed the downfall of the ancient Church of Scotland. He observed that there were, he fancied, materials enough for constructing such a one, but that they were mostly scattered in records—"of which," said he, "who knows anything to the purpose except Tom Thomson and John Riddell? It is common to laugh at such researches, but they pay the good brains that meddle with them;—and had Thomson been as diligent in setting down his discoveries as he has been in making them, he might, long before this time of day, have placed himself on a level with Ducange or Camden. The change in the country-side," he continued, "must indeed have been terrific; but it does not seem to have been felt very severely by a certain Boniface of St Andrews, for when somebody asked him, on the subsidence of the storm, what he thought of all that had occurred,—'Why,' answered mine host, 'it comes to this, that the moder*au*tor sits in my meikle chair, where the dean sat before, and in place of calling for the third stoup of Bordeaux, bids Jenny bring ben anither bowl of toddy.'"

At Dryburgh Scott pointed out to us the sepulchral aisle of his Haliburton ancestors, and said he hoped, in God's appointed time, to lay his bones among their dust.

The spot was, even then, a sufficiently interesting and impressive one; but I shall not say more of it at present.

On returning to Abbotsford, we found Mrs Scott and her daughters doing penance under the merciless curiosity of a couple of tourists who had arrived from Selkirk soon after we set out for Melrose. They were rich specimens—tall, lanky young men, both of them rigged out in new jackets and trousers of the Macgregor tartan; the one, as they had revealed, being a lawyer, the other a Unitarian preacher, from New England. These gentlemen, when told on their arrival that Mr Scott was not at home, had shewn such signs of impatience, that the servant took it for granted they must have serious business, and asked if they would wish to speak a word with his lady. They grasped at this, and so conducted themselves in the interview, that Mrs Scott never doubted they had brought letters of introduction to her husband, and invited them accordingly to partake of her luncheon. They had been walking about the house and grounds with her and her daughters ever since that time, and appeared at the porch, when the Sheriff and his party returned to dinner, as if they had been already fairly enrolled on his visiting list. For the moment, he too was taken in—he fancied that his wife must have received and opened their credentials—and shook hands with them with courteous cordiality. But Mrs Scott, with all her overflowing good-nature, was a sharp observer; and she, before a minute had elapsed, interrupted the ecstatic compliments of the strangers, by reminding them that her husband would be glad to have the letters of the friends who had been so good as to write by them. It then turned out that there were no letters to be produced—and Scott, signifying that his hour for dinner approached, added, that as he supposed they meant to walk to Melrose, he could not trespass further on their time. The two lion-hunters seemed quite unprepared for this abrupt escape. But there was about Scott, in perfection, when he chose to

exert it, the power of civil repulsion; he bowed the overwhelmed originals to his door, and on re-entering the parlour, found Mrs Scott complaining very indignantly that they had gone so far as to pull out their note-book, and beg an exact account, not only of his age—but of her own. Scott, already half relenting, laughed heartily at this misery. He observed, however, that "if he were to take in all the world, he had better put up a sign-post at once,—

'Porter, ale, and British spirits,
Painted bright between twa trees;'[1]

and that no traveller of respectability could ever be at a loss for such an introduction as would ensure his best hospitality." Still he was not quite pleased with what had happened—and as we were about to pass, half an hour afterwards, from the drawing-room to the dining-room, he said to his wife, "Hang the Yahoos, Charlotte—but we should have bid them stay dinner." "Devil a bit," quoth Captain John Fergusson, who had again come over from Huntly Burn, and had been latterly assisting the lady to amuse her Americans—"Devil a bit, my dear,—they were quite in a mistake, I could see. The one asked Madame whether she deigned to call her new house Tullyveolan or Tillietudlem; and the other, when Maida happened to lay his nose against the window, exclaimed *pro-di-gi-ous!* In short, they evidently meant all the humbug not for you, but for the culprit of Waverley, and the rest of that there rubbish." "Well, well, Skipper," was the reply,—"for a' that, the loons would hae been nane the waur o' their kail."

From this banter it may be inferred that the younger Fergusson had not as yet been told the Waverley secret—which to any of that house could never have been any mystery. Probably this, or some similar occasion soon afterwards, led to his formal initiation; for during the many subsequent years that the veil was kept on, I used to admire

[1] Macneill's *Will and Jean.*

the tact with which, when in their topmost high-jinks humour, both "Captain John" and "The Auld Captain" eschewed any the most distant allusion to the affair.

And this reminds me, that at the period of which I am writing, none of Scott's own family, except of course his wife, had the advantage in that matter of the Skipper. Some of them, too, were apt, like him, so long as no regular confidence had been reposed in them, to avail themselves of the author's reserve for their own sport among friends. Thus, one morning, just as Scott was opening the door of the parlour, the rest of the party being already seated at the breakfast-table, the Dominie was in the act of helping himself to an egg, marked with a peculiar hieroglyphic by Mrs Thomas Purdie, upon which Anne Scott, then a lively rattling girl of sixteen, lisped out, "That's a mysterious looking egg, Mr Thomson—what if it should have been meant for *the Great Unknown?*" Ere the Dominie could reply, her father advanced to the foot of the table, and having seated himself and deposited his stick on the carpet beside him, with a sort of whispered whistle, "What's that Lady Anne's[1] saying?" quoth he; "I thought that it had been well known that the *keelavined* egg must be a soft one for *the Sherra?*" And so he took his egg, and while all smiled in silence, poor Anne said gaily, in the midst of her blushes, "Upon my word, papa, I thought Mr John Ballantyne might have been expected." This allusion to Johnny's glory in being considered as the accredited representative of Jedediah Cleishbotham, produced a laugh—at which the Sheriff frowned—and then laughed too.

I remember nothing particular about our second day's dinner, except that it was then I first met my dear and

[1] When playing in childhood with the young ladies of the Buccleuch family, she had been overheard saying to her namesake Lady Anne Scott, "Well, I do wish I were Lady Anne too—it is so much prettier than Miss;" thenceforth she was commonly addressed in the family by the coveted title.

honoured friend William Laidlaw. The evening passed rather more quietly than the preceding one. Instead of the dance in the new dining-room, we had a succession of old ballads sung to the harp and guitar by the young ladies of the house; and Scott, when they seemed to have done enough, found some reason for taking down a volume of Crabbe, and read us one of his favourite tales—

> "Grave Jonas Kindred, Sybil Kindred's sire,
> Was six feet high, and looked six inches higher," &c.

But jollity revived in full vigour when the supper-tray was introduced, and to cap all merriment, Adam Fergusson dismissed us with the *Laird of Cockpen*. Lord and Lady Melville were to return to Melville Castle next morning, and Mr Wilson and I happened to mention that we were engaged to dine and sleep at the seat of my friend and relation Mr Pringle of Torwoodlee, on our way to Edinburgh. Scott immediately said that he would send word in the morning to the Laird, that he and Fergusson meant to accompany us—such being the unceremonious style in which country neighbours in Scotland visit each other. Next day, accordingly, we all rode over together to the "*distant Torwoodlee*" of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, distant not above five or six miles from Abbotsford—coursing hares as we proceeded, but inspecting the antiquities of the *Catrail* to the interruption of our sport. We had another joyous evening at Torwoodlee. Scott and Fergusson returned home at night, and the morning after, as Wilson and I mounted for Edinburgh, our kind old host, his sides still sore with laughter, remarked that "the Sheriff and the Captain together were too much for any company."

Towards the end of this year Scott received from Lord Sidmouth the formal announcement of the Prince Regent's desire (which had been privately communicated some months earlier through the Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam) to confer on him the rank of Baronet. When he first heard of the Regent's intention, he signified considerable

hesitation; for it had not escaped his observation that such airy sounds, however modestly people may be disposed to estimate them, are apt to entail in the upshot additional cost upon their way of living, and to affect accordingly the plastic fancies, feelings, and habits of their children. But Lord Sidmouth's letter happened to reach him a few months after he had heard of the sudden death of Charles Carpenter, who had bequeathed the reversion of his fortune to his sister's family; and this circumstance disposed Scott to wave his scruples, chiefly with a view to the professional advantage of his eldest son, who had by this time fixed on the life of a soldier. As is usually the case, the estimate of Mr Carpenter's property transmitted on his death to England proved to have been an exaggerated one; and at any rate no one of Scott's children lived to receive any benefit from the bequest. But it was thus he wrote at the time to Morritt:—"It would be easy saying a parcel of fine things about my contempt of rank, and so forth; but although I would not have gone a step out of my way to have asked, or bought, or begged, or borrowed a distinction, which to me personally will rather be inconvenient than otherwise, yet, coming as it does directly from the source of feudal honours, and as an honour, I am really gratified with it;—especially as it is intimated, that it is his Royal Highness's pleasure to heat the oven for me expressly, without waiting till he has some new *batch* of Baronets ready in dough. My poor friend Carpenter's bequest to my family has taken away a certain degree of *impecuniosity*, a necessity of saving cheese-parings and candle-ends, which always looks inconsistent with any little pretension to rank. But as things now stand, Advance banners in the name of God and St Andrew! Remember, I anticipate the jest, 'I like not such grinning honours as Sir Walter hath.'[1] After all, if one must speak for themselves, I have my quarters and emblazonments, free of all

[1] Sir Walter Blunt—1*st King Henry IV.*, Act V. Scene 3.

stain but Border theft, and High Treason, which I hope are gentlemanlike crimes; and I hope Sir Walter Scott will not sound worse than Sir Humphrey Davy, though my merits are as much under his, in point of utility, as can well be imagined. But a name is something, and mine is the better of the two."

His health prevented him from going up to the fountain of honour for more than a year. Meantime his building and other operations continued to tax his resources more than he had calculated upon; and he now completed an important negotiation with Constable, who agreed to give him bonds for L.12,000 in consideration of all his existing copyrights; namely, whatever shares had been reserved to him in the earlier poems, and the whole property in his novels down to the third series of Tales of my Landlord inclusive. The deed included a clause by which Constable was to forfeit L.2000 if he ever "divulged the name of the Author of Waverley during the life of the said Walter Scott, Esq." It is perhaps hardly worth mentioning, that about this date a London bookseller announced certain volumes of Grub-Street manufacture, as "A New Series of the Tales of my Landlord;" and when John Ballantyne, as the "agent for the author of Waverley," published a declaration that the volumes thus advertised were not from that writer's pen, met John's declaration by an audacious rejoinder—impeaching his authority, and asserting that nothing but the personal appearance in the field of the gentleman for whom Ballantyne pretended to act, could shake his belief that he was himself in the confidence of the true Simon Pure. Hereupon the dropping of Scott's mask seems to have been pronounced advisable by both Ballantyne and Constable. But he calmly replied, "The Author who lends himself to such a trick must be a blockhead—let them publish, and that will serve our purpose better than anything we ourselves could do." I have forgotten the names of the

"'tales," which, being published accordingly, fell still-born from the press.

During the winter he appears to have made little progress with the third series included in this negotiation;—his painful seizures of cramp were again recurring frequently, and he probably thought it better to allow the novels to lie over until his health should be reestablished. In the meantime he drew up a set of topographical and historical essays, which originally appeared in the successive numbers of the splendidly illustrated work, entitled Provincial Antiquities of Scotland.[1] But he did this merely to gratify his own love of the subject, and because, well or ill, he must be doing something. He declined all pecuniary recompense; but afterwards, when the success of the publication was secure, accepted from the proprietors some of the beautiful drawings by Turner, Thomson, and other artists, which had been prepared to accompany his text. He also wrote that winter his article on the Drama for the Encyclopædia Supplement, and the reviewal of the fourth canto of Childe Harold for the Quarterly.

On the 15th of February 1819, he witnessed the first representation, on the Edinburgh boards, of the most meritorious and successful of all the *Terryfications*, though Terry himself was not the manufacturer. The drama of *Rob Roy* will never again be got up so well in all its parts, as it then was by William Murray's Company; the manager's own *Captain Thornton* was excellent—and so was the *Dugald Creature* of a Mr Duff—there was also a good *Mattie*—(about whose equipment, by the by, Scott felt such interest that he left his box between the acts to remind Mr Murray that she "must have a mantle with her lanthorn;")—but the great and unrivalled attraction was the

[1] These charming essays are now included in his *Miscellaneous Prose Works*.

personification of *Bailie Jarvie*, by Charles Mackay, who, being himself a native of Glasgow, entered into the minutest peculiarities of the character with high *gusto*, and gave the west-country dialect in its most racy perfection. It was extremely diverting to watch the play of Scott's features during this admirable realization of his conception; and I must add, that the behaviour of the Edinburgh audience on all such occasions, while the secret of the novels was preserved, reflected great honour on their good taste and delicacy of feeling. He seldom, in those days, entered his box without receiving some mark of general respect and admiration; but I never heard of any pretext being laid hold of to connect these demonstrations with the piece he had come to witness, or, in short, to do or say anything likely to interrupt his quiet enjoyment of the evening in the midst of his family and friends.

This *Rob Roy* had a continued run of forty-one nights; and when the Bailie's benefit-night arrived, he received an epistle of kind congratulation signed *Jedediah Cleishbotham*, and enclosing a five-pound note: but all the while, Scott was in a miserable state, and when he left Edinburgh, in March, the alarm about him in the Parliament House was very serious. He had invited me to visit him in the country during the recess; but I should not have ventured to keep my promise, had not the Ballantynes reported amendment towards the close of April. John then told me that his "illustrious friend" (for so both the brothers usually spoke of him) was so much recovered as to have resumed his usual literary tasks, though with this difference, that he now, for the first time in his life, found it necessary to employ the hand of another.

He had now begun in earnest his Bride of Lammermoor, and his amanuenses were William Laidlaw and John Ballantyne;—of whom he preferred the latter, when he could be at Abbotsford, on account of the superior rapidity of his pen; and also because John kept his pen to the paper

without interruption, and, though with many an arch twinkle in his eyes, and now and then an audible smack of his lips, had resolution to work on like a well-trained clerk; whereas good Laidlaw entered with such keen zest into the interest of the story as it flowed from the author's lips, that he could not suppress exclamations of surprise and delight—"Gude keep us a'!—the like o' that!—eh sirs! eh sirs!"—and so forth—which did not promote despatch. I have often, however, in the sequel, heard both these secretaries describe the astonishment with which they were equally affected when Scott began this experiment. The affectionate Laidlaw beseeching him to stop dictating, when his audible suffering filled every pause, "Nay, Willie," he answered, "only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves; but as to giving over work, that can only be when I am in woollen." John Ballantyne told me, that after the first day, he always took care to have a dozen of pens made before he seated himself opposite to the sofa on which Scott lay, and that though he often turned himself on his pillow with a groan of torment, he usually continued the sentence in the same breath. But when dialogue of peculiar animation was in progress, spirit seemed to triumph altogether over matter—he arose from his couch and walked up and down the room, raising and lowering his voice, and as it were acting the parts. It was in this fashion that Scott produced the far greater portion of The Bride of Lammermoor—the whole of the Legend of Montrose—and almost the whole of Ivanhoe. Yet when his health was fairly reestablished, he disdained to avail himself of the power of dictation, which he had thus put to the sharpest test, but resumed, and for many years resolutely adhered to, the old plan of writing everything with his own hand. When I once, sometime afterwards, expressed my surprise that he did not consult his ease, and spare his eye-sight at all events, by occasionally dictating, he answered—"I should as soon

think of getting into a sedan-chair while I can use my legs."

But to return:—I rode out to Abbotsford with John Ballantyne towards the end of the spring vacation, and though he had warned me of a sad change in Scott's appearance, it was far beyond what I had been led to anticipate. He had lost a great deal of flesh—his clothes hung loose about him—his countenance was meagre, haggard, and of the deadliest yellow of the jaundice—and his hair, which a few weeks before had been but slightly sprinkled with grey, was now almost literally snow-white. His eye, however, retained its fire unquenched; indeed it seemed to have gained in brilliancy from the new langour of the other features; and he received us with all the usual cordiality, and even with little perceptible diminishment in the sprightliness of his manner. He sat at the table while we dined, but partook only of some rice pudding; and after the cloth was drawn, while sipping his toast and water, pushed round the bottle in his old style, and talked with easy cheerfulness of the stout battle he had fought, and which he now seemed to consider as won.

"One day there was," he said, "when I certainly began to have great doubts whether the mischief was not getting at my mind—and I'll tell you how I tried to reassure myself on that score. I was quite unfit for anything like original composition; but I thought if I could turn an old German ballad I had been reading into decent rhymes, I might dismiss my worst apprehensions—and you shall see what became of the experiment." He then desired his daughter Sophia to fetch the MS. of *The Noble Moringer*, as it had been taken down from his dictation, partly by her and partly by Mr Laidlaw, during one long and painful day while he lay in bed. He read it to us as it stood, and seeing that both Ballantyne and I were much pleased with the verses, he said he should copy them over,—make them

a little "tighter about the joints,"—and give them to the Register for 1816.

The reading of this long ballad, however,—(it consists of forty-three stanzas)[1]—seemed to have exhausted him: he retired to his bed-room; and an hour or two after, when we were about to follow his example, his family were distressed by the well-known symptoms of another sharp recurrence of his affliction. A large dose of opium and the hot bath were immediately put in requisition. His good neighbour, Dr Scott of Darnlèe, was sent for, and soon attended; and in the course of three or four hours we learned that he was once more at ease. But I can never forget the groans which, during that space, his agony extorted from him. Well knowing the iron strength of his resolution, to find him confessing its extremity, by cries audible not only all over the house, but even to a considerable distance from it—it may be supposed that this was sufficiently alarming, even to my companion; how much more to me, who had never before listened to that voice, except in the gentle accents of kindness and merriment.

I told Ballantyne that I saw this was no time for my visit, and that I should start for Edinburgh again at an early hour—and begged he would make my apologies—in the propriety of which he acquiesced. But as I was dressing, about seven next morning, Scott himself tapped at my door, and entered, looking better I thought than at my arrival the day before. "Don't think of going," said he; "I feel hearty this morning, and if my devil does come back again, it won't be for three days at any rate. For the present, I want nothing to set me up except a good trot in the open air, to drive away the accursed vapours of the laudanum I was obliged to swallow last night. You have never seen Yarrow, and when I have finished a little job I have with Jocund Johnny, we shall all take horse

[1] See *Scott's Poetical Works*, royal 8vo, p. 618.

and make a day of it." When I said something about a ride of twenty miles being rather a bold experiment after such a night, he answered, that he had ridden more than forty, a week before, under similar circumstances, and felt nothing the worse. He added, that there was an election on foot, in consequence of the death of Sir John Riddell of Riddell, Member of Parliament for the Selkirk district of Burghs, and that the bad health and absence of the Duke of Buccleuch rendered it quite necessary that he should make exertions on this occasion. "In short," said he, laughing, "I have an errand which I shall perform—and as I must pass Newark, you had better not miss the opportunity of seeing it under so excellent a cicerone as the old minstrel,

> 'Whose withered cheek and tresses grey
> Shall yet see many a better day.'"

About eleven o'clock, accordingly, he was mounted, by the help of Tom Purdie, upon a staunch active cob, yclept *Sybil Grey*,—exactly such a creature as is described in Mr Dinmont's *Dumple*—while Ballantyne sprung into the saddle of noble *Old Mortality*, and we proceeded to the town of Selkirk, where Scott halted to do business at the Sheriff-Clerk's, and begged us to move onward at a gentle pace until he should overtake us. He came up by and by at a canter, and seemed in high glee with the tidings he had heard about the canvass. And so we rode by Philiphaugh, Carterhaugh, Bowhill, and Newark, he pouring out all the way his picturesque anecdotes of former times—more especially of the fatal field where Montrose was finally overthrown by Leslie. He described the battle as vividly as if he had witnessed it; the passing of the Ettrick at daybreak by the Covenanting General's heavy cuirassiers, many of them old soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus, and the wild confusion of the Highland host when exposed to their charge on an extensive *haugh* as flat as a bowling-green. He drew us aside at *Slain-men's-lee*, to observe the green mound that marks the resting-place of the slaughtered royalists;

and pointing to the apparently precipitous mountain, Minchmoor, over which Montrose and his few cavaliers escaped, mentioned, that, rough as it seemed, his mother remembered passing it in her early days in a coach and six, on her way to a ball at Peebles—several footmen marching on either side of the carriage to prop it up, or drag it through bogs, as the case might require. He also gave us, with all the dramatic effect of one of his best chapters, the history of a worthy family who, inhabiting at the time of the battle a cottage on his own estate, had treated with particular kindness a young officer of Leslie's army quartered on them for a night or two before. When parting from them to join the troops, he took out a purse of gold, and told the goodwoman that he had a presentiment he should not see another sun set, and in that case would wish his money to remain in her kind hands; but, if he should survive, he had no doubt she would restore it honestly. The young man returned mortally wounded, but lingered a while under her roof, and finally bequeathed to her and hers his purse and his blessing. "Such," he said, "was the origin of the respectable lairds of ——, now my good neighbours."

The prime object of this expedition was to talk over the politics of Selkirk with one of the Duke of Buccleuch's great store farmers, who, as the Sheriff had learned, possessed private influence with a doubtful bailie or deacon among the Souters. I forget the result, if ever I heard it. But next morning, having, as he assured us, enjoyed a good night in consequence of this ride, he invited us to accompany him on a similar errand across Bowden Moor, and up the Valley of the Ayle; and when we reached a particular bleak and dreary point of that journey, he informed us that he perceived in the waste below a wreath of smoke, which was the appointed signal that a *wavering* Souter of some consequence had agreed to give him a personal interview where no Whiggish eyes were likely to observe them; —and so, leaving us on the road, he proceeded to thread

his way westwards, across moor and bog, until we lost view of him. I think a couple of hours might have passed before he joined us again, which was, as had been arranged, not far from the village of Lilliesleaf. In that place, too, he had some negotiation of the same sort to look after; and when he had finished it, he rode with us all round the ancient woods of Riddell, but would not go near the house; I suppose lest any of the afflicted family might still be there. Many were his lamentations over the catastrophe which had just befallen them. "They are," he said, "one of the most venerable races in the south of Scotland—they were here long before these glens had ever heard the name of Soulis or Douglas—to say nothing of Buccleuch: they can shew a Pope's bull of the tenth century, authorizing the then Riddell to marry a relation within the forbidden degrees. Here they have been for a thousand years at least; and now all the inheritance is to pass away, merely because one good worthy gentleman would not be contented to enjoy his horses, his hounds, and his bottle of claret, like thirty or forty predecessors, but must needs turn scientific agriculturist, take almost all his fair estate into his own hand, superintend for himself perhaps a hundred ploughs, and try every new nostrum that has been tabled by the quackish *improvers* of the time. And what makes the thing ten times more wonderful is, that he kept day-book and ledger, and all the rest of it, as accurately as if he had been a cheesemonger in the Grassmarket." Some of the most remarkable circumstances in Scott's own subsequent life have made me often recall this conversation—with more wonder than he expressed about the ruin of the Riddells.

I remember he told us a world of stories, some tragical, some comical, about the old lairds of this time-honoured lineage; and among others, that of the seven Bibles and the seven bottles of ale, which he afterwards inserted in a note to a novel then in progress.[1] He was also full of

[1] See *The Bride of Lammermoor*, Note to chap. xiv.

anecdotes about a friend of his father's, a minister of Lilliesleaf, who reigned for two generations the most popular preacher in Teviotdale; but I forget the orator's name. When the original of Saunders Fairford congratulated him in his latter days on the undiminished authority he still maintained—every kirk in the neighbourhood being left empty when it was known he was to mount the *tent* at any country sacrament—the shrewd divine answered, "Indeed, Mr Walter, I sometimes think it's vera surprising. There's aye a talk of this or that wonderfully gifted young man frae the college; but whenever I 'm to be at the same *occasion* with ony o' them, I e'en mount the white horse in the Revelations, and he dings them a'."

Thus Scott amused himself and us as we jogged homewards: and it was the same the following day, when (no election matters pressing) he rode with us to the western peak of the Eildon hills, that he might show me the whole panorama of his Teviotdale, and expound the direction of the various passes by which the ancient forayers made their way into England, and tell the names and the histories of many a monastic chapel and baronial peel, now mouldering in glens and dingles that escape the eye of the traveller on the highways. Among other objects on which he descanted with particular interest, were the ruins of the earliest residence of the Kerrs of Cessford, so often opposed in arms to his own chieftains of Branksome, and a desolate little kirk on the adjoining moor, where the Dukes of Roxburghe are still buried in the same vault with the hero who fell at Turn-again. Turning to the northward, he shewed us the crags and tower of Smailholme, and behind it the shattered fragment of Ercildoune — and repeated some pretty stanzas ascribed to the last of the real wandering minstrels of this district, by name *Burn*:—

> "Sing Ercildoune, and Cowdenknowes,
> Where Holmes had ance commanding," &c.

That night he had again an attack of his cramp, but not

so serious as the former. Next morning he was again at work with Ballantyne at an early hour; and when I parted from him after breakfast, he spoke cheerfully of being soon in Edinburgh for the usual business of his Court. I left him, however, with dark prognostications; and the circumstances of this little visit to Abbotsford have no doubt dwelt on my mind the more distinctly, from my having observed and listened to him throughout under the painful feeling that it might very probably be my last.

Within a few days he heard tidings, perhaps as heavy as ever reached him. His ever steadfast friend, to whom he looked up, moreover, with the feelings of the true old border clansman, Charles Duke of Buccleuch, died on the 20th of April at Lisbon. Captain Adam Fergusson had accompanied the Duke, whose health had for years been breaking, to the scene of his own old campaigns: he now attended his Grace's remains to England; and on landing received a letter, in which Scott said:—"I have had another eight days' visit of my disorder, which has confined me chiefly to my bed. It will perhaps shade off into a mild chronic complaint—if it returns frequently with the same violence, I shall break up by degrees, and follow my dear chief. I thank God I can look at this possibility without much anxiety, and without a shadow of fear."

On the 11th of May he returned to Edinburgh, and was present at the opening of the Court; when all who saw him were as much struck as I had been at Abbotsford with the change in his appearance. He was unable to persist in attendance at the Clerks' table—for several weeks afterwards I think he seldom if ever attempted it; and I well remember that, when the Bride of Lammermoor and Legend of Montrose at length came out (which was on the 10th of June), he was known to be confined to bed, and the book was received amidst the deep general impression that we should see no more of that parentage.

"The *Bride of Lammermoor*" (says James Ballantyne)

"was not only written, but published before Mr Scott was able to rise from his bed; and he assured me that when it was first put into his hands in a complete shape, he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained. He did not desire me to understand, nor did I understand, that his illness had erased from his memory the original incidents of the story, with which he had been acquainted from his boyhood. These remained rooted where they had ever been; or, to speak more explicitly, he remembered the general facts of the existence of the father and mother, of the son and daughter, of the rival lovers, of the compulsory marriage, and the attack made by the bride upon the hapless bridegroom, with the general catastrophe of the whole. All these things he recollected just as he did before he took to his bed: but he literally recollected nothing else—not a single character woven by the romancer, not one of the many scenes and points of humour, nor anything with which he was connected as the writer of the work. 'For a long time,' he said, 'I felt myself very uneasy in the course of my reading, lest I should be startled by meeting something altogether glaring and fantastic. However, I recollected that you had been the printer, and I felt sure that you would not have permitted anything of this sort to pass.' 'Well,' I said, 'upon the whole, how did you like it?'—'Why,' he said, 'as a whole, I felt it monstrous gross and grotesque; but still the worst of it made me laugh, and I trusted the good-natured public would not be less indulgent.' I do not think I ever ventured to lead to the discussion of this singular phenomenon again; but you may depend upon it, that what I have now said is as distinctly reported as if it had been taken down in short-hand at the moment; I believe you will agree with me in thinking that the history of the human mind contains nothing more wonderful."

One day, soon after he reappeared in the Parliament-House, he asked me to walk home with him. He moved

languidly, and said, if he were to stay in town many days, he must send for Sybil Grey; but his conversation was heart-whole; and, in particular, he laughed till, despite his weakness, the stick was flourishing in his hand, over the following almost incredible specimen of the eleventh Earl of Buchan.

Hearing one morning shortly before this time, that Scott was actually *in extremis*, the Earl proceeded to Castle Street, and found the knocker tied up. He then descendedto the door in the area, and was there received by honest Peter Mathieson, whose face seemed to confirm the woful tidings, for in truth his master was ill enough. Peter told his Lordship that he had the strictest orders to admit no visitor; but the Earl would take no denial, pushed the bashful coachman aside, and elbowed his way up stairs to the door of Scott's bedchamber. He had his fingers upon the handle before Peter could give warning to Miss Scott; and when she appeared to remonstrate against such an intrusion, he patted her on the head like a child, and persisted in his purpose of entering the sick-room so strenuously, that the young lady found it necessary to bid Peter see the Earl down stairs again, at whatever damage to his dignity. Peter accordingly, after trying all his eloquence in vain, gave the tottering, bustling, old, meddlesome coxcomb a single shove,—as respectful, doubt not, as a shove can ever be,—and he accepted that hint, and made a rapid exit. Scott, meanwhile, had heard the confusion, and at length it was explained to him; when fearing that Peter's gripe might have injured Lord Buchan's feeble person, he desired James Ballantyne, who had been sitting by his bed, to follow the old man home—make him comprehend, if he could, that the family were in such bewilderment of alarm that the ordinary rules of civility were out of the question—and, in fine, inquire what had been the object of his Lordship's intended visit. James proceeded forthwith to the Earl's house in George Street, and found him strutting

about his library in a towering indignation. Ballantyne's elaborate demonstrations of respect, however, by degrees softened him, and he condescended to explain himself. "I wished," said he, "to embrace Walter Scott before he died, and inform him that I had long considered it as a satisfactory circumstance that he and I were destined to rest together in the same place of sepulchre. The principal thing, however, was to relieve his mind as to the arrangements of his funeral—to show him a plan which I had prepared for the procession—and, in a word, to assure him that I took upon myself the whole conduct of the ceremonial at Dryburgh." He then exhibited to Ballantyne a formal programme, in which, as may be supposed, the predominant feature was not Walter Scott, but David Earl of Buchan. It had been settled, *inter alia*, that the said Earl was to pronounce an eulogium over the grave, after the fashion of French Academicians in the *Père la Chaise*.

And this was the elder brother of Thomas and Henry Erskine! But the story is well known of his boasting one day to the late Duchess of Gordon of the extraordinary talents of his family—when her unscrupulous Grace asked him, very coolly, whether the wit had not come by the mother, and been all settled on the younger branches?

I must not forget to set down what Sophia Scott afterwards told me of her father's conduct upon one night in June, when he really did despair of himself. He then called his children about his bed, and took leave of them with solemn tenderness. After giving them, one by one, such advice as suited their years and characters, he added,—"For myself, my dears, I am unconscious of ever having done any man an injury, or omitted any fair opportunity of doing any man a benefit. I well know that no human life can appear otherwise than weak and filthy in the eyes of God: but I rely on the merits and intercession of our Redeemer." He then laid his hand on their heads, and said—"God bless you! Live so that you may all hope to

meet each other in a better place hereafter. And now leave me, that I may turn my face to the wall." They obeyed him; but he presently fell into a deep sleep; and when he awoke from it after many hours, the crisis of extreme danger was felt by himself, and pronounced by his physician, to have been overcome.

The Tales of the Third Series would have been read with indulgence, had they needed it; for the painful circumstances under which they must have been produced were in part known wherever an English newspaper made its way; but I believe that, except in typical errors, from the author's inability to correct proof-sheets, no one ever affected to perceive in either work the slightest symptom of his malady. Dugald Dalgetty was placed by acclamation in the same rank with Bailie Jarvie—a conception equally new, just, and humorous, and worked out in all the details, as if it had formed the luxurious entertainment of a chair as easy as was ever shaken by Rabelais; and though the character of Montrose himself seemed hardly to have been treated so fully as the subject merited, the accustomed rapidity of the novelist's execution would have been enough to account for any such defect. Caleb Balderstone—(the hero of one of the many ludicrous delineations which he owed to the late Lord Haddington)—was pronounced at the time, by more than one critic, a mere caricature; and, though he himself would never, in after days admit this censure to be just, he allowed that "he might have sprinkled rather too much parsley over his chicken." But even that blemish, for I grant that I think it a serious one, could not disturb the profound interest and pathos of the Bride of Lammermoor—to my fancy the most pure and powerful of all the tragedies that Scott ever penned.

These volumes, as was mentioned, came out before the middle of June; and though at that moment he was unable to quit his room, he did not hesitate to make all ar-

rangements as to another romance. Nay, though his condition still required an amanuensis, he had advanced considerably in the new work before the Session closed in July. That he felt much more security as to his health by that time, must be inferred from his then allowing his son Walter to proceed to Ireland to join the 18th regiment of Hussars. The Cornet was only in the eighteenth year of his age; and the fashion of education in Scotland is such, that he had scarcely ever slept a night under a different roof from his parents, until this separation occurred. He had been treated from his cradle with all the indulgence that a man of sense can ever permit himself to show to any of his children; and for several years he had now been his father's daily companion in all his out-of-doors occupations and amusements. The parting was a painful one: but Scott's ambition centred in the heir of his name, and instead of fruitless pinings and lamentings, he henceforth made it his constant business to keep up such a frank correspondence with the young man as might enable himself to exert over him, when at a distance, the gentle influence of kindness, experience, and wisdom. The series of his letters to his son is, in my opinion, by far the most interesting and valuable, as respects the personal character and temper of the writer. His manly kindness to his boy, whether he is expressing approbation or censure of his conduct, is a model for the parent; and his practical wisdom was of that liberal order, based on such comprehensive views of man and the world, that I am persuaded it will often be found available to the circumstances of their own various cases, by young men of whatever station or profession.

Abbotsford had, in the ensuing autumn, the honour of a visit from Prince Leopold, now King of Belgium, who had been often in Scott's company in Paris in 1815; and his Royal Highness was followed by many other distinguished guests; none of whom, from what they saw, would have doubted that the masons and foresters fully occupied their

host's time. He was all the while, however, making steady progress with his Ivanhoe—and that although he was so far from entire recovery, that Mr Laidlaw continued to produce most of the MS. from his dictation.

The approach of winter brought a very alarming aspect of things in our manufacturing districts; and there was throughout Scotland a general revival of the old volunteer spirit. Scott did not now dream of rejoining the Light Horse of Edinburgh, which he took much pleasure in seeing re-organized; but in conjunction with his neighbour the laird of Gala, he planned the raising of a body of Border Sharpshooters, and was highly gratified by the readiness with which a hundred young men from his own immediate neighbourhood sent in their names, making no condition but that the Sheriff himself should be the commandant. He was very willing to accept that stipulation; and Laidlaw was instantly directed to look out for a stalwart charger, a fit successor for the Brown Adams of former days. But the progress of disaffection was arrested before this scheme could be carried into execution. It was in the midst of that alarm that he put forth the brief, but beautiful series of papers entitled *The Visionary.*

In December he had an extraordinary accumulation of distress in his family circle. Within ten days he lost his uncle Dr Rutherford; his dear aunt Christian Rutherford; and his excellent mother. On her death he says to Lady Louisa Stuart (who had seen and been much pleased with the old lady):—"If I have been able to do anything in the way of painting the past times, it is very much from the studies with which she presented me. She connected a long period of time with the present generation, for she remembered, and had often spoken with, a person who perfectly recollected the battle of Dunbar, and Oliver Cromwell's subsequent entry into Edinburgh. She preserved her faculties to the very day before her final illness; for our friends Mr and Mrs Scott of Harden visited her on the Sunday,

and, coming to our house after, were expressing their surprise at the alertness of her mind, and the pleasure which she had in talking over both ancient and modern events. She had told them with great accuracy the real story of the Bride of Lammermuir, and pointed out wherein it differed from the novel. She had all the names of the parties, and detailed (for she was a great genealogist) their connexion with existing families. On the subsequent Monday she was struck with a paralytic affection, suffered little, and that with the utmost patience; and what was God's reward, and a great one to her innocent and benevolent life, she never knew that her brother and sister, the last thirty years younger than herself, had trodden the dark path before her. She was a strict economist, which she said enabled her to be liberal; out of her little income of about L.300 a-year, she bestowed at least a third in well-chosen charities, and with the rest lived like a gentlewoman, and even with hospitality more general than seemed to suit her age; yet I could never prevail on her to accept of any assistance. You cannot conceive how affecting it was to me to see the little preparation of presents which she had assorted for the New Year—for she was a great observer of the old fashions of her period—and to think that the kind heart was cold which delighted in all these acts of kindly affection."

There is in the library at Abbotsford a fine copy of Baskerville's folio Bible, two volumes, printed at Cambridge in 1763; and there appears on the blank leaf, in the trembling handwriting of Scott's mother, this inscription—"*To my dear son, Walter Scott, from his affectionate Mother, Anne Rutherford—January* 1*st*, 1819." Under these words her son has written as follows:—"This Bible was the gift of my grandfather Dr John Rutherford, to my mother, and presented by her to me; being alas! the last gift which I was to receive from that excellent parent, and, as I verily believe, the thing which she most loved in the world,—not only in humble veneration of the sacred contents, but as

the dearest pledge of her father's affection to her. As such she gave it to me; and as such I bequeath it to those who may represent me—charging them carefully to preserve the same, in memory of those to whom it has belonged. 1820."

On the 18th of December, while his house was thus saddened, appeared his *Ivanhoe*. It was received throughout England with a more clamorous delight than any of the *Scotch novels* had been. The volumes (three in number) were now, for the first time, of the post 8vo form, with a finer paper than hitherto, the press-work much more elegant, and the price accordingly raised from eight shillings the volume to ten; yet the copies sold in this original shape were twelve thousand.

I ought to have mentioned sooner, that the original intention was to bring out Ivanhoe as the production of a new hand, and that to assist this impression, the work was printed in a size and manner unlike the preceding ones; but Constable, when the day of publication approached, remonstrated against this experiment, and it was accordingly abandoned.

The reader has already been told that Scott dictated the greater part of this romance. The portion of the MS. which is his own, appears, however, not only as well and firmly executed as that of any of the Tales of my Landlord, but distinguished by having still fewer erasures and interlineations, and also by being in a smaller hand. The fragment is beautiful to look at—many pages together without one alteration. It is, I suppose, superfluous to add, that in no instance did Scott re-write his prose before sending it to the press. Whatever may have been the case with his poetry, the world uniformly received the *prima cura* of the novelist.

As a work of art, Ivanhoe is perhaps the first of all Scott's efforts, whether in prose or in verse; nor have the strength and splendour of his imagination been displayed

to higher advantage than in some of the scenes of this romance. But I believe that no reader who is capable of thoroughly comprehending the author's Scotch character and Scotch dialogue will ever place even Ivanhoe, as a work of genius, on the same level with Waverley, Guy Mannering, or the Heart of Mid-Lothian.

The introduction of the charming Jewess and her father originated, I find, in a conversation that Scott held with his friend Skene during the severest season of his bodily sufferings in the early part of this year. "Mr Skene," says that gentleman's wife, "sitting by his bedside, and trying to amuse him as well as he could in the intervals of pain, happened to get on the subject of the Jews, as he had observed them when he spent some time in Germany in his youth. Their situation had naturally made a strong impression; for in those days they retained their own dress and manners entire, and were treated with considerable austerity by their Christian neighbours, being still locked up at night in their own quarter by great gates; and Mr Skene, partly in seriousness, but partly from the mere wish to turn his mind at the moment upon something that might occupy and divert it, suggested that a group of Jews would be an interesting feature if he could contrive to bring them into his next novel." Upon the appearance of Ivanhoe, he reminded Mr Skene of this conversation, and said, "You will find this book owes not a little to your German reminiscences."

By the way, before Ivanhoe made its appearance, I had myself been formally admitted to the author's secret; but had he favoured me with no such confidence, it would have been impossible for me to doubt that I had been present some months before at the conversation which suggested, and indeed supplied all the materials of, one of its most amusing chapters. I allude to that in which our Saxon terms for animals in the field, and our Norman equivalents for them as they appear on the table, and so on, are ex-

plained and commented on. All this Scott owed to the after-dinner talk one day in Castle Street of his old friend Mr William Clerk,—who, among other elegant pursuits, has cultivated the science of philology very deeply.

I cannot conclude without observing that the publication of Ivanhoe marks the most brilliant epoch in Scott's history as the literary favourite of his contemporaries. With the novel which he next put forth, the immediate sale of these works began gradually to decline; and though, even when that had reached its lowest declension, it was still far above the most ambitious dreams of any other novelist, yet the publishers were afraid the announcement of anything like a falling-off might cast a damp over the spirits of the author. He was allowed to remain for several years under the impression that whatever novel he threw off commanded at once the old triumphant sale of ten or twelve thousand, and was afterwards, when included in the collective edition, to be circulated in that shape also as widely as Waverley or Ivanhoe. In my opinion, it would have been very unwise in the booksellers to give Scott any unfavourable tidings upon such subjects after the commencement of the malady which proved fatal to him,—for that from the first shook his mind; but I think they took a false measure of the man when they hesitated to tell him exactly how the matter stood, throughout 1820 and the three or four following years, when his intellect was as vigorous as it ever had been, and his heart as courageous; and I regret their scruples (among other reasons), because the years now mentioned were the most costly ones in his life; and for every twelvemonths in which any man allows himself, or is encouraged by others, to proceed in a course of unwise expenditure, it becomes proportionably more difficult for him to pull up when the mistake is at length detected or recognised.

In the correspondence of this winter [1819-1820], there occurs frequent mention of the Prince Gustavus Vasa, who

spent some months in Edinburgh, and his Royal Highness's accomplished attendant, the Baron Polier. I met them often in Castle Street, and remember as especially interesting the first evening that they dined there. The only portrait in Scott's Edinburgh dining-room was one of Charles XII. of Sweden, and he was struck, as indeed every one must have been, with the remarkable resemblance which the exiled Prince's air and features presented to the hero of his race. Young Gustavus, on his part, hung with keen and melancholy enthusiasm on his host's anecdotes of the expedition of Charles Edward. The Prince, accompanied by Scott and myself, witnessed the ceremonial of the proclamation of King George IV. on the 2d of February, at the Cross, from a window over Mr Constable's shop in the High Street; and on that occasion also the air of sadness that mixed in his features with eager curiosity was very affecting. Scott explained all the details to him, not without many lamentations over the barbarity of the Auld Reekie bailies, who had removed the beautiful Gothic Cross itself, for the sake of widening the thoroughfare. The weather was fine, the sun shone bright; and the antique tabards of the heralds, the trumpet notes of *God save the King*, and the hearty cheerings of the immense uncovered multitude that filled the noble old street, produced altogether a scene of great splendour and solemnity. The Royal Exile surveyed it with a flushed cheek and a watery eye, and Scott, observing his emotion, withdrew with me to another window, whispering "poor lad! poor lad! God help him." Later in the season the Prince spent a few days at Abbotsford, where he was received with at least as much reverence as any eldest son of a reigning sovereign could have been. He gave Scott, at parting, a seal, which he almost constantly used ever after.

About the middle of February—it having been ere that time arranged that I should marry his eldest daughter in the course of the spring,—I accompanied him and part of

his family on one of those flying visits to Abbotsford, with which he often indulged himself on a Saturday during term. Upon such occasions Scott appeared at the usual hour in Court, but wearing, instead of the official suit of black, his country morning dress—green jacket and so forth—under the clerk's gown; a licence of which many gentlemen of the long robe had been accustomed to avail themselves in the days of his youth—it being then considered as the authentic badge that they were lairds as well as lawyers—but which, to use the dialect of the place, had fallen into *desuetude* before I knew the Parliament House. He was, I think, one of the two or three, or at most the half-dozen, who still adhered to this privilege of their order; and it has now, in all likelihood, become quite obsolete, like the ancient custom, a part of the same system, for all Scotch barristers to appear without gowns or wigs, and in coloured clothes, when upon circuit. At noon, when the Court broke up, Peter Mathieson was sure to be in attendance in the Parliament Close, and five minutes after, the gown had been tossed off, and Scott, rubbing his hands for glee, was under weigh for Tweedside. On this occasion, he was, of course, in mourning; but I have thought it worth while to preserve the circumstance of his usual Saturday's costume. As we proceeded, he talked without reserve of the novel of the Monastery, of which he had the first volume with him: and mentioned, what he had probably forgotten when he wrote the Introduction of 1830, that a good deal of that volume had been composed before he concluded Ivanhoe. "It was a relief," he said, "to interlay the scenery most familiar to me, with the strange world for which I had to draw so much on imagination."

Next morning there appeared at breakfast John Ballantyne, who had at this time a hunting-box a few miles off, in the vale of the Leader—and with him Mr Constable, his guest; and it being a fine clear day, as soon as Scott had read the Church service and one of Jeremy Taylor's

sermons, we all sallied out, before noon, on a perambulation of his upland territories; Maida and the rest of the favourites accompanying our march. At starting we were joined by the constant henchman, Tom Purdie—and I may save myself the trouble of any attempt to describe his appearance, for his master has given us an inimitably true one in introducing a certain personage of his Redgauntlet:—"He was, perhaps, sixty years old; yet his brow was not much furrowed, and his jet black hair was only grizzled, not whitened, by the advance of age. All his motions spoke strength unabated; and though rather undersized, he had very broad shoulders, was square made, thin-flanked, and apparently combined in his frame muscular strength and activity; the last somewhat impaired, perhaps, by years, but the first remaining in full vigour. A hard and harsh countenance; eyes far sunk under projecting eyebrows, which were grizzled like his hair; a wide mouth, furnished from ear to ear with a range of unimpaired teeth of uncommon whiteness, and a size and breadth which might have become the jaws of an ogre, completed this delightful portrait." Equip this figure in Scott's cast-off green jacket, white hat and drab trousers; and imagine that years of kind treatment, comfort, and the honest consequence of a confidential *grieve*, had softened away much of the hardness and harshness originally impressed on the visage by anxious penury and the sinister habits of a *black-fisher*;—and the Tom Purdie of 1820 stands before us.[1]

We were all delighted to see how completely Scott had recovered his bodily vigour, and none more so than Constable, who, as he puffed and panted after him up one ravine and down another, often stopped to wipe his forehead, and remarked that "it was not every author who should lead him such a dance." But Purdie's face shone

[1] There is in the dining-room at Abbotsford a clever little sketch in oil of Tom Purdie by Edwin Landseer, R.A.—who often enjoyed Tom's company in sports both of flood and field.

with rapture as he observed how severely the swag-bellied bookseller's activity was taxed. Scott exclaiming exultingly, though perhaps for the tenth time, "This will be a glorious spring for our trees, Tom!"—"You may say that, Shirra," quoth Tom,—and then lingering a moment for Constable,—"My certy," he added, scratching his head, "and I think it will be a grand season for *our buiks* too." But indeed Tom always talked of *our buiks* as if they had been as regular products of the soil as *our aits* and *our birks*. Having threaded, first the Hexilcleugh, and then the Rhymer's Glen, we arrived at Huntly Burn, where the hospitality of the kind *Weird-Sisters*, as Scott called the Miss Fergussons, reanimated our exhausted Bibliopoles, and gave them courage to extend their walk a little further down the same famous brook. Here there was a small cottage in a very sequestered situation, by making some little additions to which Scott thought it might be converted into a suitable summer residence for his daughter and future son-in-law. The details of that plan were soon settled—it was agreed on all hands that a sweeter scene of seclusion could not be fancied. He repeated some verses of Rogers' "Wish," which paint the spot:—

> "Mine be a cot beside the hill—
> A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
> A willowy brook that turns a mill,
> With many a fall shall linger near:" &c.

But when he came to the stanza—

> "And Lucy at her wheel shall sing,
> In russet-gown and apron blue,"

he departed from the text, adding—

> "But if Bluestockings here you bring,
> The Great Unknown won't dine with you."

Johnny Ballantyne, a projector to the core, was particularly zealous about this embryo establishment. Foreseeing that he should have had walking enough ere he reached Hunlty Burn, his dapper little Newmarket groom had been

ordered to fetch Old Mortality thither, and now, mounted on his fine hunter, he capered about us, looking pallid and emaciated as a ghost, but as gay and cheerful as ever, and would fain have been permitted to ride over hedge and ditch to mark out the proper line of the future avenue. Scott admonished him that the country-people, if they saw him at such work, would take the whole party for heathens; and clapping spurs to his horse, he left us. "The deil 's in the body," quoth Tom Purdie; "he 'll be ower every *yett* atween this and Turn-again, though it be the Lord's day. I wadna wonder if he were to be *ceeted* before the Session."—"Be sure, Tam," cries Constable, "that you egg on the Dominie to blaw up his father—I wouldna grudge a hundred miles o' gait to see the ne'er-do-weel on the stool, and neither, I 'll be sworn, would the Sheriff." —"Na, na," quoth the Sheriff, "we'll let sleeping dogs be, Tam."

As we walked homeward, Scott, being a little fatigued, laid his left hand on Tom's shoulder, and leaned heavily for support, chatting to his "Sunday poney," as he called the affectionate fellow, just as freely as with the rest of the party, and Tom put in his word shrewdly and manfully, and grinned and grunted whenever the joke chanced to be within his apprehension. It was easy to see that his heart swelled within him from the moment that the Sheriff got his collar in his gripe.

There arose a little dispute between them about what tree or trees ought to be cut down in a hedge-row that we passed; and Scott seemed somewhat ruffled with finding that some previous hints of his on that head had not been attended to. When we got into motion again, his hand was on Constable's shoulder—and Tom dropped a pace or two to the rear, until we approached a gate, when he jumped forward and opened it. "Give us a pinch of your snuff, Tom," quoth the Sheriff. Tom's mull was produced, and the hand resumed its position. I was much diverted

with Tom's behaviour when we at length reached Abbotsford. There were some garden chairs on the green in front of the cottage porch. Scott sat down on one of them to enjoy the view of his new tower as it gleamed in the sunset, and Constable and I did the like. Mr Purdie remained lounging near us for a few minutes, and then asked the Sheriff "to speak a word." They withdrew together into the garden—and Scott presently rejoined us with a particularly comical expression of face. As soon as Tom was out of sight, he said—"Will ye guess what he has been saying, now?—Well, this is a great satisfaction! Tom assures me that he has thought the matter over, and *will take my advice* about the thinning of that clump behind Captain Fergusson's."[1]

I must not forget, that whoever might be at Abbotsford, Tom always appeared at his master's elbow on Sunday,

[1] I was obliged to the Sheriff's companion of 1815, John Scott of Gala, for reminding me of the following trait of Tom Purdie. The first time John Richardson of Fludyer Street (one of Sir Walter's dearest friends) came to Abbotsford, Tom (who took him for a Southron) was sent to attend upon him while he tried for a *fish* (*i. e.* a salmon) in the neighbourhood of Melrose Bridge. As they walked thither, Tom boasted grandly of the size of the fish he had himself caught there, evidently giving the stranger no credit for much skill in the Waltonian craft. By and by, however, Richardson, who is an admirable angler, hooked a vigorous fellow, and after a beautiful exhibition of the art, landed him in safety. "A fine *fish*, Tom."—"Oo, aye, Sir," quoth Tom—"it's a bonny grilse." "A *grilse*, Tom!" says Mr R.—"it's as heavy a *salmon* as the heaviest you were telling me about." Tom shewed his teeth in a smile of bitter incredulity; but while they were still debating, Lord Sommerville's fisherman came up with scales in his basket, and Richardson insisted on having his victim weighed. The result was triumphant for the captor. "Weel," says Tom, letting the salmon drop on the turf—"weel, ye *are* a meikle fish, mon—and a meikle *fule* too," (he added in a lower key) "to let yoursell be kilt by an Englander."

when dinner was over, and drank long life to the Laird and the Lady and all the good company, in a quaigh of whisky, or a tumbler of wine, according to his fancy. I believe Scott has somewhere expressed in print his satisfaction that, among all the changes of our manners, the ancient freedom of personal intercourse may still be indulged between a master and an *out-of-doors'* servant; but in truth he kept by the old fashion even with domestic servants, to an extent which I have hardly seen practised by any other gentleman. He conversed with his coachman if he sat by him, as he often did on the box—with his footman, if he happened to be in the rumble; and when there was any very young lad in the household, he held it a point of duty to see that his employments were so arranged as to leave time for advancing his education, made him bring his copy-book once a-week to the library, and examined him as to all that he was doing. Indeed he did not confine this humanity to his own people. Any steady servant of a friend of his was soon considered as a sort of friend too, and was sure to have a kind little colloquy to himself at coming and going. With all this, Scott was a very rigid enforcer of discipline—contrived to make it thoroughly understood by all about him, that they must do their part by him as he did his by them; and the result was happy. I never knew any man so well served as he was—so carefully, so respectfully, and so silently; and I cannot help doubting if in any department of human operations real kindness ever compromised real dignity.

CHAPTER II.

Scott's Baronetcy—Portrait by Lawrence and Bust by Chantrey—Presidency of the Royal Society of Edinburgh—Hospitalities and Sports at Abbotsford—Publication of the Monastery—The Abbot—and Kenilworth.—1820.

THE novel of The Monastery was published in the beginning of March 1820. It appeared not in the post 8vo form of Ivanhoe, but in 3 vols. 12mo, like the earlier works of the series. In fact, a few sheets of The Monastery had been printed before Scott agreed to let Ivanhoe have "By the Author of Waverley" on its title-page; and the different shapes of the two books belonged to the abortive scheme of passing off "Mr Laurence Templeton" as a hitherto unheard of candidate for literary success.

At the rising of his Court on the 12th, he proceeded to London, for the purpose of receiving his baronetcy, which he had been prevented from doing in the spring of the preceding year by illness, and again at Christmas by family afflictions. The Prince Regent was now King.

One of his first visiters was Sir Thomas Lawrence, who informed him that his Majesty had resolved to adorn the great gallery, then in progress at Windsor Castle, with portraits by his hand of his most distinguished contemporaries; all the reigning monarchs of Europe, and their chief ministers and generals, had already sat for this purpose: on the same walls the King desired to see exhibited those of his own subjects who had attained the highest honours of literature and science—and it was his pleasure that this series should commence with Walter Scott. The portrait was begun immediately, and the head was finished

before Scott left town. Sir Thomas has caught and fixed with admirable skill one of the loftiest expressions of his countenance at the proudest period of his life: to the perfect truth of the representation, every one who ever surprised him in the act of composition at his desk will bear witness. The expression, however, was one with which many who had seen the man often, were not familiar; and it was extremely unfortunate that Sir Thomas filled in the figure from a separate sketch after he had quitted London. When I first saw the head, I thought nothing could be better; but there was an evident change for the worse when the picture appeared in its finished state—for the rest of the person had been done on a different scale, and this neglect of proportion takes considerably from the majestic effect which the head itself, and especially the mighty pile of forehead, had in nature. I hope one day to see a good engraving of the head alone, as I first saw it floating on a dark sea of canvass.

Lawrence told me several years afterwards that, in his opinion, the two greatest men he had painted were the Duke of Wellington and Sir Walter Scott; "and it was odd," said he, "that they both chose usually the same hour for sitting—seven in the morning. They were both as patient sitters as I ever had. Scott, however, was, in my case at least, a very difficult subject. I had selected what struck me as his noblest look; but when he was in the chair before me, he talked away on all sorts of subjects in his usual style, so that it cost me great pains to bring him back to solemnity, when I had to attend to anything beyond the outline of a subordinate feature. I soon found that the surest recipe was to say something that would lead him to recite a bit of poetry. I used to introduce by hook or by crook a few lines of Campbell or Byron; he was sure to take up the passage where I left it, or *cap* it by something better—and then—when he was, as Dryden says of one of his heroes,

'Made up of three parts fire—so full of heaven
It sparkled at his eyes'—

then was my time—and I made the best use I could of it. The hardest day's work I had with him was once when ****** [1] accompanied him to my painting room. ****** was in particularly gay spirits, and nothing would serve him but keeping both artist and sitter in a perpetual state of merriment by anecdote upon anecdote about poor Sheridan. The anecdotes were mostly in themselves black enough—but the style of the *conteur* was irresistibly quaint and comical. When Scott came next, he said he was ashamed of himself for laughing so much as he listened to them; 'for truly,' quoth he, 'if the tithe was fact, ***** might have said to Sherry—as Lord Braxfield once said to an eloquent culprit at the bar—'Ye're a verra clever chiel', man, but ye wad be nane the waur o' a hanging.'"

It was also during this visit to London that Scott sat to Chantrey for that bust which alone preserves for posterity the cast of expression most fondly remembered by all who ever mingled in his domestic circle. Chantrey's request that Scott would sit to him was communicated through Allan Cunningham, clerk of the works in the great sculptor's establishment. "Honest Allan," in his early days, when gaining his bread as a stone-mason in Nithsdale, made a pilgrimage on foot into Edinburgh, for the sole purpose of seeing the author of Marmion as he passed along the street. He was now in possession of a celebrity of his own, and had mentioned to his patron his purpose of calling on Scott to thank him for some kind message he had received, through a common friend, on the subject of those "Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song," which first made his poetical talents known to the public. Chantrey embraced this opportunity of conveying to Scott his own long-cherished ambition of modelling his head; and Scott at

[1] A distinguished Whig friend.

once assented to the flattering proposal. "It was about nine in the morning," says Mr Cunningham, "that I sent in my card to him at Miss Dumergue's in Piccadilly. It had not been gone a minute, when I heard a quick heavy step coming, and in he came, holding out both hands, as was his custom, and saying, as he pressed mine—'Allan Cunningham, I am glad to see you.' I said something," continues Mr C., "about the pleasure I felt in touching the hand that had charmed me so much. He moved his hand, and with one of his comic smiles said, 'Ay—and a big brown hand it is.' I was a little abashed at first: Scott saw it, and soon put me at my ease; he had the power—I had almost called it the art, but art it was not—of winning one's heart, and restoring one's confidence, beyond any man I ever met."

Chantrey's purpose had been the same as Lawrence's—to seize a poetical phasis of the countenance; and when the poet first sat, he proceeded to model the head as looking upwards, gravely and solemnly. The talk that passed, meantime, had amused and gratified both, and fortunately at parting, Chantrey requested that Scott would come and breakfast with him next morning before they recommenced operations in the studio. He accepted the invitation, and when he arrived again in Ecclestone Street, found two or three acquaintances assembled to meet him,—among others, his old friend Richard Heber. The breakfast was, as any party in Sir Francis Chantrey's house was sure to be, a gay one, and not having seen Heber in particular for several years, Scott's spirits were unusually excited. "In the midst of the mirth (says Cunningham) John (commonly called *Jack*) Fuller, the member for Surrey, and standing jester of the House of Commons, came in. Heber, who was well acquainted with the free and joyous character of that worthy, began to lead him out by relating some festive anecdotes: Fuller growled approbation, and indulged us with some of his odd sallies; things which

he assured us 'were damned good, and true too, which was better.' Mr Scott, who was standing when Fuller came in, eyed him at first with a look grave and considerate; but as the stream of conversation flowed, his keen eye twinkled brighter and brighter; his stature increased, for he drew himself up, and seemed to take the measure of the hoary joker, body and soul. An hour or two of social chat had meanwhile induced Chantrey to alter his views as to the bust, and when Scott left us, he said to me privately, 'This will never do—I shall never be able to please myself with a perfectly serene expression. I must try his conversational look, take him when about to break out into some sly funny old story.' As Chantrey said this, he took a string, cut off the head of the bust, put it into its present position, touched the eyes and mouth slightly, and wrought such a transformation, that when Scott came to his third sitting, he smiled and said—'Ay, ye're mair like yoursel now!—Why, Mr Chantrey, no witch of old ever performed such cantrips with clay as this.'"

The baronetcy was conferred on him, not in consequence of any Ministerial suggestion, but by the King personally, and of his own unsolicited motion; and when the poet kissed his hand, he said to him—"I shall always reflect with pleasure on Sir Walter Scott's having been the first creation of my reign."

The Gazette announcing this was dated March 30, 1820; and the Baronet, as soon afterwards as he could get away from Lawrence, set out on his return to the North; for he had such respect for the ancient prejudice (a classical as well as a Scottish one) against marrying in May, that he was anxious to have the ceremony in which his daughter was concerned, over before that unlucky month should commence. He reached Edinburgh late in April, and on the 29th of that month he gave me the hand of his daughter Sophia. The wedding, *more Scotico*, took place in the evening; and adhering on all such occa-

sions to ancient modes of observance with the same punctiliousness which he mentions as distinguishing his worthy father, he gave a jolly supper afterwards to all the friends and connexions of the young couple.

In May 1820, he received from both the English Universities the highest compliment which it was in their power to offer him. The Vice-Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge communicated to him, in the same week, their request that he would attend at the approaching Commemorations, and accept the honorary degree of Doctor in Civil Law. It was impossible for him to leave Scotland again in time; and on various subsequent renewals of the same flattering proposition from either body, he was prevented by similar circumstances from availing himself of their distinguished kindness.

About the middle of August, my wife and I went to Abbotsford; and we remained there for several weeks, during which I became familiarized to Sir Walter Scott's mode of existence in the country. The humblest person who stayed merely for a short visit, must have departed with the impression that what he witnessed was an occasional variety; that Scott's courtesy prompted him to break in upon his habits when he had a stranger to amuse; but that it was physically impossible that the man who was writing the Waverley romances at the rate of nearly twelve volumes in the year, could continue, week after week, and month after month, to devote all but a hardly perceptible fraction of his mornings to out-of-doors' occupations, and the whole of his evenings to the entertainment of a constantly varying circle of guests. The hospitality of his afternoons must alone have been enough to exhaust the energies of almost any man; for his visiters did not mean, like those of country-houses in general, to enjoy the landlord's good cheer and amuse each other; but the far greater proportion arrived from a distance, for the sole sake of the Poet and Novelist himself,

whose person they had never before seen, and whose voice they might never again have an opportunity of hearing. No other villa in Europe was ever resorted to from the same motives, and to anything like the same extent, except Ferney; and Voltaire never dreamt of being visible to his *hunters*, except for a brief space of the day;—few of them even dined with him, and none of them seem to have slept under his roof. Scott's establishment, on the contrary, resembled in every particular that of the affluent idler, who, because he has inherited, or would fain transmit political influence in some province, keeps open house—receives as many as he has room for, and sees their apartments occupied, as soon as they vacate them, by another troop of the same description. Even on gentlemen guiltless of inkshed, the exercise of hospitality upon this sort of scale is found to impose a heavy tax; few of them, now-a-days, think of maintaining it for any large portion of the year: very few indeed below the highest rank of the nobility—in whose case there is usually a staff of led-captains, led-chaplains, servile dandies, and semi-professional talkers and jokers from London, to take the chief part of the burden. Now, Scott had often in his mouth the pithy verses—

> "Conversation is but carving:—
> Give no more to every guest,
> Than he 's able to digest:
> Give him always of the prime,
> And but little at a time;
> Carve to all but just enough,
> Let them neither starve nor stuff;
> *And that you may have your due,*
> *Let your neighbours carve for you:*"—

and he, in his own familiar circle always, and in other circles where it was possible, furnished a happy exemplification of these rules and regulations of the Dean of St Patrick's. But the same sense and benevolence which dictated adhesion to them among his old friends and acquaintance,

rendered it necessary to break them when he was receiving strangers of the class I have described above at Abbotsford: he felt that their coming was the best homage they could pay to his celebrity, and that it would have been as uncourteous in him not to give them their fill of his talk, as it would be in your every-day lord of manors to make his casual guests welcome indeed to his venison, but keep his grouse-shooting for his immediate allies and dependants.

Every now and then he received some stranger who was not indisposed to take his part in the *carving;* and how good-humouredly he surrendered the lion's share to any one that seemed to covet it—with what perfect placidity he submitted to be bored even by bores of the first water, must have excited the admiration of many besides the daily observers of his proceedings. I have heard a spruce Senior Wrangler lecture him for half an evening on the niceties of the Greek epigram; I have heard the poorest of all parliamentary blunderers try to detail to him the *pros* and *cons* of what he called the *Truck system;* and in either case the same bland eye watched the lips of the tormentor. But, with such ludicrous exceptions, Scott was the one object of the Abbotsford pilgrims; and evening followed evening only to shew him exerting, for their amusement, more of animal spirits, to say nothing of intellectual vigour, than would have been considered by any other man in the company as sufficient for the whole expenditure of a week's existence. Yet this was not the chief marvel: he talked of things that interested himself, because he knew that by doing so he should give most pleasure to his guests. But how vast was the range of subjects on which he could talk with unaffected zeal; and with what admirable delicacy of instinctive politeness did he select his topic according to the peculiar history, study, pursuits, or social habits of the stranger! And all this was done without approach to the unmanly trickery of what is called *catching the tone*

of the person one converses with. Scott took the subject on which he thought such a man or woman would like best to hear him speak—but not to handle it in their way, or in any way but what was completely, and most simply his own;—not to flatter them by embellishing, with the illustration of his genius, the views and opinions which they were supposed to entertain,—but to let his genius play out its own variations, for his own delight and theirs, as freely and easily, and with as endless a multiplicity of delicious novelties, as ever the magic of Beethoven or Mozart could fling over the few primitive notes of a village air.

It is the custom in some, perhaps in many country-houses, to keep a register of the guests, and I have often regretted that nothing of the sort was ever attempted at Abbotsford. It would have been a curious record—especially if so contrived—(as I have seen done)—that the names of each day should, by their arrangement on the page, indicate the exact order in which the company sat at dinner. It would hardly, I believe, be too much to affirm, that Sir Walter Scott entertained, under his roof, in the course of the seven or eight brilliant seasons when his prosperity was at its height, as many persons of distinction in rank, in politics, in art, in literature, and in science, as the most princely nobleman of his age ever did in the like space of time.—I turned over, since I wrote the preceding sentence, Mr Lodge's compendium of the British Peerage, and on summing up the titles which suggested *to myself* some reminiscence of this kind, I found them nearly as one out of six.—I fancy it is not beyond the mark to add, that of the eminent foreigners who visited our island within this period, a moiety crossed the Channel mainly in consequence of the interest with which his writings had invested Scotland—and that the hope of beholding the man under his own roof was the crowning motive with half that moiety. As for countrymen of his own, like him ennobled, in the higher sense of that word, by the display of their intellectual

energies, if any one such contemporary can be pointed out as having crossed the Tweed, and yet not spent a day at Abbotsford, I shall be surprised.

It is needless to add, that Sir Walter was familiarly known, long before the days I am speaking of, to almost all the nobility and higher gentry of Scotland; and consequently, that there seldom wanted a fair proportion of them to assist him in doing the honours of his country. It is still more superfluous to say so respecting the heads of his own profession at Edinburgh: *Sibi et amicis*—Abbotsford was their villa whenever they pleased to resort to it, and few of them were ever absent from it long. He lived meanwhile in a constant interchange of easy visits with the gentlemen's families of Teviotdale and the Forest; so that mixed up with his superfine admirers of the Mayfair breed, his staring worshippers from foreign parts, and his quick-witted coevals of the Parliament-House—there was found generally some hearty home-spun laird, with his dame, and the young laird—a bashful bumpkin, perhaps, whose ideas did not soar beyond his gun and pointer—or perhaps a little pseudo-dandy, for whom the Kelso racecourse and the Jedburgh ball were Life and the World. To complete the *olla podrida*, we must remember that no old acquaintance, or family connexions, however remote their actual station or style of manners from his own, were forgotten or lost sight of. He had some, even near relations, who, except when they visited him, rarely if ever found admittance to what the haughty dialect of the upper world is pleased to designate exclusively as *society*. These were welcome guests, let who might be under that roof; and it was the same with many a worthy citizen of Edinburgh, habitually moving in an obscure circle, who had been in the same class with Scott at the High School, or his fellow-apprentice when he was proud of earning threepence a page by the use of his pen. To dwell on nothing else, it was surely a beautiful perfection of real uni-

versal humanity and politeness, that could enable this great and good man to blend guests so multifarious in one group, and contrive to make them all equally happy with him, with themselves, and with each other.

I remember saying to William Allan one morning as the whole party mustered before the porch after breakfast—"A faithful sketch of what you at this moment see, would be more interesting a hundred years hence, than the grandest so-called historical picture that you will ever exhibit at Somerset House;" and my friend agreed with me so cordially, that I often wondered afterwards he had not attempted to realize the suggestion. The subject ought, however, to have been treated conjointly by him (or Wilkie) and Edwin Landseer. It was a clear, bright September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine, and all was in readiness for a grand coursing match on Newark Hill. The only guest who had chalked out other sport for himself was the stanchest of anglers, Mr Rose; but he, too, was there on his *shelty*, armed with his salmon-rod and landing-net, and attended by his humorous squire Hinves, and Charlie Purdie, a brother of Tom, in those days the most celebrated fisherman of the district. This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sybil, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip; and, among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphrey Davy, Dr Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish belles-lettres, Henry Mackenzie. The Man of Feeling, however, was persuaded with some difficulty to resign his steed for the present to his faithful negro follower, and to join Lady Scott in the sociable, until we should reach the ground of our *battue*. Laidlaw, on a long-tailed wiry Highlander, yclept *Hoddin*

Grey, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground as he sat, was the adjutant. But the most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp. He had come for his favourite sport of angling, and had been practising it successfully with Rose, his travelling companion, for two or three days preceding this, but he had not prepared for coursing fields, or had left Charlie Purdie's troop for Sir Walter's on a sudden thought; and his fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brims, surrounded with line upon line, and innumerable fly-hooks—jack-boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white-cord breeches, and well-polished jockey-boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr Wollaston was in black, and with his noble serene dignity of countenance might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr Mackenzie, at this time in the 76th year of his age, with a white hat turned up with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog-whistle round his neck, and had all over the air of as resolute a devotee as the gay captain of Huntly Burn. Tom Purdie and his subalterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the greyhounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose; but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gambolled about Sibyl Grey, barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

The order of march had been all settled, and the sociable was just getting under weigh, when *the Lady Anne* broke from the line, screaming with laughter, and exclaimed—"Papa, papa, I knew you could never think of going without your pet."—Scott looked round, and I rather think there was a blush as well as a smile upon his face, when he perceived a little black pig frisking about his pony, and evidently a self-elected addition to the party of the day. He

tried to look stern, and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy soon found a strap round its neck, and was dragged into the background :—Scott, watching the retreat, repeated with mock pathos the first verse of an old pastoral song—

"What will I do gin my hoggie[1] die?
My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
My only beast, I had nae mae,
And wow! but I was vogie!"

—the cheers were redoubled—and the squadron moved on.

This pig had taken—nobody could tell how—a most sentimental attachment to Scott, and was constantly urging its pretensions to be admitted a regular member of his *tail* along with the greyhounds and terriers; but indeed I remember him suffering another summer under the same sort of pertinacity on the part of an affectionate hen. I leave the explanation for philosophers—but such were the facts. I have too much respect for the vulgarly calumniated donkey to name him in the same category of pets with the pig and the hen; but a year or two after this time, my wife used to drive a couple of these animals in a little garden chair, and whenever her father appeared at the door of our cottage, we were sure to see Hannah More and Lady Morgan (as Anne Scott had wickedly christened them) trotting from their pasture to lay their noses over the paling, and, as Washington Irving says of the old white-haired hedger with the Parisian snuff-box, "to have a pleasant crack with the laird."

But to return to the *chasse*. On reaching Newark Castle, we found Lady Scott, her eldest daughter, and the venerable Mackenzie, all busily engaged in unpacking a basket that had been placed in their carriage, and arranging the

[1] *Hog* signifies in the Scotch dialect a young sheep that has never been shorn. Hence, no doubt, the name of the Poet of Ettrick—derived from a long line of shepherds.

luncheon it contained upon the mossy rocks overhanging the bed of the Yarrow. When such of the company as chose had partaken of this refection, the Man of Feeling resumed his pony, and all ascended the mountain, duly marshalled at proper distances, so as to beat in a broad line over the heather, Sir Walter directing the movement from the right wing—towards Blackandro. Davy, next to whom I chanced to be riding, laid his whip about the fern like an experienced hand, but cracked many a joke, too, upon his own jackboots, and surveying the long eager battalion of bush-rangers, exclaimed—"Good heavens! is it thus that I visit the scenery of the Lay of the Last Minstrel?" He then kept muttering to himself, as his glowing eye—(the finest and brightest that I ever saw)—ran over the landscape, some of those beautiful lines from the *Conclusion* of the Lay—

——— "But still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue bells on Newark heath,
When throstles sung on Hareheadshaw,
And corn was green in Carterhaugh,
And flourished, broad, Blakandro's oak,
The aged harper's soul awoke," &c.

Mackenzie, spectacled though he was, saw the first sitting hare, gave the word to slip the dogs, and spurred after them like a boy. All the seniors, indeed, did well as long as the course was upwards, but when puss took down the declivity, they halted and breathed themselves upon the knoll—cheering gaily, however, the young people, who dashed at full speed past and below them. Coursing on such a mountain is not like the same sport over a set of fine English pastures. There were gulfs to be avoided and bogs enough to be threaded—many a stiff nag stuck fast—many a bold rider measured his length among the peat-hags—and another stranger to the ground besides

Davy plunged neck-deep into a treacherous well-head, which, till they were floundering in it, had borne all the appearance of a piece of delicate green turf. When Sir Humphrey emerged from his involuntary bath, his habiliments garnished with mud, slime, and mangled water-cresses, Sir Walter received him with a triumphant *encore!* But the philosopher had his revenge, for joining soon afterwards in a brisk gallop, Scott put Sibyl Grey to a leap beyond her prowess, and lay humbled in the ditch, while Davy, who was better mounted, cleared it and him at a bound. Happily there was little damage done—but no one was sorry that the sociable had been detained at the foot of the hill.

I have seen Sir Humphrey in many places, and in company of many different descriptions; but never to such advantage as at Abbotsford. His host and he delighted in each other, and the modesty of their mutual admiration was a memorable spectacle. Davy was by nature a poet—and Scott, though anything but a philosopher in the modern sense of that term, might, I think it very likely, have pursued the study of physical science with zeal and success, had he chanced to fall in with such an instructor as Sir Humphrey would have been to him, in his early life. Each strove to make the other talk—and they did so in turn more charmingly than I ever heard either on any other occasion whatsoever. Scott in his romantic narratives touched a deeper chord of feeling than usual, when he had such a listener as Davy; and Davy, when induced to open his views upon any question of scientific interest in Scott's presence, did so with a degree of clear energetic eloquence, and with a flow of imagery and illustration, of which neither his habitual tone of table-talk (least of all in London), nor any of his prose writings (except, indeed, the posthumous Consolations of Travel) could suggest an adequate notion. I say his prose writings—for who that has read his sublime quatrains on the doctrine of Spinoza

can doubt that he might have united, if he had pleased, in some great didactic poem, the vigorous ratiocination of Dryden and the moral majesty of Wordsworth? I remember William Laidlaw whispering to me, one night, when their "rapt talk" had kept the circle round the fire until long after the usual bedtime of Abbotsford—"Gude preserve us! this is a very superior occasion! Eh, sirs!" he added, cocking his eye like a bird, "I wonder if Shakspeare and Bacon ever met to screw ilk-other up?"

Since I have touched on the subject of Sir Walter's autumnal diversions in these his latter years, I may as well notice here two annual festivals, when sport was made his pretext for assembling his rural neighbours about him—days eagerly anticipated, and fondly remembered by many. One was a solemn bout of salmon-fishing for the neighbouring gentry and their families, instituted originally, I believe, by Lord Somerville, but now, in his absence, conducted and presided over by the Sheriff. Charles Purdie, Tom's brother, had charge (partly as lessee) of the salmon-fisheries for three or four miles of the Tweed, including all the water attached to the lands of Abbotsford, Gala, and Allwyn; and this festival had been established with a view, besides other considerations, of recompensing him for the attention he always bestowed on any of the lairds or their visiters that chose to fish, either from the banks or the boat, within his jurisdiction. His selection of the day, and other precautions, generally secured an abundance of sport for the great anniversary; and then the whole party assembled to regale on the newly-caught prey, boiled, grilled, and roasted in every variety of preparation, beneath a grand old ash, adjoining Charlie's cottage at Boldside, on the northern margin of the Tweed, about a mile above Abbotsford. This banquet took place earlier in the day or later, according to circumstances; but it often lasted till the harvest moon shone on the lovely scene and its revellers. These formed groups that would have

done no discredit to Watteau—and a still better hand has painted the background in the Introduction of the Monastery:—" On the opposite bank of the Tweed might be seen the remains of ancient enclosures, surrounded by sycamores and ash-trees of considerable size. These had once formed the crofts or arable ground of a village, now reduced to a single hut, the abode of a fisherman, who also manages a ferry. The cottages, even the church which once existed there, have sunk into vestiges hardly to be traced without visiting the spot, the inhabitants having gradually withdrawn to the more prosperous town of Galashiels, which has risen into consideration within two miles of their neighbourhood. Superstitious eld, however, has tenanted the deserted grove with aërial beings to supply the want of the mortal tenants who have deserted it. The ruined and abandoned churchyard of Boldside has been long believed to be haunted by the Fairies, and the deep broad current of the Tweed, wheeling in moonlight round the foot of the steep bank, with the number of trees originally planted for shelter round the fields of the cottagers, but now presenting the effect of scattered and detached groves, fill up the idea which one would form in imagination for a scene that Oberon and Queen Mab might love to revel in. There are evenings when the spectator might believe, with Father Chaucer, that the

> ——'Queen of Faëry,
> With harp, and pipe, and symphony,
> Were dwelling in the place.'"——

Sometimes the evening closed with a "burning of the water;" and then the Sheriff, though now not so agile as when he practised that rough sport in the early times of Ashestiel, was sure to be one of the party in the boat,—held a torch, or perhaps took the helm,—and seemed to enjoy the whole thing as heartily as the youngest of his company—

> "'Tis blythe along the midnight tide,
> With stalwart arm the boat to guide—

On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
And heedful plunge the barbed spear;
Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,
Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
And from the bank our band appears
Like Genii armed with fiery spears."[1]

The other "superior occasion" came later in the season; the 28th of October, the birthday of Sir Walter's eldest son, was, I think, that usually selected for *the Abbotsford Hunt.* This was a coursing-field on a large scale, including, with as many of the young gentry as pleased to attend, all Scott's personal favourites among the yeomen and farmers of the surrounding country. The Sheriff always took the field, but latterly devolved the command upon his good friend Mr John Usher, the ex-laird of Toftfield; and he could not have had a more skilful or a better-humoured lieutenant. The hunt took place either on the moors above the Cauldshields' Loch, or over some of the hills on the estate of Gala, and we had commonly, ere we returned, hares enough to supply the wife of every farmer that attended with soup for a week following. The whole then dined at Abbotsford, the Sheriff in the chair, Adam Fergusson croupier, and Dominie Thompson, of course, chaplain. George, by the way, was himself an eager partaker in the preliminary sport; and now he would favour us with a grace, in Burns's phrase "as long as my arm," beginning with thanks to the Almighty, who had given man dominion over the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, and expatiating on this text with so luculent a commentary, that Scott, who had been fumbling with his spoon long before he reached Amen, could not help exclaiming as he sat down, "Well done, Mr George! I think we've had everything but the view holla!" The company, whose onset had been thus deferred, were seldom, I think, under thirty in number, and sometimes they exceeded

[1] See *Poetical Works*, royal 8vo, p. 694.

forty. The feast was such as suited the occasion—a baron of beef at the foot of the table, a salted round at the head, while tureens of hare-soup and hotch-potch extended down the centre, and such light articles as geese, turkeys, a sucking-pig, a singed sheep's head, and the unfailing haggis, were set forth by way of side-dishes. Blackcock and moorfowl, bushels of snipe, *black puddings*, *white puddings*, and pyramids of pancakes, formed the second course. Ale was the favourite beverage during dinner, but there was plenty of port and sherry for those whose stomachs they suited. The quaighs of Glenlivet were tossed off as if they held water. The wine decanters made a few rounds of the table, but the hints for hot punch soon became clamorous. Two or three bowls were introduced, and placed under the supervision of experienced manufacturers—one of these being usually the Ettrick Shepherd—and then the business of the evening commenced in good earnest. The faces shone and glowed like those at Camacho's wedding: the chairman told his richest stories of old rural life, Lowland or Highland; Fergusson and humbler heroes fought their peninsular battles o'er again; the stalwart Dandie Dinmonts lugged out their last winter's snow-storm, the parish scandal, perhaps, or the dexterous bargain of the Northumberland *tryste;* and every man was knocked down for the song that he sung best, or took most pleasure in singing. Sheriff-substitute Shortreed—(a cheerful, hearty, little man, with a sparkling eye and a most infectious laugh)—gave us *Dick o' the Cow*, or *Now Liddesdale has ridden a raid;* his son Thomas (Sir Walter's assiduous disciple and assistant in Border Heraldry and Genealogy) shone without a rival in *The Douglas Tragedy* and *The Twa Corbies;* a weather-beaten, stiff-bearded veteran, *Captain* Ormistoun, as he was called (though I doubt if his rank was recognised at the Horse-Guards), had the primitive pastoral of *Cowdenknowes* in sweet perfection; Hogg produced *The Women folk*, or *The Kye comes hame;* and, in

spite of many grinding notes, contrived to make everybody delighted whether with the fun or the pathos of his ballad; the Melrose doctor sang in spirited style some of Moore's masterpieces; a couple of retired sailors joined in *Bould Admiral Duncan upon the high sea*;—and the gallant croupier crowned the last bowl with *Ale, good ale, thou art my darling!* Imagine some smart Parisian *savant*—some dreamy pedant of Halle or Heidelberg—a brace of stray young Lords from Oxford or Cambridge, or perhaps their prim college tutors, planted here and there amidst these rustic wassailers—this being their first vision of the author of Marmion and Ivanhoe, and he appearing as heartily at home in the scene as if he had been a veritable *Dandie* himself—his face radiant, his laugh gay as childhood, his chorus always ready. And so it proceeded until some worthy, who had fifteen or twenty miles to ride home, began to insinuate that his wife and bairns would be getting sorely anxious about the fords, and the Dumples and Hoddins were at last heard neighing at the gate, and it was voted that the hour had come for *doch an dorrach*—the stirrup-cup—to wit, a bumper all round of the unmitigated *mountain dew*. How they all contrived to get home in safety, Heaven only knows—but I never heard of any serious accident except upon one occasion, when James Hogg made a bet at starting that he would leap over his wall-eyed pony as she stood, and broke his nose in this experiment of "o'ervaulting ambition." One comely goodwife, far off among the hills, amused Sir Walter by telling him, the next time he passed her homestead after one of these jolly doings, what her husband's first words were when he alighted at his own door—"Ailie, my woman, I'm ready for my bed—and oh lass (he gallantly added), I wish I could sleep for a towmont, for there's only ae thing in this warld worth living for, and that's the Abbotsford hunt!"

It may well be supposed that the President of the Bold-

side Festival and the Abbotsford Hunt did not omit the good old custom of *the Kirn.* Every November, before quitting the country for Edinburgh, he gave a *harvest home*, on the most approved model of former days, to all the peasantry on his estate, their friends and kindred, and as many poor neighbours besides as his barn could hold. Here old and young danced from sunset to sunrise,—John of Skye's bagpipe being relieved at intervals by the violin of some Wandering Willie;—and the laird and all his family were present during the early part of the evening—he and his wife to distribute the contents of the first tub of whisky-punch, and his young people to take their due share in the endless reels and hornpipes of the earthen floor. As Mr Morritt has said of him as he appeared at Laird Nippy's kirn of earlier days, "to witness the cordiality of his reception might have unbent a misanthrope." He had his private joke for every old wife or "gausie carle," his arch compliment for the ear of every bonny lass, and his hand and his blessing for the head of every little *Eppie Daidle* from Abbotstown or Broomielees.

The whole of the ancient ceremonial of the *daft days*, as they are called in Scotland, obtained respect at Abbotsford. He said it was *uncanny*, and would certainly have felt it very uncomfortable, not to welcome the new year in the midst of his family, and a few old friends, with the immemorial libation of a *het pint;* but of all the consecrated ceremonies of the time none gave him such delight as the visit which he received as *Laird* from all the children on his estate, on the last morning of every December—when, in the words of an obscure poet often quoted by him,

> "The cottage bairns sing blythe and gay,
> At the ha' door for *hogmanay.*"

The following is from a new-year's day letter to Joanna Baillie:—"The Scottish labourer is in his natural state perhaps one of the best, most intelligent, and kind-hearted

of human beings; and in truth I have limited my other habits of expense very much since I fell into the habit of employing mine honest people. I wish you could have seen about a hundred children, being almost entirely supported by their fathers' or brothers' labour, come down yesterday to dance to the pipes, and get a piece of cake and bannock, and pence a-piece (no very deadly largess) in honour of *hogmanay*. I declare to you, my dear friend, that when I thought the poor fellows who kept these children so neat, and well taught, and well behaved, were slaving the whole day for eighteen-pence or twenty-pence at the most, I was ashamed of their gratitude, and of their becks and bows. But after all, one does what one can, and it is better twenty families should be comfortable according to their wishes and habits, than half that number should be raised above their situation. Besides, like Fortunio in the fairy tale, I have my gifted men—the best wrestler and cudgel-player—the best runner and leaper—the best shot in the little district; and, as I am partial to all manly and athletic exercises, these are great favourites, being otherwise decent persons, and bearing their faculties meekly. All this smells of sad egotism, but what can I write to you about save what is uppermost in my own thoughts? And here am I, thinning old plantations and planting new ones; now undoing what has been done, and now doing what I suppose no one would do but myself, and accomplishing all my magical transformations by the arms and legs of the aforesaid genii, conjured up to my aid at eighteen-pence a-day."

"The notable paradox," he says in one of the most charming of his essays, "that the residence of a proprietor upon his estate is of as little consequence as the bodily presence of a stockholder upon Exchange, has, we believe, been renounced. At least, as in the case of the Duchess of Suffolk's relationship to her own child, the vulgar continue to be of opinion that there is some difference in favour

of the next hamlet and village, and even of the vicinage in general, when the squire spends his rents at the manor-house, instead of cutting a figure in France or Italy. A celebrated politician used to say he would willingly bring in one bill to make poaching felony, another to encourage the breed of foxes, and a third to revive the decayed amusements of cock-fighting and bull-baiting—that he would make, in short, any sacrifice to the humours and prejudices of the country gentlemen, in their most extravagant form, provided only he could prevail upon them to 'dwell in their own houses, be the patrons of their own tenantry, and the fathers of their own children.'"[1]

In September 1820 appeared *The Abbot*—the continuation, to a certain extent, of The Monastery, of which I barely mentioned the publication under the preceding March. I have nothing of any consequence to add to the information which the Introduction of 1830 affords us respecting the composition and fate of the former of these novels. It was considered as a failure—the first of the series on which any such sentence was pronounced;—nor have I much to allege in favour of the White Lady of Avenel, generally criticised as the primary blot—or of Sir Percy Shafton, who was loudly, though not quite so generally, condemned. In either case, considered separately, he seems to have erred from dwelling (in the German taste) on materials that might have done very well for a rapid sketch. The phantom, with whom we have leisure to become familiar, is sure to fail—even the witch of Endor is contented with a momentary appearance and five syllables of the shade she evokes. And we may say the same of any grotesque absurdity in human manners. Scott might have considered with advantage how lightly and briefly Shakspeare introduces *his* Euphuism—though actually the prevalent humour of the hour when he was writing. But perhaps these errors might have attracted little notice had the novelist

[1] *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, i. p. viii.

been successful in finding some reconciling medium capable of giving consistence and harmony to his naturally incongruous materials. "These," said one of his ablest critics, "are joined—but they refuse to blend: Nothing can be more poetical in conception, and sometimes in language, than the fiction of the White Maid of Avenel; but when this etherial personage, who rides on the cloud which 'for Araby is bound'—who is

> 'Something between heaven and hell,
> Something that neither stood nor fell,'—

—whose existence is linked by an awful and mysterious destiny to the fortunes of a decaying family; when such a being as this descends to clownish pranks, and promotes a frivolous jest about a tailor's bodkin, the course of our sympathies is rudely arrested, and we feel as if the author had put upon us the old-fashioned pleasantry of selling a bargain."[1]

The beautiful natural scenery, and the sterling Scotch characters and manners introduced in The Monastery, are, however, sufficient to redeem even these mistakes; and, indeed, I am inclined to believe that it will ultimately occupy a securer place than some romances enjoying hitherto a far higher reputation, in which he makes no use of *Scottish* materials.

Sir Walter himself thought well of *The Abbot* when he had finished it. When he sent me a complete copy, I found on a slip of paper at the beginning of volume first, these two lines from *Tom Cribb's Memorial to Congress*—

> "Up he rose in a funk, lapped a toothful of brandy,
> And *to it* again!—any odds upon Sandy!"—

and whatever ground he had been supposed to lose in The Monastery, part at least of it was regained by this tale, and especially by its most graceful and pathetic portraiture of Mary Stuart. "The Castle of Lochleven," says the Chief-Commissioner Adam, "is seen at every turn from

[1] Adolphus's *Letters to Heber*, p. 13.

the northern side of Blair-Adam. This castle, renowned and attractive above all the others in my neighbourhood, became an object of much increased attention, and a theme of constant conversation, after the author of Waverley had, by his inimitable power of delineating character—by his creative poetic fancy in representing scenes of varied interest—and by the splendour of his romantic descriptions, infused a more diversified and a deeper tone of feeling into the history of Queen Mary's captivity and escape."

I have introduced this quotation from a little book privately printed for the amiable Judge's own family and familiar friends, because Sir Walter owned to myself at the time, that the idea of *The Abbot* had arisen in his mind during a visit to Blair-Adam. In the pages of the tale itself, indeed, the beautiful localities of that estate are distinctly mentioned, with an allusion to the virtues and manners that adorned its mansion, such as must have been intended to satisfy the possessor (if he could have had any doubts on the subject) as to the authorship of those novels.

About Midsummer 1816, the Judge received a visit from his near relation William Clerk, Adam Fergusson, his hereditary friend and especial favourite, and their lifelong intimate, Scott. They remained with him for two or three days, in the course of which they were all so much delighted with their host, and he with them, that it was resolved to rëassemble the party, with a few additions, at the same season of every following year. This was the origin of the Blair-Adam Club, the regular members of which were in number nine. They usually contrived to meet on a Friday; spent the Saturday in a ride to some scene of historical interest within an easy distance; enjoyed a quiet Sunday at home—"duly attending divine worship at the Kirk of Cleish (not Cleishbotham)"—gave Monday morning to another antiquarian excursion, and returned to Edinburgh in time for the Courts of Tuesday. From 1816 to 1831

inclusive, Sir Walter was a constant attendant at these meetings. He visited in this way Castle-Campbell, Magus Moor, Falkland, Dunfermline, St Andrew's, and many other scenes of ancient celebrity: to one of those trips we must ascribe his dramatic sketch of *Macduff's Cross*—and to that of the dog-days of 1819 we owe the weightier obligation of *The Abbot.*

To return—for reasons connected with the affairs of the Ballantynes, Messrs Longman published the first edition of the Monastery; and similar circumstances induced Sir Walter to associate this house with that of Constable in the succeeding novel. Constable disliked its title, and would fain have had *The Nunnery* instead: but Scott stuck to his *Abbot.* The bookseller grumbled a little, but was soothed by the author's reception of his request that Queen Elizabeth might be brought into the field in his next romance, as a companion to the Mary Stuart of The Abbot. Scott would not indeed indulge him with the choice of the particular period of Elizabeth's reign, indicated in the proposed title of *The Armada;* but expressed his willingness to take up his own old favourite legend of Meikle's ballad. He wished to call the novel, like the ballad, *Cumnor-Hall,* but in further deference to Constable's wishes, substituted "Kenilworth." John Ballantyne objected to this title, and told Constable the result would be "something worthy of the kennel;" but Constable had all reason to be satisfied with the child of his christening. His partner, Mr Cadell, says—"His vanity boiled over so much at this time, on having his suggestion gone into, that, when in his high moods, he used to stalk up and down his room, and exclaim, 'By G—, I am all but the author of the Waverley Novels!'" Constable's bibliographical knowledge, however, it is but fair to say, was really of most essential service to Scott upon many of these occasions; and his letter proposing the subject of *The Armada,* furnished such a catalogue of materials for the illustration of the period as may, probably enough,

have called forth some very energetic expression of thankfulness.

Scott's kindness secured for John Ballantyne the usual interest in the profits of Kenilworth,—the last of his great works in which his friend was to have any concern. I have already mentioned the obvious drooping of his health and strength; yet his manners continued as airy as ever; —nay, it was now, after his maladies had taken a very serious shape, and it was hardly possible to look on him without anticipating a speedy termination of his career, that the gay hopeful spirit of the shattered and trembling invalid led him to plunge into a new stream of costly indulgence. It was an amiable point in his character, that he had always retained a tender fondness for his native place. He had now taken up the ambition of rivalling his illustrious friend, in some sort, by providing himself with a summer retirement amidst the scenery of his boyhood; and it need not be doubted, at the same time, that in erecting a villa at Kelso, he calculated on substantial advantages from its vicinity to Abbotsford.

One fine day of this autumn I accompanied Sir Walter to inspect the progress of this edifice, which was to have the title of *Walton Hall.* John had purchased two or three old houses with notched gables and thatched roofs, near the end of the long original street of Kelso, with their small gardens and paddocks running down to the Tweed. He had already fitted up convenient bachelor's lodgings in one of the primitive tenements, and converted the others into a goodly range of stabling, and was now watching the completion of his new *corps de logis* behind, which included a handsome entrance-hall, or saloon, destined to have old Piscator's bust on a stand in the centre, and to be embellished all round with emblems of his sport. Behind this were spacious rooms overlooking the little *pleasance*, which was to be laid out somewhat in the Italian style, with ornamental steps, a fountain and *jet d'eau*, and a broad

terrace hanging over the river. In these new dominions John received us with pride and hilarity; we dined gaily, *al fresco*, by the side of his fountain; and after not a few bumpers to the prosperity of Walton Hall, he mounted Old Mortality, and escorted us for several miles on our ride homewards. It was this day that, overflowing with kindly zeal, Scott revived one of the long-forgotten projects of their early connexion in business, and offered his gratuitous services as editor of a Novelist's Library, to be printed and published for the sole benefit of his host. The offer was eagerly embraced, and when, two or three mornings afterwards, John returned Sir Walter's visit, he had put into his hands the MS. of that admirable life of Fielding, which was followed at brief intervals, as the arrangements of the projected work required, by fourteen others of the same class and excellence. The publication of the first volume of "Ballantyne's Novelist's Library" did not take place, however, until February 1821; and notwithstanding its Prefaces, in which Scott combines all the graces of his easy narrative with a perpetual stream of deep and gentle wisdom in commenting on the tempers and fortunes of his best predecessors in novel literature, and also with expositions of his own critical views, which prove how profoundly he had investigated the principles and practice of those masters before he struck out a new path for himself—in spite of these delightful and valuable essays, the Collection was not a prosperous speculation.

Sir James Hall of Dunglass resigned, in November 1820, the Presidency of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; and the Fellows, though they had on all former occasions selected a man of science to fill that post, paid Sir Walter the compliment of unanimously requesting him to be Sir James's successor in it. He felt and expressed a natural hesitation about accepting this honour—which at first sight seemed like invading the proper department of another order of scholars. But when it was urged upon him that the So-

ciety is really a double one—embracing a section for literature as well as one of science—and that it was only due to the former to let it occasionally supply the chief of the whole body,—Scott acquiesced in the flattering proposal; and his gentle skill was found effective, so long as he held the Chair, in maintaining and strengthening the tone of good feeling and good manners which can alone render the meetings of such a society either agreeable or useful. The new President himself soon began to take a lively interest in many of their discussions—those at least which pointed to any discovery of practical use;—and he by and by added some eminent men of science, with whom his acquaintance had hitherto been slight, to the list of his most valued friends:—in particular Sir David Brewster.

I may mention his introduction about the same time to an institution of a far different description,—that called "The Celtic Society of Edinburgh;" a club established mainly for the patronage of ancient Highland manners and customs, especially the use of "the Garb of Old Gaul"—though part of their funds have always been applied to the really important object of extending education in the wilder districts of the north. At their annual meetings Scott was henceforth a regular attendant. He appeared, as in duty bound, in the costume of the Fraternity, and was usually followed by "John of Skye," in all his plumage.

His son Charles left home for the first time towards the close of 1820—a boy of exceedingly quick and lively parts, with the gentlest and most affectionate and modest of dispositions. This threw a cloud over the domestic circle; but, as on the former occasion, Sir Walter sought and found comfort in a constant correspondence with the absent favourite. Charles had gone to Lampeter, in Wales, to be under the care of the celebrated scholar John Williams, Archdeacon of Cardigan; whose pains were well rewarded in the progress of his pupil.

About Christmas appeared Kenilworth, in 3 vols. post

8vo, like Ivanhoe, which form was adhered to with all the subsequent novels of the series. Kenilworth was one of the most successful of them all at the time of publication; and it continues, and, I doubt not, will ever continue to be placed in the very highest rank of prose fiction. The rich variety of character, and scenery, and incident in this novel, has never indeed been surpassed; nor, with the one exception of the Bride of Lammermoor, has Scott bequeathed us a deeper and more affecting tragedy than that of Amy Robsart.

CHAPTER III.

Death of John Ballantyne—and William Erskine—George IV. at Edinburgh—Visits of Mr Crabbe and Miss Edgeworth—Reminiscences by Mr Adolphus—Publication of Lives of the Novelists—Halidon Hill—The Pirate—The Fortunes of Nigel—Peveril of the Peak—Quentin Durward—and St Ronan's Well.—1821-1823.

BEFORE the end of January 1821, he went to London at the request of the other Clerks of Session, that he might watch over the progress of an Act of Parliament designed to relieve them from a considerable part of their drudgery in attesting recorded deeds by signature;—and his stay was prolonged until near the beginning of the Summer term of his Court. On his return he found two matters of domestic interest awaiting him. On the 23d April he writes to the Cornet:—"The noble Captain Fergusson was married on Monday last. I was present at the bridal, and I assure you the like hath not been seen since the days of Lesmahago. Like his prototype, the Captain advanced in a jaunty military step, with a kind of leer on his face that seemed to quiz the whole affair. You should write to your brother sportsman and soldier, and wish the veteran joy of his entrance into the band of Benedicts. Odd enough that I should christen a grandchild and attend the wedding of a contemporary within two days of each other. I have sent John of Skye, with Tom, and all the rabblement which they can collect, to play the pipes, shout, and fire guns below the Captain's windows this morning; and I am just going over to hover about on my pony, and witness their reception. The happy pair returned to Huntley Burn on Saturday; but yesterday being Sunday, we permitted them to enjoy their

pillows in quiet. This morning they must not expect to get off so well."

The Captain and his Lady soon pitched a tent for themselves—but it was in the same parish, and *Gattonside* was but an additional Huntley Burn. I may as well introduce here, however, Scott's description to Lord Montagu of *the Glen* and its yet undivided community:—"The Captain is a very singular fellow; for, with all his humour and knowledge of the world, he by nature is a remarkably shy and modest man, and more afraid of the possibility of intrusion than would occur to any one who only sees him in the full stream of society. His sister Margaret is extremely like him in the turn of thought and of humour, and he has two others who are as great curiosities in their way. The eldest is a complete old maid, with all the gravity and shyness of the character, but not a grain of its bad humour or spleen; on the contrary, she is one of the kindest and most motherly creatures in the world. The second, Mary, was in her day a very pretty girl; but her person became deformed, and she has the sharpness of features with which that circumstance is sometimes attended. She rises very early in the morning, and roams over all my wild land in the neighbourhood, wearing the most complicated pile of handkerchiefs of different colours on her head, and a stick double her own height in her hand, attended by two dogs, whose powers of yelping are truly terrific. With such garb and accompaniments, she has very nearly established the character in the neighbourhood of being *something no canny*—and the urchins of Melrose and Darnick are frightened from gathering hazel-nuts and cutting wands in my cleuch, by the fear of meeting *the daft lady*. With all this quizzicality, I do not believe there ever existed a family with so much mutual affection, and such an overflow of benevolence to all around them, from men and women down to hedge-sparrows and lame ass-colts, more than one of which they have taken under their direct and special protection."

On the 16th of June 1821, died at Edinburgh John Ballantyne. Until within a week or two before, Sir Walter had not entertained any thought that his end was near. I was present at one of their last interviews, and John's death-bed was a thing not to be forgotten. We sat by him for perhaps an hour, and I think half that space was occupied with his predictions of a speedy end, and details of his last will, which he had just been executing, and which lay on his coverlid; the other half being given, five minutes or so at a time, to questions and remarks, which intimated that the hope of life was still flickering before him—nay, that his interest in all its concerns remained eager. The proof-sheets of a volume of his Novelist's Library lay also by his pillow; and he passed from them to his will, and then back to them, as by jerks and starts the unwonted veil of gloom closed upon his imagination, or was withdrawn again. He had, he said, left his great friend and patron L.2000 towards the completion of the new library at Abbotsford—and the spirit of the auctioneer virtuoso flashed up as he began to describe what would, he thought, be the best style and arrangement of the book-shelves. He was interrupted by an agony of asthma, which left him with hardly any signs of life; and ultimately he did expire in a fit of the same kind. Scott was visibly and profoundly shaken by this scene and sequel. As we stood together a few days afterwards, while they were smoothing the turf over John's remains in the Canongate churchyard, the heavens which had been dark and slaty, cleared up suddenly, and the midsummer sun shone forth in his strength. Scott, ever awake to the "skiey influences," cast his eye along the overhanging line of the Calton Hill, with its gleaming walls and towers, and then turning to the grave again, "I feel," he whispered in my ear,—"I feel as if there would be less sunshine for me from this day forth."

As we walked homewards, he told me, among other fa-

vourable *traits* of his friend, one little story which I must not omit. He remarked one day to a poor student of divinity attending his auction, that he looked as if he were in bad health. The young man assented with a sigh. "Come," said Ballantyne, "I think I ken the secret of a sort of draft that would relieve you—particularly," he added, handing him a cheque for L.5 or L.10—"particularly, my dear, if taken upon an empty stomach."

I am sorry to take leave of John Ballantyne with the remark, that his last will was a document of the same class with too many of his *states* and *calendars*. So far from having L.2000 to bequeath to Sir Walter, he died as he had lived, ignorant of the situation of his affairs, and deep in debt.

The coronation of George IV. had been deferred in consequence of the unhappy affair of the Queen's Trial. The 19th of July 1821 was now announced for this solemnity, and Sir Walter resolved to be among the spectators. It occurred to him that if the Ettrick Shepherd were to accompany him, and produce some memorial of the scene likely to catch the popular ear in Scotland, good service might thus be done to the cause of loyalty. But this was not his only consideration. Hogg had married a handsome and most estimable young woman, a good deal above his own original rank in life, the year before; and expecting with her a dowry of L.1000, he had forthwith revived the grand ambition of an earlier day, and taken an extensive farm on the Buccleuch estate, at a short distance from Altrive Lake. Misfortune pursued the Shepherd—the bankruptcy of his wife's father interrupted the stocking of the sheep-walk; and the arable part was sadly mismanaged. Scott hoped that a visit to London, and a coronation poem, or pamphlet, might end in some pension or post that would relieve these difficulties, and when writing to Lord Sidmouth, to ask a place for himself in the Hall and Abbey of Westminster, begged suitable accommodation for Hogg also.

Lord Sidmouth answered that Sir Walter's wishes should be gratified, *provided* they would both dine with him the day after the coronation, in Richmond Park, "where," says the letter of the Under-Secretary, "his Lordship will invite the Duke of York and a few other Jacobites to meet you." All this being made known to the tenant of Mount-Benger, he wrote to Scott, as he says, "with the tear in his eye," to signify, that if he went to London he must miss attending the great annual Border fair, held on St Boswell's Green, on the 18th of every July; and that his absence from that meeting so soon after entering upon business as a store-farmer, would be considered by his new compeers as highly imprudent and discreditable. "In short," James concludes, "the thing is impossible. But as there is no man in his Majesty's dominions admires his great talents for government, and the energy and dignity of his administration, so much as I do, I will write something at home, and endeavour to give it you before you start." The Shepherd probably expected that these pretty compliments would reach the royal ear; but however that may have been, his own Muse turned a deaf ear to him—at least I never heard of anything that he wrote on this occasion. Scott embarked without him, on board a new steam-ship called *the City of Edinburgh*, which, as he suggested to the master, ought rather to have been christened the *New Reekie*.

On the day after the coronation, Sir Walter addressed a letter descriptive of the whole ceremonial to Ballantyne, who published it in his newspaper. It has been since reprinted frequently: and will probably possess considerable interest for the student of English history and manners in future times; for the two next coronations were conducted on a vastly inferior scale of splendour and expense—and the precedent of curtailment in any such matters is now seldom neglected.

At the close of that brilliant scene, he received a mark of homage to his genius which delighted him not less than

Laird Nippy's reverence for the *Sheriff's Knoll*, and the Sheffield cutler's dear acquisition of his signature on a visiting ticket. Missing his carriage, he had to return home on foot from Westminster, after the banquet—that is to say, between two or three o'clock in the morning;—when he and a young gentleman his companion found themselves locked in the crowd, somewhere near Whitehall, and the bustle and tumult were such that his friend was afraid some accident might happen to the lame limb. A space for the dignitaries was kept clear at that point by the Scots Greys. Sir Walter addressed a serjeant of this celebrated regiment, begging to be allowed to pass by him into the open ground in the middle of the street. The man answered shortly, that his orders were strict—that the thing was impossible. While he was endeavouring to persuade the serjeant to relent, some new wave of turbulence approached from behind, and his young companion exclaimed in a loud voice, "Take care, Sir Walter Scott, take care!" The stalwart dragoon, on hearing the name, said, "What! Sir Walter Scott? He shall get through anyhow!" He then addressed the soldiers near him—"Make room, men, for Sir Walter Scott, our illustrious countryman!" The men answered, "Sir Walter Scott!—God bless him!"—and he was in a moment within the guarded line of safety.

"I saw Sir Walter again," says Allan Cunningham, "when he attended the coronation. In the meantime his bust had been wrought in marble, and the sculptor desired to take the advantage of his visit to communicate such touches of expression or lineament as the new material rendered necessary. This was done with a happiness of eye and hand almost magical: for five hours did the poet sit, or stand, or walk, while Chantrey's chisel was passed again and again over the marble, adding something at every touch. 'Well, Allan,' he said, 'were you at the coronation? it was a splendid sight.'—'No, Sir Walter,' I an-

swered,—'places were dear and ill to get: I am told it was magnificent: but having seen the procession of King Crispin at Dumfries, I was satisfied.' Scott laughed heartily.—'That's not a bit better than Hogg,' he said. 'He stood balancing the matter whether to go to the coronation or the fair of Saint Boswell—and the fair carried it.' During this conversation, Mr Bolton the engineer came in. Something like a cold acknowledgment passed between the poet and him. On his passing into an inner room, Scott said, 'I am afraid Mr Bolton has not forgot a little passage that once took place between us. We met in a public company, and in reply to the remark of some one, he said, "That's like the old saying,—in every quarter of the world you will find a Scot, a rat, and a Newcastle grindstone." This touched my Scotch spirit, and I said, "Mr Bolton, you should have added—*and a Brummagem button.*" There was a laugh at this, and Mr Bolton replied, "We make something better in Birmingham than buttons—we make steam-engines, sir."—'I like Bolton,' continued Sir Walter; 'he is a brave man,—and who can dislike the brave? He shewed this on a remarkable occasion. He had engaged to coin for some foreign prince a large quantity of gold. This was found out by some desperadoes, who resolved to rob the premises, and as a preliminary step tried to bribe the porter. The porter was an honest fellow,—he told Bolton that he was offered a hundred pounds to be blind and deaf next night. Take the money, was the answer, and I shall protect the place. Midnight came—the doors, secured with patent locks, opened as of their own accord—and three men with dark lanterns entered and went straight to the gold. Bolton had prepared some flax steeped in turpentine—he dropt fire upon it,—a sudden light filled all the place, and with his assistants he rushed forward on the robbers; the leader saw in a moment he was betrayed, turned on the porter, and shooting him dead, burst through all obstruc-

tion, and with an ingot of gold in his hand, scaled the wall and escaped.' 'That is quite a romance in robbing,' I said; and I had nearly said more, for the cavern scene and death of Meg Merrilees rose in my mind;—perhaps the mind of Sir Walter was taking the direction of the Solway too, for he said, 'How long have you been from Nithsdale?'"

Sir F. Chantrey presented the bust, of which Mr Cunningham speaks, to Sir Walter himself; by whose remotest descendants it will undoubtedly be held in additional honour on that account. The poet had the further gratification of learning that three copies were executed in marble before the original quitted the studio: One for Windsor Castle—a second for Apsley House—and a third for the friendly sculptor's own private collection. The casts of this bust have since been multiplied beyond all numeration. Some years later Scott gave Chantrey some more sittings: and a second bust, rather graver in the expression, was then produced for Sir Robert Peel's gallery at Drayton.

When Sir Walter returned from London, he brought with him the detailed plans of Mr Atkinson for the completion of his house at Abbotsford;—which, however, did not extend to the gateway or the beautiful screen between the court and the garden—for these graceful parts of the general design were conceptions of his own, reduced to shape by the skill of the Messrs Smith of Darnick. It would not, indeed, be easy for me to apportion rightly the constituent members of the whole edifice;—throughout there were numberless consultations with Mr Blore, Mr Terry, and Mr Skene, as well as with Mr Atkinson—and the actual builders placed considerable inventive talents, as well as admirable workmanship, at the service of their friendly employer. Every preparation was now made by them, and the foundations might have been set about without farther delay; but he was very reluctant to authorize the demolition of the rustic porch of the old cottage, with

its luxuriant overgrowth of roses and jessamines; and, in short, could not make up his mind to sign the death-warrant of his favourite bower until winter had robbed it of its beauties. He then made an excursion from Edinburgh, on purpose to be present at its downfall—saved as many of the creepers as seemed likely to survive removal, and planted them with his own hands about a somewhat similar porch, erected expressly for their reception, at his daughter Sophia's little cottage of Chiefswood.

There my wife and I spent this summer and autumn of 1821—the first of several seasons which will ever dwell on my memory as the happiest of my life. We were near enough Abbotsford to partake as often as we liked of its brilliant society; yet could do so without being exposed to the worry and exhaustion of spirit which the daily reception of new comers entailed upon all the family except Sir Walter himself. But, in truth, even he was not always proof against the annoyances connected with such a style of open-house-keeping. Even his temper sunk sometimes under the solemn applauses of learned dulness, the vapid raptures of painted and periwigged dowagers, the horse-leech avidity with which underbred foreigners urged their questions, and the pompous simpers of condescending magnates. When sore beset at home in this way, he would every now and then discover that he had some very particular business to attend to on an outlying part of his estate, and craving the indulgence of his guests overnight, appear at the cabin in the glen before its inhabitants were astir in the morning. The clatter of Sibyl Grey's hoofs, the yelping of Mustard and Spice, and his own joyous shout of *reveillée* under our windows, were the signal that he had burst his toils, and meant for that day to "take his ease in his inn." On descending, he was to be found seated with all his dogs and ours about him, under a spreading ash that overshadowed half the bank between the cottage and the brook, pointing the edge of his woodman's axe for himself, and

listening to Tom Purdie's lecture touching the plantation that most needed thinning. After breakfast, he would take possession of a dressing-room up stairs, and write a chapter of *The Pirate;* and then, having made up and despatched his packet for the printer, away to join Purdie wherever the foresters were at work—and sometimes to labour among them strenuously himself—until it was time either to rejoin his own party at Abbotsford, or the quiet circle of the cottage. —When his guests were few and friendly, he often made them come over and meet him at Chiefswood in a body towards evening; and surely he never appeared to more amiable advantage than when helping his young people with their little arrangements upon such occasions. He was ready with all sorts of devices to supply the wants of a narrow establishment; he used to delight particularly in sinking the wine in a well under the *brae* ere he went out, and hauling up the basket just before dinner was announced—this primitive process being, he said, what he had always practised when a young housekeeper—and, in his opinion, far superior in its results to any application of ice; and, in the same spirit, whenever the weather was sufficiently genial, he voted for dining out-of-doors altogether, which at once got rid of the inconvenience of very small rooms, and made it natural and easy for the gentlemen to help the ladies, so that the paucity of servants went for nothing. Mr Rose used to amuse himself with likening the scene and the party to the closing act of one of those little French dramas, where 'Monsieur le Comte' and 'Madame la Comtesse' appear feasting at a village bridal under the trees; but in truth, our "M. le Comte" was only trying to live over again for a few simple hours his own old life of Lasswade.

When circumstances permitted, he usually spent one evening at least in the week at our little cottage; and almost as frequently he did the like with the Fergussons, to whose table he could bring chance visitors, when he pleased, with

equal freedom as to his daughter's. Indeed it seemed to be much a matter of chance, any fine day when there had been no alarming invasion of the Southron, whether the three families (which, in fact, made but one) should dine at Abbotsford, at Huntley Burn, or at Chiefswood; and at none of them was the party considered quite complete, unless it included also Mr Laidlaw. Death has laid a heavy hand upon that circle—as happy a circle I believe as ever met. Bright eyes now closed in dust, gay voices for ever silenced, seem to haunt me as I write.

During several weeks of that summer Scott had under his roof Mr William Erskine and two of his daughters; this being, I believe, their first visit to Tweedside since the death of Mrs Erskine in September 1819. He had probably made a point of having his friend with him at this particular time, because he was desirous of having the benefit of his advice and corrections from day to day as he advanced in the composition of The Pirate—with the localities of which romance the Sheriff of Orkney and Zetland was of course thoroughly familiar. At all events, the constant and eager delight with which Erskine watched the progress of the tale has left a deep impression on my memory; and indeed I heard so many of its chapters first read from the MS. by him, that I can never open the book now without thinking I hear his voice. Sir Walter used to give him at breakfast the pages he had written that morning; and very commonly, while he was again at work in his study, Erskine would walk over to Chiefswood, that he might have the pleasure of reading them aloud to my wife and me under our favourite tree, before the packet had to be sealed up for Edinburgh. I cannot paint the pleasure and the pride with which he acquitted himself on such occasions. The little artifice of his manner was merely superficial, and was wholly forgotten as tender affection and admiration, fresh as the impulses of childhood, glistened in his eye, and trembled in his voice.

Erskine was, I think, the only man in whose society Scott took great pleasure, during the more vigorous part of his life, that had neither constitution nor inclination for any of the rough bodily exercises in which he himself delighted. The Counsellor (as the survivors of *The Mountain* always called him) was a little man of feeble make, who seemed unhappy when his pony got beyond a footpace, and had never, I should suppose, addicted himself to any out-of-doors sport whatever. He would, I fancy, have as soon thought of slaying his own mutton as of handling a fowling-piece; he used to shudder when he saw a party equipped for coursing, as if murder were in the wind; but the cool meditative angler was in his eyes the abomination of abominations. His small elegant features, hectic cheek, and soft hazel eyes, were the index of the quick sensitive gentle spirit within. He had the warm heart of a woman, her generous enthusiasm, and some of her weaknesses. A beautiful landscape, or a fine strain of music, would send the tears rolling down his cheek; and though capable, I have no doubt, of exhibiting, had his duty called him to do so, the highest spirit of a hero or a martyr, he had very little command over his nerves amidst circumstances such as men of ordinary mould (to say nothing of iron fabrics like Scott's) regard with indifference. He would dismount to lead his horse down what his friend hardly perceived to be a descent at all; grew pale at a precipice; and, unlike the White Lady of Avenel, would go a long way round for a bridge.

Erskine had as yet been rather unfortunate in his professional career, and thought a sheriffship by no means the kind of advancement due to his merits, and which his connexions might naturally have secured for him. These circumstances had at the time when I first observed him tinged his demeanour; he had come to intermingle a certain wayward snappishness now and then with his forensic exhibitions, and in private seemed inclined (though altogether

incapable of abandoning the Tory party) to say bitter things of people in high places; but, with these exceptions, never was benevolence towards all the human race more lively and overflowing than his evidently was, even when he considered himself as one who had reason to complain of his luck in the world. Now, however, these little asperities had disappeared; one great real grief had cast its shadow over him, and submissive to the chastisement of Heaven, he had no longer any thoughts for the petty misusage of mankind. Meanwhile he shrunk from the collisions of general society, and lived almost exclusively in his own little circle of intimates. His conversation, though somewhat precise and finical on the first impression, was rich in knowledge. His literary ambition, active and aspiring at the outset, had long before this time merged in his profound veneration for Scott; but he still read a great deal, and did so as much I believe with a view to assisting Scott by hints and suggestions, as for his own amusement. He had much of his friend's tact in extracting the picturesque from old, and, generally speaking, dull books; and in bringing out his stores he often shewed a great deal of quaint humour and sly wit. Scott, on his side, respected, trusted, and loved him, much as an affectionate husband does the wife who gave him her heart in youth, and thinks his thoughts rather than her own in the evening of life; he soothed, cheered, and sustained Erskine habitually. I do not believe a more entire and perfect confidence ever subsisted than theirs was and always had been in each other; and to one who had duly observed the creeping jealousies of human nature, it might perhaps seem doubtful on which side the balance of real nobility of heart and character, as displayed in their connection at the time of which I am speaking, ought to be cast.

In the course of a few months more, Sir Walter had the great satisfaction of seeing Erskine at length promoted to a seat on the Bench of the Court of Session,

by the title of Lord Kinnedder; and his pleasure was enhanced doubtless by the reflection that his friend owed this elevation very much, if not mainly, to his own unwearied exertions on his behalf. He writes thus on the occasion to Joanna Baillie:—"There is a degree of melancholy attending the later stages of a barrister's profession, which, though no one cares for sentimentalities attendant on a man of fifty or thereabout, in a rusty black bombazine gown, are not the less cruelly felt: their business sooner or later fails, for younger men will work cheaper, and longer, and harder—besides that the cases are few, comparatively, in which senior counsel are engaged, and it is not etiquette to ask any one in that advanced age to take the whole burden of a cause. Insensibly, without decay of talent, and without losing the public esteem, there is a gradual decay of employment, which almost no man ever practised thirty years without experiencing; and thus the honours and dignities of the Bench, so hardly earned, and themselves leading but to toils of another kind, are peculiarly desirable. Erskine would have sat there ten years ago, but for wretched intrigues."

In August appeared the volume of the Novelist's Library, containing Scott's Life of Smollett; and it being now ascertained that John Ballantyne had died a debtor, the editor offered to proceed with this series of prefaces, on the footing that the whole profits of the work should go to his widow. Mr Constable, whose own health was now beginning to break, had gone southwards in quest of more genial air, and was residing near London when he heard of this proposition. He immediately wrote to me, entreating me to represent to Sir Walter that the undertaking, having been coldly received at first, was unlikely to grow in favour if continued on the same plan—that in his opinion the bulk of the volumes, and the small type of their text, had been unwisely chosen, for a work of mere entertainment, and could only be suitable for one of reference; that Ballantyne's Nove-

list's Library, therefore, ought to be stopped at once, and another in a lighter shape, to range with the late collected edition of the first series of the Waverley Romances, announced with his own name as publisher and Scott's as editor. He proposed at the same time to commence the issue of a Select Library of English Poetry, with prefaces and a few notes by the same hand; and calculating that each of these collections should extend to twenty-five volumes, and that the publication of both might be concluded within two years—"The writing of the prefaces, &c. forming perhaps an occasional relief from more important labours"!—the bookseller offered to pay their editor L.6000: a small portion of which sum, as he hinted, would undoubtedly be more than Mrs John Ballantyne could ever hope to derive from the prosecution of her husband's last publishing adventure. Various causes combined to prevent the realization of these magnificent projects. Scott now, as at the beginning of his career, had views about what a collection of English Poetry should be, in which even Constable could not be made to concur; and one of his letters to Lady Louisa Stuart sufficiently explains the coldness with which he regarded further attempts upon our Elder Novelists. The Ballantyne Library crept on to the tenth volume, and was then dropped abruptly; and the double negociation with Constable was never renewed.

Lady Louisa had not, I fancy, read Scott's Lives of the Novelists until, some years after this time, they were collected into two little piratical duodecimos by a Parisian bookseller; and on her then expressing her admiration of them, together with her astonishment that the speculation of which they formed a part should have attracted little notice of any sort, he answered as follows:—"I am delighted they afford any entertainment, for they are rather flimsily written, being done merely to oblige a friend: they were yoked to a great ill-conditioned, lubberly, double-columned book, which they were as useful to tug along as

a set of fleas would be to draw a mail-coach. It is very difficult to answer your Ladyship's curious question concerning change of taste; but whether in young or old, it takes place insensibly without the parties being aware of it. A grand-aunt of my own, Mrs Keith of Ravelstone, who was a person of some condition, being a daughter of Sir John Swinton of Swinton—lived with unabated vigour of intellect to a very advanced age. She was very fond of reading, and enjoyed it to the last of her long life. One day she asked me, when we happened to be alone together, whether I had ever seen Mrs Behn's novels?—I confessed the charge.—Whether I could get her a sight of them?—I said, with some hesitation, I believed I could; but that I did not think she would like either the manners, or the language, which approached too near that of Charles II.'s time to be quite proper reading. 'Nevertheless,' said the good old lady, 'I remember them being so much admired, and being so much interested in them myself, that I wish to look at them again.' To hear was to obey. So I sent Mrs Aphra Behn, curiously sealed up, with 'private and confidential' on the packet, to my gay old grand-aunt. The next time I saw her afterwards, she gave me back Aphra, properly wrapped up, with nearly these words:—'Take back your bonny Mrs Behn; and, if you will take my advice, put her in the fire, for I found it impossible to get through the very first novel. But is it not,' she said, 'a very odd thing that I, an old woman of eighty and upwards, sitting alone, feel myself ashamed to read a book which, sixty years ago, I have heard read aloud for the amusement of large circles, consisting of the first and most creditable society in London?' This, of course, was owing to the gradual improvement of the national taste and delicacy. The change that brings into and throws out of fashion particular styles of composition, is something of the same kind. It does not signify what the greater or less merit of the book is:—the reader, as Tony Lumpkin says, must be in

a concatenation accordingly—the fashion, or the general taste, must have prepared him to be pleased, or put him on his guard against it. It is much like *dress*. If Clarissa should appear before a modern party in her lace ruffles and head-dress, or Lovelace in his wig, however genteely powdered, I am afraid they would make no conquests; the fashion which makes conquests of us in other respects, is very powerful in literary composition, and adds to the effect of some works, while in others it forms their sole merit."

Among other miscellaneous work of this autumn, Scott amused some leisure hours with writing a series of "Private Letters," supposed to have been discovered in the repositories of a Noble English Family, and giving a picture of manners in town and country during the early part of the reign of James I. These letters were printed as fast as he penned them, in a handsome quarto form, and he furnished the margin with a running commentary of notes, drawn up in the character of a disappointed chaplain, a keen Whig, or rather Radical, overflowing on all occasions with spleen against Monarchy and Aristocracy. When the printing had reached the 72d page, however, he was told candidly by Erskine, by James Ballantyne, and also by myself, that, however clever his imitation of the epistolary style of the period in question, he was throwing away in these letters the materials of as good a romance as he had ever penned; and a few days afterwards he said to me—patting Sibyl's neck till she danced under him—"You were all quite right; if the letters had passed for genuine they would have found favour only with a few musty antiquaries; and if the joke were detected, there was not story enough to carry it off. I shall burn the sheets, and give you Bonny King Jamie and all his tail in the old shape, as soon as I can get Captain Goffe within view of the gallows."

I think it must have been about the middle of October that he dropped the scheme of this fictitious correspondence,

I well remember the morning that he began *The Fortunes of Nigel*. The day being destined for Newark Hill, I went over to Abbotsford before breakfast, and found Mr Terry walking about with his friend's master-mason. While Terry and I were chatting, Scott came out, bareheaded, with a bunch of MS. in his hand, and said, "Well, lads, I've laid the keel of a new lugger this morning—here it is—be off to the waterside, and let me hear how you like it." Terry took the papers, and walking up and down by the river, read to me the first chapter of Nigel. He expressed great delight with the animated opening, and especially with the contrast between its thorough stir of London life, and a chapter about Norna of the Fitfulhead, in the third volume of The Pirate, which had been given to him in a similar manner the morning before. I could see that (according to the Sheriff's phrase) *he smelt roast meat;* here there was every prospect of a fine field for the art of *Terryfication.* The actor, when our host met us returning from the haugh, did not fail to express his opinion that the new novel would be of this quality. Sir Walter, as he took the MS. from his hand, eyed him with a gay smile, in which genuine benevolence mingled with mock exultation, and then throwing himself into an attitude of comical dignity, he rolled out, in the tones of John Kemble, one of the loftiest bursts of Ben Jonson's Mammon—

> "Come on, sir. Now you set your foot on shore
> In *Novo orbe*——Pertinax, my Surly,[1]
> Again I say to thee aloud, Be rich,
> This day thou shalt have ingots."—

This was another period of "refreshing the machine." Early in November, I find Sir Walter writing thus to Con-

[1] The fun of this application of "my Surly" will not escape any one who remembers the kind and good-humoured Terry's power of assuming a peculiarly saturnine aspect. This queer grimness of look was invaluable to the comedian; and in private he often called it up when his heart was most cheerful.

stable's partner, Mr Cadell :—" I want two books, Malcolm's London Redivivus, or some such name, and Derham's Artificial Clockmaker." [The reader of Nigel will understand these requests.] " All good luck to you, commercially and otherwise. I am grown a shabby letter-writer, for my eyes are not so young as they were, and I grudge every thing that does not go to press."

Sir Walter concluded, before he went to town in November, another negotiation of importance with this house. They agreed to give for the remaining copyright of the four novels published between December 1819 and January 1821—to wit, Ivanhoe, The Monastery, The Abbot, and Kenilworth—the sum of five thousand guineas. The stipulation about not revealing the author's name, under a penalty of L.2000, was repeated. By these four novels, the fruits of scarcely more than twelve months' labour, he had already cleared at least L.10,000 before this bargain was completed. I cannot pretend to guess what the actual state of his pecuniary affairs was at the time when John Ballantyne's death relieved them from one great source of complication and difficulty. But I have said enough to satisfy every reader, that when he began the second, and far the larger division of his building at Abbotsford, he must have contemplated the utmost sum it could cost him as a mere trifle in relation to the resources at his command. He must have reckoned on clearing L.30,000 at least in the course of a couple of years by the novels written within such a period. The publisher of his Tales, who best knew how they were produced, and what they brought of gross profit, and who must have had the strongest interest in keeping the author's name untarnished by any risk or reputation of failure, would willingly, as we have seen, have given him L.6000 more within a space of two years for works of a less serious sort, likely to be despatched at leisure hours, without at all interfering with the main manufacture. But alas! even this was not all. Messrs Constable had

such faith in the prospective fertility of his imagination, that they were by this time quite ready to sign bargains and grant bills for novels and romances to be produced hereafter, but of which the subjects and the names were alike unknown to them and to the man from whose pen they were to proceed.[1] A forgotten satirist well says :—

"The active principle within
Works on some brains the effect of gin;"

but in Sir Walter's case, every external influence combined to stir the flame, and swell the intoxication of restless exuberant energy. His allies knew indeed, what he did not, that the sale of his novels was rather less than it had been in the days of Ivanhoe; and hints had sometimes been dropped to him that it might be well to try the effect of a pause. But he always thought—and James Ballantyne had decidedly the same opinion—that his best things were those which he threw off the most easily and swiftly; and it was no wonder that his booksellers, seeing how immeasurably even his worst excelled in popularity, as in merit, any other person's best, should have shrunk from the experiment of a decisive damper. On the contrary, they might be excused for from time to time flattering themselves, that if the books sold at less rate, this might be counthrpoised by still greater rapidity of production. They could not make up their minds to cast the peerless vessel adrift; and, in short, after every little whisper of prudential misgiving, echoed the unfailing burden of Ballantyne's song—to push on, hoisting more and more sail as the wind lulled.

He was as eager to do as they could be to suggest—and this I well knew at the time. I had, however, no notion,

[1] Mr Cadell says:—"This device for raising the wind was the only real legacy left by John Ballantyne to his generous friend; it was invented to make up for the bad book stock of the Hanover Street concern, which supplied so much good money for the passing hour."

until all his correspondence lay before me, of the extent to which he had permitted himself thus early to build on the chances of life, health, and continued popularity. Before The Fortunes of Nigel issued from the press, Scott had exchanged instruments, and received his booksellers' bills, for no less than four "works of fiction"—not one of them otherwise described in the deeds of agreement—to be produced in unbroken succession, each of them to fill at least three volumes, but with proper saving clauses as to increase of copy-money in case any of them should run to four. And within two years all this anticipation had been wiped off by Peveril of the Peak, Quentin Durward, St Ronan's Well, and Redgauntlet; and the new castle was by that time complete. But by that time the end also was approaching!

The splendid Romance of The Pirate was published in the beginning of December 1821; and the wild freshness of its atmosphere, the beautiful contrast of Minna and Brenda, and the exquisitely drawn character of Captain Cleveland, found the reception which they deserved. The work was analyzed with remarkable care in the Quarterly Review—by a critic second to few, either in the manly heartiness of his sympathy with the felicities of genius, or in the honest acuteness of his censure in cases of negligence and confusion. This was the second of a series of articles in that Journal, conceived and executed in a tone widely different from those given to Waverley, Guy Mannering, and The Antiquary. I fancy Mr Gifford had become convinced that he had made a grievous mistake in this matter, before he acquiesced in Scott's proposal about "quartering the child" in January 1816; and if he was fortunate in finding a contributor able and willing to treat the rest of Father Jedediah's progeny with excellent skill, and in a spirit more accordant with the just and general sentiments of the public, we must also recognise a pleasing and honourable trait of character in the frankness with which the re-

cluse and often despotic editor now delegated the pen to Mr Senior.

On the 13th December, Sir Walter received a copy of CAIN, as yet unpublished, from Lord Byron's bookseller, who had been instructed to ask whether he had any objection to having the "Mystery" dedicated to him. He says, in answer to Mr Murray,—"I accept with feelings of great obligation the flattering proposal of Lord Byron to prefix my name to the very grand and tremendous drama of Cain. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose tone will be adopted by others out of affectation or envy. But then they must condemn the Paradise Lost, if they have a mind to be consistent. The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil lead exactly to the point which was to be expected—the commission of the first murder, and the ruin and despair of the perpetrator." Such was Scott's opinion of the drama which, when pirated, Lord Eldon refused to protect. It may be doubted if the great Chancellor had ever read *Paradise Lost.*

Whoever reads Scott's letters to Terry might naturally suppose that during this winter his thoughts were almost exclusively occupied with the rising edifice on Tweedside. The pains he takes about every trifle of arrangement, exterior and interior, is truly most remarkable: it is not probable that many idle lords or lairds ever look half so much about such matters. But his literary industry was all the while unresting. His Nigel was completed by April 1822. He had edited Lord Fountainhall's Chronological Notes, and several other antiquarian publications. Nor had he neglected a promise of the summer before to supply Miss Baillie with a contribution for a volume of miscellaneous verse, which she had undertaken to compile for the benefit of a friend in distress. With that view he now produced—and that, as I well remember, in the course of two rainy mornings at Abbotsford—the dramatic sketch

of Halidon Hill; but on concluding it, he found that he had given it an extent quite incompatible with his friend's arrangements for her charitable pic-nic. He therefore cast about for another subject likely to be embraced in smaller compass; and the Blair-Adam meeting of the next June supplied him with one in Macduff's Cross. Meantime, on hearing a whisper about Halidon Hill, Constable's junior partner, without seeing the MS., forthwith tendered L.1000 for the copyright—the same sum that had appeared almost irrationally munificent, when offered in 1807 for the embryo Marmion. It was accepted, and a letter about to be quoted will shew how well the head of the firm was pleased with this wild bargain.

The Nigel was published on the 30th of May 1822; and was, I need not say, hailed as ranking in the first class of Scott's romances. Indeed, as a historical portraiture, his of James I. stands forth prëeminent, and almost alone; nor, perhaps, in reperusing these novels deliberately as a series, does any one of them leave so complete an impression, as the picture of an age. It is, in fact, the best commentary on the old English drama—hardly a single picturesque point of manners touched by Ben Jonson and his contemporaries but has been dovetailed into this story, and all so easily and naturally, as to form the most striking contrast to the historical romances of authors who *cram*, as the schoolboys phrase it, and then set to work oppressed and bewildered with their crude and undigested burden.

On the day after the publication, Constable, then near London, wrote thus to the author:—"I was in town yesterday, and so keenly were the people devouring my friend *Jingling Geordie*, that I actually saw them reading it in the streets as they passed along. I assure you there is no exaggeration in this. A new novel from the Author of Waverley puts aside—in other words, puts down for the time, every other literary performance. The smack Ocean, by which the new work was shipped, arrived at

the wharf on Sunday; the bales were got out by *one* on Monday morning, and before half-past ten o'clock 7000 copies had been dispersed! I was truly happy to hear of Halidon Hill, and of the satisfactory arrangements made for its publication. I wish I had the power of prevailing with you to give us a similar production every three months; and that our ancient enemies on this side the Border might not have too much their own way, perhaps your next dramatic sketch might be Bannockburn. It would be presumptuous in me to point out subjects—[had he quite forgotten the *Lord of the Isles?*]—but you know my craving to be great, and I cannot resist mentioning here that I should like to see a battle of Hastings—a Cressy—a Bosworth field—and many more."—The Nigel was just launched—Constable knew that *Peveril of the Peak* was already on the stocks: yet see how quietly he suggests that a little pinnace of the Halidon class might easily be rigged out once a-quarter by way of diversion, and thus add another L.4000 per annum to the L.10,000 or L.15,000, on which all parties counted as the sure yearly profit of the three-deckers *in fore!* But Constable, during that residence in England, was in the habit of writing every week or two to Sir Walter, and his letters are all of the same complexion. The ardent bookseller's brain seems to have been well-nigh unsettled; and I have often thought that the foxglove which he then swallowed (his complaint being a threatening of water in the chest) might have had a share in the extravagant excitement of his mind. Occasionally, however, he enters on details, as to which, or at least as to Sir Walter's share in them, there could not have been any mistake; and these were, it must be owned, of a nature well calculated to nourish and sustain in the author's fancy a degree of almost mad exhilaration, near akin to his publisher's own predominant mood. In a letter of the ensuing month, for example, after returning to the progress of Peveril of the Peak, under 10,000 copies of which (or nearly that

number) Ballantyne's presses were now groaning, and glancing gaily to the prospect of their being kept regularly employed to the same extent until three other novels, as yet unchristened, had followed Peveril, he adds a summary of what was then, had just been, or was about to be, the amount of occupation furnished to the same office by reprints of older works of the same pen;—"a summary," he exclaims, "to which I venture to say there will be no rival in our day!" And well might Constable say so; for the result is, that James Ballantyne and Co. had just executed, or were on the eve of executing, by his order—

"A new edition of Sir W. Scott's Poetical Works, in 10 vols. (miniature) . .	5000	copies.
"Novels and Tales, 12 vols. ditto, .	5000	—
"Historical Romances, 6 vols. ditto, .	5000	—
"Poetry from Waverley, &c. 1 vol. 12mo.	5000	—
"Paper required, ...	7772	reams.
"Volumes produced from Ballantyne's press,	145,000!	

To which we may safely add from 30,000 to 40,000 volumes more as the immediate produce of the author's daily industry within the space of twelve months. The scale of these operations was, without question, enough to turn any bookseller's wits;—Constable's, in his soberest hours, was as inflammable a head-piece as ever sat on the shoulders of a poet; and his ambition, in truth, had been moving *pari passu*, during several of these last stirring and turmoiling years, with that of *his* poet. He, too, as I ought to have mentioned ere now, had, like a true Scotchman, concentrated his dreams on the hope of bequeathing to his heir the name and dignity of a lord of acres; he, too, had considerably before this time purchased a landed estate in his native county of Fife; he, too, I doubt not, had, while Abbotsford was rising, his own rural castle *in petto;* and alas! for "Archibald Constable of Balniel" also, and his overweening intoxication of worldly suc-

cess, Fortune had already begun to prepare a stern rebuke.

I must pass on to a different excitement—that of the King's visit to his northern dominions in the autumn of 1822. Before this time no Prince of the House of Hanover was known to have touched the soil of Scotland, except one, whose name had ever been held there in universal detestation—the cruel conqueror of Culloden,—"the butcher Cumberland." Now that the very last dream of Jacobitism had expired with the Cardinal of York, there could be little doubt that all the northern Tories, of whatever shade of sentiment, would concur to give their lawful Sovereign a greeting of warm and devoted respect; but the feelings of the Liberals towards George IV. personally had been unfavourably tinctured, in consequence of several incidents in his history—above all—(speaking of the mass of population addicted to that political creed)—the unhappy dissensions and scandals which had terminated, as it were but yesterday, in the trial of his Queen. On the whole it was, in the opinion of cool observers, a very doubtful experiment, which the new, but not young king, had resolved on trying. That he had been moved to do so in a very great measure, both directly and indirectly, by Scott, there can be no question; and I believe it will be granted by all who recall the particulars as they occurred, that his Majesty mainly owed to Scott's personal influence, authority and zeal, the more than full realization of the highest hopes he could have indulged on the occasion of this progress.

Whether all the arrangements which Sir Walter dictated or enforced, were conceived in the most accurate taste, is a different question. It appeared to be very generally thought, when the first programmes were issued, that kilts and bagpipes were to occupy a great deal too much space. With all respect for the generous qualities which the Highland clans have often exhibited, it was

difficult to forget that they had always constituted a small, and almost always an unimportant part of the Scottish population; and when one reflected how miserably their numbers had of late years been reduced in consequence of the selfish and hard-hearted policy of their landlords, it almost seemed as if there was a cruel mockery in giving so much prominence to their pretensions. But there could be no question that they were picturesque—and their enthusiasm was too sincere not to be catching; so that by and by even the coolest-headed Sassenach felt his heart, like John of Argyle's, "warm to the tartan;" and high and low were in the humour, not only to applaud, but each, according to his station, to take a share in what might really be described as a sort of grand *terryfication* of the Holyrood chapters in Waverley;—George IV., *anno ætatis* 60, being well contented to enact Prince Charlie, with the Great Unknown himself for his Baron Bradwardine, "*ad exuendas vel detrahendas caligas domini regis post battalliam.*"

But Sir Walter had as many parts to play as ever tasked the Protean genius of his friend Mathews; and he played them all with as much cordial energy as animated the exertions of any Henchman or Piper in the company. His severest duties, however, were those of stage-manager, and under these I sincerely believe any other human being's temper would very soon have given way. The magistrates, bewildered with the rush of novelty, threw themselves on him for advice about the merest trifles; and he had to arrange everything, from the order of a procession to the embroidering of a cross. Ere the green-room in Castle Street had dismissed provosts and bailies, it was sure to be besieged by swelling chieftains, who could not agree on the relative positions their clans had occupied at Bannockburn, which they considered as constituting the authentic precedent for determining their own places, each at the head of his little theatrical *tail*, in the line of the

King's escort between the Pier of Leith and the Canongate. It required all Scott's unwearied good humour, and imperturbable power of face, to hear in becoming gravity the sputtering controversies of such fiery rivals, each regarding himself as a true potentate, the representative of princes as ancient as Bourbon; and no man could have coaxed them into decent coöperation, except him whom all the Highlanders, from the haughtiest MacIvor to the slyest Callum Beg, agreed in looking up to as the great restorer and blazoner of their traditionary glories. He had, however, in all this most delicate part of his administration, an admirable assistant in one who had also, by the direction of his literary talents, acquired no mean share of authority among the Celts—General David Stewart of Garth, the historian of the Highland Regiments. On Garth (seamed all over with the scars of Egypt and Spain) devolved the Toy-Captainship of the *Celtic Club*, already alluded to as an association of young civilians enthusiastic for the promotion of the philabeg;—and he drilled and conducted that motley array in such style, that they formed, perhaps, the most splendid feature in the whole of this plaided panorama. But he, too, had a potential voice in the conclave of rival chieftains,—and with the able backing of this honoured veteran, Scott succeeded finally in assuaging all their heats, and reducing their conflicting pretensions to terms of truce, at least, and compromise. A ballad (now included in his works), wherein these magnates were most adroitly flattered, was understood to have had a considerable share of the merit in this peace-making; but the constant hospitality of his table was a not less efficient organ of influence.

About noon of the 14th of August, the royal yacht and the attendant vessels of war cast anchor in the Roads of Leith; but although Scott's ballad-prologue had entreated the clergy to "warstle for a sunny day," the weather was so unpropitious that it was found necessary to defer the

landing until the 15th. In the midst of the rain, however, Sir Walter rowed off to the Royal George; and, says the newspaper of the day,—"When his arrival alongside the yacht was announced to the King.—'What!' exclaimed his Majesty, 'Sir Walter Scott! The man in Scotland I most wish to see! Let him come up.'" When he stepped on the quarter-deck, his Majesty called for a bottle of Highland whisky, and having drunk his health, desired a glass to be filled for him. Sir Walter, after draining his bumper, made a request that the King would condescend to bestow on him the glass out of which his Majesty had just drunk his health; and this being granted, the precious vessel was immediately wrapped up and carefully deposited in what he conceived to be the safest part of his dress. So he returned with it to Castle Street; but—to say nothing at this moment of graver distractions—on reaching his house he found a guest established there of a sort rather different from the usual visiters of the time. The poet Crabbe, after repeatedly promising an excursion to the north, had at last arrived in the midst of these tumultuous preparations for the royal advent. Notwithstanding all such impediments, he found his quarters ready for him, and Scott entering, wet and hurried, embraced the venerable man with brotherly affection. The royal gift was forgotten—the ample skirt of the coat within which it had been packed, and which he had hitherto held cautiously in front of his person, slipped back to its more usual position—he sat down beside Crabbe, and the glass was crushed to atoms. His scream and gesture made his wife conclude that he had sat down on a pair of scissors or the like: but very little harm had been done except the breaking of the glass, of which alone he had been thinking. This was a damage not to be repaired: as for the scratch that accompanied it, its scar was of no great consequence, as even when mount-

ing the "*cat-dath*, or battle-garment" of the Celtic Club, he adhered, like his hero Waverley, to *the trews*.

By six o'clock next morning, Sir Walter, arrayed in the Garb of old Gaul (which he had of the Campbell tartan, in memory of one of his great-grandmothers), was attending a muster of these gallant Celts in the Queen-Street Gardens, where he had the honour of presenting them with a set of colours, and delivered a suitable exhortation, crowned with their rapturous applause. Some members of the Club, all of course in their full costume, were invited to breakfast with him. He had previously retired for a little to his library, and when he entered the parlour, Mr Crabbe, dressed in the highest style of professional neatness and decorum, with buckles in his shoes, and whatever was then considered as befitting an English clergyman of his years and station, was standing in the midst of half-a-dozen stalwart Highlanders, exchanging elaborate civilities with them in what was at least meant to be French. He had come into the room shortly before, without having been warned about such company, and hearing the party conversing together in an unknown tongue, the polite old man had adopted, in his first salutation, what he considered as the universal language. Some of the Celts, on their part, took him for some foreign abbé or bishop, and were doing their best to explain to him that they were not the wild savages for which, from the startled glance he had thrown on their hirsute proportions, there seemed but too much reason to suspect he had taken them; others, more perspicacious, gave in to the thing for the joke's sake; and there was high fun when Scott dissolved the charm of their stammering, by grasping Crabbe with one hand, and the nearest of these figures with the other, and greeted the whole group with the same hearty *good-morning*.

Perhaps no Englishman of these recent days ever arrived in Scotland with a scantier stock of information about

the country and the people than (judging from all that he said, and more expressively looked) this illustrious poet had brought with him in August 1822. It seemed as if he had never for one moment conceived that the same island in which his peaceful parsonage stood, contained actually a race of men, and gentlemen too, owning no affinity with Englishmen either in blood or in speech, and still proud in wearing, whenever opportunity served, a national dress of their own, bearing considerably more resemblance to an American Indian's than to that of an old-fashioned divine from the Vale of Belvoir. But the aspect of the city on the 15th, was as new to the inhabitants as it could have been even to the Rector of Muston :—every height and precipice occupied by military of the regular army, or by detachments of these more picturesque irregulars from beyond the Grampians—lines of tents, flags, and artillery, circling Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags, and the Calton Hill—and the old black Castle and its rock, wreathed in the smoke of repeated salvoes, while a huge banner royal, such as had not waved there since 1745, floated and flapped over all :—every street, square, garden, or open space below, paved with solid masses of silent expectants, except only where glittering lines of helmets marked the avenue guarded for the approaching procession. All captiousness of criticism sunk into nothing before the grandeur of this vision : and it was the same, or nearly so, on every subsequent day when the King chose to take part in the devised ceremonial. I forget where Sir Walter's place was on the 15th ; but on one or other of these occasions I remember him seated in an open carriage, in the Highland dress, armed and accoutred as heroically as Garth himself (who accompanied him), and evidently in a most bardish state of excitement, while honest Peter Mathieson managed as best he might four steeds of a fierier sort than he had usually in his keeping—though, perhaps, after all, he might be less puzzled with them than with the

cocked-hat and regular London Jehu's flaxen wig, which he, for the first and last time, displayed during "the royal fortnight."

It is, I believe, of the dinner of this 15th August in Castle Street that Crabbe penned the following brief record in his Journal:—"Whilst it is fresh in my memory, I should describe the day which I have just passed, but I do not believe an accurate description to be possible. What avails it to say, for instance, that there met at the sumptuous dinner, in all the costume of the Highlanders, the great chief himself, and officers of his company. This expresses not the singularity of appearance and manners—the peculiarities of men all gentlemen, but remote from our society—leaders of clans—joyous company. Then we had Sir Walter Scott's national songs and ballads, exhibiting all the feelings of clanship. I thought it an honour that Glengarry even took notice of me, for there were those, and gentlemen too, who considered themselves honoured by following in his train. There were also Lord Errol, and the Macleod, and the Fraser, and the Gordon, and the Fergusson; and I conversed at dinner with Lady Glengarry, and did almost believe myself a harper, or bard, rather—for harp I cannot strike; and Sir Walter was the life and soul of the whole. It was a splendid festivity, and I felt I know not how much younger."

In the glittering and tumultuous assemblages of that season, the elder bard was (to use one of his friend's favourite similitudes) very like *a cow in a fremd loaning;* and though Scott could never have been seen in colours more likely to excite admiration, Crabbe had hardly any opportunity of observing him in the everyday loveableness of his converse. Sir Walter's enthusiastic excitement about the kilts and the processions seemed at first utterly incomprehensible to him; but by degrees he perceived and appreciated the dexterous management of prejudices and pretensions. He exclaims, in his Journal,—"What a keen

discriminating man is my friend!" But I shall ever regret that Crabbe did not see him at Abbotsford among his books, his trees, and his own good simple peasants. They had, I believe, but one quiet walk together, and it was to the ruins of St Anthony's Chapel and Muschat's Cairn, which the deep impression made on Crabbe by the Heart of Mid-Lothian had given him an earnest wish to see. I accompanied them; and the hour so spent, in the course of which the fine old man gave us some most touching anecdotes of his early struggles, was a truly delightful contrast to the bustle and worry of miscellaneous society which consumed so many of his few hours in Scotland.

The King took up his residence at Dalkeith Palace; and here his dinner party almost daily included Sir Walter, who, however, appeared to have derived more deep-felt gratification from his Majesty's kind and paternal attention to his juvenile host (the Duke of Buccleuch was at that time only in his sixteenth year), than from all the flattering condescension lavished on himself. From Dalkeith the King repaired to Holyroodhouse two or three times, for the purposes of a levee or drawing-room. One Sunday he attended divine service in the Cathedral of St Giles', when the decorum and silence preserved by the multitudes in the streets, struck him as a most remarkable contrast to the rapturous excitement of his reception on week-days; and the scene was not less noticeable in the eyes of Crabbe, who says in his Journal,—"The silence of Edinburgh on the Sunday is in itself devout."

There is in the armoury at Abbotsford a sword presented by Charles I. to the great Marquis of Montrose—with Prince Henry's arms and cypher on one side of the blade, and his own on the other. One day the late Duke of Montrose happened to sit next to Sir Walter, and complimented him on the vigorous muster of Border Yeomanry which Portobello Sands had exhibited that morning. "Indeed," said Scott, "there's scarcely a man left to guard

our homesteads."—"I've a great mind," quoth the Duke, "to send a detachment of my tail to Abbotsford to make prize of my ancestor's sword."—"Your Grace," says Sir Walter, drily, "is very welcome to try—but we 're near Philiphaugh yonder."

Another very splendid day was that of a procession from Holyrood to the Castle, whereof the whole ceremonial had obviously been arranged under Scott's auspices, for the purpose of calling up, as exactly as might be, the time-hallowed observance of "the Riding of the Parliament." Mr Peel (then Secretary of State for the Home Department) was desirous of witnessing this procession privately, instead of taking a place in it, and he walked up the High Street accordingly in company with Scott, some time before the royal cavalcade was to get into motion. The Poet was as little desirous of attracting notice as the Secretary, but he was soon recognised—and his companion, when revisiting Scotland, after the lapse of fourteen years, expressed his lively remembrance of the enthusiastic veneration with which Scott's person was then greeted by all classes of his countrymen. In proposing Sir Walter's memory at a public dinner given to him in Glasgow, in December 1836, Sir Robert Peel said,—"I had the honour of accompanying his late Majesty as his Secretary of State, when he paid a visit to Edinburgh. I suppose there are many of you here who were present on that occasion, at that memorable scene, when the days of ancient chivalry were recalled—when every man's friendship seemed to be confirmed—when men met for the first time, who had always looked to each other with distrust, and resolved in the presence of their Sovereign to forget their hereditary feuds and animosities. In the beautiful language of Dryden—

> 'Men met each other with erected look—
> The steps were higher that they took;
> Friends to congratulate their friends would haste,
> And long inveterate foes saluted as they pass'd.'

Sir Walter Scott took an active lead in these ceremonies. On the day on which his Majesty was to pass from Holyroodhouse, he proposed to me to accompany him up the High Street, to see whether the arrangements were completed. I said to him—'You are trying a dangerous experiment—you will never get through in privacy.' He said, 'They are entirely absorbed in loyalty.' But I was the better prophet: he was recognised from the one extremity of the street to the other, and never did I see such an instance of national devotion expressed."

The King at his first levee diverted many, and delighted Scott, by appearing in the full Highland garb,—the same brilliant *Stuart Tartans*, so called, in which certainly no Stuart, except Prince Charles, had ever presented himself in the saloons of Holyrood. His Majesty's Celtic toilette had been carefully watched and assisted by the gallant Laird of Garth, who was not a little proud of the result of his dexterous manipulations of the royal plaid, and pronounced the King "a vera pretty man." And he did look a most stately and imposing person in that beautiful dress—but his satisfaction therein was cruelly disturbed, when he discovered, towering and blazing among and above the genuine Glengarries and Macleods and MacGregors, a figure even more portly than his own, equipped, from a sudden impulse of loyal ardour, in an equally complete set of the self-same conspicuous Stuart tartans :—

> "He caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt—
> While throng'd the chiefs of every Highland clan
> To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alderman." [1]

In truth, this portentous apparition cast an air of ridicule and caricature over the whole of Sir Walter's Celtified pageantry. A sharp little bailie from Aberdeen, who had previously made acquaintance with the worthy Guildhall Baronet, and tasted the turtle-soup of his voluptuous yacht,

[1] Byron's *Age of Bronze*.

tortured him, as he sailed down the long gallery of Holyrood, by suggesting that, after all, his costume was not quite perfect. Sir William, who had been rigged out, as the auctioneer's advertisements say, "regardless of expense," exclaimed that he must be mistaken—begged he would explain his criticism—and as he spoke, threw a glance of admiration on a *skene dhu* (black knife), which, like a true "warrior and hunter of deer," he wore stuck into one of his garters. "Oo ay—oo ay," quoth the Aberdonian; "the knife's a' right, mon; but faar's your speen?"—(where's your spoon?) Such was Scott's story—but whether he "gave it a cocked-hat and walking-cane," in the hope of restoring the King's good-humour, so grievously shaken by this heroical *doppel-ganger*, it is not very necessary to inquire

As in Hamlet, there was to be a play within the play; and, by his Majesty's desire, William Murray's company performed in his presence the drama of *Rob Roy*. The audience were enchanted with the King's hearty laughter at Bailie Jarvie's jokes;—but I particularly remember his Majesty's shout at *Mattie's* "nane o' your Lunnan tricks."

On the 24th the Magistrates entertained their Sovereign with a banquet in the Parliament House; and Sir Walter Scott was invited to preside over one of the tables. But the most striking homage (though apparently an unconscious one) that his genius received during this festive period, was, when the King, after proposing the health of the Magistrates, rose and said there was one toast more, and but one, in which he must request the assembly to join him,—"I shall simply give you," said he, "*The Chieftains and Clans of Scotland*—and prosperity to the Land of Cakes." So completely had this hallucination taken possession, that nobody seems to have been startled at the time by language which thus distinctly conveyed his Majesty's impression that the marking and crowning glory of Scotland consisted in the Highland clans and their chieftains.

Scott's early associations, and the prime labours and honours of his life, had been so deeply connected with the Highlands, that it was no wonder he should have taught himself to look on their clans and chiefs with almost as much affection and respect as if he had had more than a scantling of their blood in his veins. But it was necessary to be an eye-witness of this royal visit, in order to comprehend the extent to which he had allowed his imagination to get the mastery over him as to all these matters; and perhaps it was necessary to understand him thoroughly on such points, in his personal relations, feelings, and demeanour, before one could follow his genius to advantage in some of his most favoured and delightful walks of exertion. The strongest impression, however, which the whole affair left on my mind was, that I had never till then formed any just notion of his capacity for practical dealing and rule among men. I do not think he had much in common with the statesmen and diplomatists of his own age and country; but I am mistaken if Scott could not have played in other days either the Cecil or the Gondomar; and I believe no man, after long and intimate knowledge of any other great poet, has ever ventured to say that he could have conceived the possibility of any such parts being adequately filled on the active stage of the world, by a person in whom the powers of fancy and imagination had such predominant sway as to make him in fact live three or four lives habitually in place of one. I have known other literary men of energy perhaps as restless as his; but all such have been entitled to the designation of *busy bodies*—busy almost exclusively about trifles, and, above all, supremely and constantly conscious of their own remarkable activity, and rejoicing and glorying in it. Whereas Scott, neither in literary labour nor in continual contact with the affairs of the world, ever did seem aware that he was making any very extraordinary exertion. The machine, thus gigantic in its impetus, moved so easily that the master had no perception of the obstruc-

tions it overcame—in fact, no measure for its power. Compared to him, all the rest of the *poet* species that I have chanced to observe nearly—with but one glorious exception—have seemed to me to do little more than sleep through their lives—and at best to fill the sum with dreams; and I am persuaded that, taking all ages and countries together, the rare examples of indefatigable energy, in union with serene self-possession of mind and character, such as Scott's, must be sought for in the roll of great sovereigns or great captains, rather than in that of literary genius.

In the case of such renowned practical masters, it has been usual to account for their apparent calmness amidst the stirring troubles of the world, by imputing to them callousness of the affections. Perhaps injustice has been done by the supposition; but, at all events, hardly could any one extend it to the case of the placid man of the imaginative order;—a great depicter of man and nature, especially, would seem to be, *ex vi termini*, a profound sympathizer with the passions of his brethren, with the weaknesses as well as with the strength of humanity. Such assuredly was Scott. His heart was as "ramm'd with life" (to use a phrase of Ben Jonson's) as his brain; and I never saw him tried in a tenderer point than he was during the full whirl of splendour and gaiety that seemed to make every brain but his dizzy in the Edinburgh of August 1822.

Few things had ever given him so much pleasure as William Erskine's promotion to the Bench. It seemed to have restored his dearest friend to content and cheerfulness, and thus to have doubled his own sources of enjoyment. But Erskine's constitution had been shaken before he attained this dignity; and the anxious delicacy of his conscience rendered its duties oppressive and overwhelming. In a feeble state of body, and with a sensitive mind stretched and strained, a silly calumny, set a-foot by some envious gossip, was sufficient literally to chase him out of life. On his return to Edinburgh about the 20th of July, Scott found

him in visible danger; he did whatever friendship could do to comfort and stimulate him; but all was in vain. Lord Kinnedder survived his elevation hardly half-a-year —and who that observed Scott's public doings during the three or four weeks I have been describing, could have suspected that he was daily and nightly the watcher of a deathbed, or the consoler of orphans; striving all the while against

> "True earnest sorrows, rooted miseries,
> Anguish in grain, vexations ripe and blown?"

I am not aware that I ever saw him in such a state of dejection as he was when I accompanied him and his friend Mr Thomas Thomson from Edinburgh to Queensferry, in attendance upon Lord Kinnedder's funeral. Yet that was one of the noisiest days of the royal festival, and he had to plunge into some scene of high gaiety the moment after he returned. As we halted in Castle Street, Mr Crabbe's mild, thoughtful face appeared at the window, and Scott said, on leaving me,—"Now for what our old friend there puts down as the crowning curse of his poor player in the Borough—

> 'To hide in rant the heart-ache of the night.'

The very few letters that he addressed to friends at a distance during the King's stay, are chiefly occupied with Erskine. In one of them he says:—"It would be rather difficult for any one who has never lived much among my good country-people, to comprehend that an idle story of a love intrigue, a story alike base and baseless, should be the death of an innocent man of high character, high station, and well advanced in years. It struck into poor Erskine's heart and soul, however, quite as cruelly as any similar calumny ever affected a modest woman—he withered and sunk. There is no need that I should say peace be with him! If ever a pure spirit quitted this vale of tears, it was William Erskine's. I must turn to and see what can be done about getting some pension for his daughters."

The King's stay in Scotland was protracted until the 29th of August. He then embarked from the Earl of Hopetoun's magnificent seat on the Firth of Forth, and Sir Walter had the gratification of seeing his Majesty, in the moment of departure, confer the honour of knighthood on two of his friends—both of whom, I believe, owed some obligation in this matter to his good offices—namely, Captain Adam Fergusson, deputy-keeper of the Regalia, and Henry Raeburn, R.A., properly selected as the representative of the fine arts in Scotland. This amiable man and excellent artist, however, did not long survive the receipt of his title. Sir Henry died on the 8th of July 1823—the last work of his pencil having been a portrait of Scott for Lord Montagu.

On the eve of the King's departure he received a letter from Mr Peel, saying:—"The king has commanded me to acquaint you that he cannot bid adieu to Scotland without conveying to you individually his warm personal acknowledgments. His Majesty well knows how many difficulties have been smoothed, and how much has been effected by your unremitting activity, by your knowledge of your countrymen, and by the just estimation in which they hold you. The King wishes to make you the channel of conveying to the Highland chiefs and their followers, who have given to the varied scene which we have witnessed so peculiar and romantic a character, his particular thanks for their attendance, and his warm approbation of their uniform deportment."

Though Mr Crabbe found it necessary to leave Scotland without seeing Abbotsford, this was not the case with many less celebrated friends from the south, who had flocked to the Royal Festival. Sir Walter's house was, in his own phrase, "like a cried fair," during several weeks after the King's departure; and as his masons were then in the highest activity, the tumult within doors and without was really perplexing. He says in his letters, that the excite-

ment of the Edinburgh scenes had thrown him into a fever, and, I believe, it was very lucky that an eruption took place, which compelled him to keep his chamber for some days.

Nor was an unusual influx of English pilgrims the only legacy of "the glorious days" of August. A considerable number of persons who had borne a part in the ceremonies fancied that their exertions had entitled them to some substantial mark of approbation; and post after post brought despatches from these enthusiasts, to him who was supposed to enjoy, as to matters of this description, the readiest access to the fountain of honour. To how many of these applications he accorded more than a civil answer I cannot tell; but the Duke of York was too good a *Jacobite* not to grant favourable consideration to his request that one or two half-pay officers who had distinguished themselves in the van of *the Celts*, might be replaced in Highland regiments, and so re-invested with the untheatrical "Garb of old Gaul." Sir Walter had also a petition of his own. This related to a certain gigantic piece of ordnance, celebrated in the history of the Scottish Jameses under the title of *Mons Meg*, which had been removed from Edinburgh Castle to the Tower in 1746. When Scott next saw the King, after he had displayed his person on the chief bastion of the old fortress, he lamented the absence of Mons Meg on that occasion in language which his Majesty could not resist. There ensued a correspondence with the official guardians of Meg—among others, with the Duke of Wellington, then Master-General of the Ordnance, and though circumstances deferred her restoration, it was never lost sight of, and took place when the Duke was Prime Minister, in 1828.

A more serious petition was a written one in which Sir Walter expressed feelings in which I believe every class of his countrymen were disposed to concur with him cordially —and certainly none more so than George IV. himself. The object was the restoration of the peerages forfeited in

consequence of the insurrections of 1715 and 1745; and the honourable families, in whose favour this liberal measure was soon afterwards adopted, appear to have vied with each other in the expression of their gratefulness for his exertions on their behalf.

Early in October, he had another attack of illness. He says to Terry, in a letter full of details about silk-hangings, ebony-cabinets, and so forth :—" I have not been very well—a whoreson thickness of blood, and a depression of spirits, arising from the loss of friends, have annoyed me much; and Peveril will, I fear, smell of the apoplexy. I propose a good rally, however, and hope it will be a powerful effect. My idea is, *entre nous*, a Scotch archer in the French king's guard, *tempore* Louis XI., the most picturesque of all times." This is the first allusion to *Quentin Durward* and also the species of malady that ultimately proved fatal to Sir Walter Scott. He never mentioned to his family the symptoms which he here speaks of; but long before any serious apopletic seizure occurred, it had been suspected by myself, and by others of his friends, that he had sustained slight attacks of that nature, and concealed them. The depression of spirits could not, however, have hung over him long. Peveril was completed, and some progress had also been achieved with Quentin Durward, before the year reached its close. Nor had he ceased to contemplate future labour with firmness and hopefulness. He, in October, received Constable's bills for another unnamed " work of fiction ;" and this was the last such work in which the great bookseller was destined to have any concern. The engagement was in fact that redeemed three years afterwards by *Woodstock*.

Peveril of the Peak appeared in January 1823. Its reception was somewhat colder than that of its three immediate predecessors. The rapidity of the Novelist's execution was put to a severe trial, from his adoption of so wide a canvass as was presented by a period of twenty busy

years, and filled by so large and multifarious an assemblage of persons, not a few of them, as it were, struggling for prominence. Finella was an unfortunate conception; what is good in it is not original, and the rest absurd and incredible. Even worse was that condescension to the practice of vulgar romancers, in his treatment of the trial scenes—scenes usually the very citadels of his strength—which outraged every feeling of probability with those who had studied the terrible tragedies of the Popish Plot, in the authentic records of, perhaps, the most disgraceful epoch in our history. The story is clumsy and perplexed; the catastrophe (another signal exception to his rules) foreseen from the beginning, and yet most inartificially brought about. All this is true; and yet might not criticisms of the same sort be applied to half the masterpieces of Shakspeare? And did any dramatist—to say nothing of any other novelist—ever produce, in spite of all the surrounding bewilderment of the fable, characters more powerfully conceived, or, on the whole, more happily portrayed, than those (I name but a few) of Christian, Bridgenorth, Buckingham, and Chiffinch?—sketches more vivid than those of young Derby, Colonel Blood, and the keeper of Newgate?

Among the lounging barristers of the *Outer*-House in those days, Sir Walter, in the intervals of his duty as Clerk, often came forth and mingled much in the style of his own coeval *Mountain*. Indeed the pleasure he seemed to take in the society of his professional juniors, was one of the most remarkable, and certainly not the least agreeable features of his character at this period of his consummate honour and celebrity—but I should rather have said, perhaps, of young people generally, male or female, law or lay, gentle or simple. I used to think it was near of kin to another feature in him, his love of a bright light. It was always, I suspect, against the grain with him, when he did not even work

at his desk with the sun full upon him. However, one morning soon after Peveril came out, one of our most famous wags (now famous for better things,) namely, Patrick Robertson,[1] commonly called by the endearing Scottish *diminutive* "Peter," observed that tall conical white head advancing above the crowd towards the fire-place, where the usual roar of fun was going on among the briefless, and said, "Hush, boys, here comes old Peveril—I see *the Peak*." A laugh ensued, and the Great Unknown, as he withdrew from the circle after a few minutes' gossip, insisted that I should tell him what our joke upon his advent had been. When enlightened, being by that time half way across the "babbling hall" towards his own *Division*, he looked round with a sly grin, and said, between his teeth, "Ay, ay, my man, as weel Peveril o' the Peak ony day, as Peter o' the Painch" (paunch)—which, being transmitted to the brethren of the *stove school*, of course delighted all of them, except their portly Coryphæus. But *Peter's* application stuck ; to his dying day, Scott was in the Outer-House *Peveril of the Peak*, or *Old Peveril*—and, by and by, like a good Cavalier, he took to the designation kindly. He was well aware that his own family and younger friends constantly talked of him under this *sobriquet*. Many a little note have I had from him (and so probably has *Peter* also), reproving, or perhaps encouraging, Tory mischief, and signed, "Thine, PEVERIL."

It was, perhaps, some inward misgiving towards the completion of Peveril, that determined Scott to break new ground in his next novel; and as he had before awakened a fresh interest by venturing on English scenery and history, try the still bolder experiment of a continental excursion. However this may have been, he was encouraged and strengthened by the return of his friend Skene,

[1] Mr R. became Dean of the Faculty of Advocates in 1842, and a Judge by the style of Lord Robertson in 1843. His first (and successful) appearance as a Poet was in 1847.

about this time, from a tour in France; in the course of which he had kept an accurate and lively journal, and executed a vast variety of clever drawings, representing landscapes and ancient buildings, such as would have been most sure to interest Scott had he been the companion of his wanderings. Mr Skene's MS. collections were placed at his disposal, and he took from one of their chapters the substance of the *original* Introduction to Quentin Durward. Yet still his difficulties in this new undertaking were frequent, and of a sort to which he had hitherto been a stranger. I remember observing him many times in the Advocates' Library poring over maps and gazetteers with care and anxiety.

He was much amused with a mark of French admiration which reached him (opportunely enough) in February—one of the few such that his works seem to have brought him prior to the publication of Quentin Durward. He says to Constable,—"A funny Frenchman wants me to accept some champaign for a set of my works. I have written in answer that as my works cost me nothing I could not think of putting a value on them, but that I should apply to you. Send him a set of my children and god-children (poems and novels), and—if he found, on seeing them, that they were worth a dozen flasks of champaign, he might address the case," &c.

A compliment not less flattering was paid within a few weeks after the appearance of Peveril. In the epistle introductory of that novel, Clutterbuck amuses Dryasdust with an account of a recent visit from their common parent "the Author of Waverley," whose outward man, as it was in those days, is humorously caricatured, with a suggestion that he had probably sat to Geoffrey Crayon for his "Stout Gentleman of No. II.;" and who is made to apologize for the heartiness with which he pays his duty to the viands set before him, by alleging that he is in training for the anniversary of the Roxburghe Club:—"He was prepar-

ing himself," (said the gracious and portly *Eidolon*) "to hob-nob with the lords of the literary treasures of Althorpe and Hodnet in Madeira negus, brewed by the classical Dibdin." This drollery in fact alluded, not to the Roxburghe, but to an institution of the same class which was just at this time springing into life in Edinburgh—the *Bannatyne Club*, of which Scott was the founder and first president. The heroes of the Roxburghe, however, were not to penetrate the mystification of Captain Clutterbuck's report, and from their jovial and erudite board, when they next congregated around its " generous flasks of Burgundy, each flanked by an uncut fifteener"—their Secretary, Dr Dibdin, wrote to Scott, saying:—" The death of Sir M. Sykes having occasioned a vacancy in our CLUB, I am desired to request that you will have the goodness to make that fact known to the AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY, who, from the Proheme to PEVERIL OF THE PEAK, seems disposed to become one of the members thereof; and I am further desired to express the wishes of the said CLUB that the said AUTHOR may succeed to the said Baronet."—Sir Walter answered, that he would find means to convey the message to the "Author of Waverley;" adding—" As his personal appearance in the fraternity is not like to be a speedy event, the table of the Roxburghe, like that of King Arthur, will have a vacant chair. But if this author, who 'hath fern-seed and walketh invisible,' should not appear to claim it before I come to London, with permission of the Club, I, who have something of adventure in me, although a knight like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, 'dubbed with unhacked rapier, and on carpet consideration,' would, rather than lose the chance of a dinner with the Roxburghe Club, take upon me the adventure of the *siege perilous*, and reap some amends for perils and scandals into which the invisible champion has drawn me, by being his *locum tenens* on so distinguished an occasion."—The Club gladly accepted this offer; and Scott writes again to their Secretary:—

"Mad Tom tells us, that 'the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman;'[1] and this mysterious personage will, I hope, partake as much of his honourable feelings as his invisibility, and, retaining his incognito, permit me to enjoy, in his stead, an honour which I value more than I do that which has been bestowed on me by the credit of having written any of his novels."—In his way of taking both the Frenchman's civilities and those of the Roxburghers, we see evident symptoms that the mask had begun to be worn rather carelessly. Sir Walter, it may be worth mentioning, was also about this time elected a member of "THE CLUB"—that famous one established by Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds. Moreover, he had been chosen, on the death of the antiquary Lysons, Professor of Ancient History to the Royal Academy—a chair originally founded at Dr Johnson's suggestion, "in order that *Goldy* might have a right to be at their dinners." I believe he was present at more than one of the festivals of each of these fraternities. A particular dinner of the Royal Academy, at all events, is recorded with some picturesque details in his essay on the life of Kemble, who sat next to him upon that occasion.

The Bannatyne Club was a child of his own, and from first to last he took a most fatherly concern in all its proceedings. His practical sense dictated a direction of their funds different from what had been adopted by the Roxburghe. Their *Club Books* already constitute a very curious and valuable library of Scottish history and antiquities: their example was soon followed with not inferior success by the Maitland Club of Glasgow, of which too Sir Walter was a zealous associate; by the Spalding Club of Aberdeen—and since his death by a fourth, founded at Edinburgh in his honour, and styled *The Abbotsford Club*—which last has taken a still wider range—not confining their printing to works connected with Scotland, but admitting all materials that can throw light on the ancient

[1] *King Lear*, Act III. Scene 5.

history or literature of any country, described or handled by the Author of Waverley.

At the meetings of the Bannatyne he presided from 1823 to 1831; and in the chair on their anniversary dinners, surrounded by some of his oldest and dearest friends—Thomas Thomson (the Vice-President), John Clerk (Lord Eldin), the Chief-Commissioner Adam, the Chief-Baron Shepherd, Lord Jeffrey, Mr Constable—and let me not forget his kind, intelligent, and industrious ally, Mr David Laing, bookseller, the Secretary of the Club—he from this time forward was the unfailing source and centre of all sorts of merriment, "within the limits of becoming mirth." Of the origin and early progress of their institution, the reader has a full account in his reviewal of Pitcairn's Criminal Trials; and the last edition of his Poems includes that excellent song composed for their first dinner—that of March 9, 1823—and then sung by James Ballantyne, and heartily chorused by all the aforesaid dignitaries:—

"Assist me, ye friends of old books and old wine,
To sing in the praises of sage Bannatyne,
Who left such a treasure of old Scottish lore,
As enables each age to print one volume more.
One volume more, my friends—one volume more,
We 'll ransack old Banny for one volume more."—&c.

Various passages in Scott's correspondence have recalled to my recollection the wonder with which the friends best acquainted with the extent of his usual engagements observed, about this period, his readiness in mixing himself up with the business of associations far different from the Bannatyne Club. I cannot doubt that his conduct as President of the Royal Society, and as manager of the preparations for the King's visit, had a main influence in this matter. In these capacities he had been thrown into contact with many of the most eminent of his fellow-citizens, who had previously been accustomed to flavour their notions

of him with something of the gall of local politics; and they had soon appreciated his influence, for they must all have had abundant opportunities of observing the ease with which ill humours are engendered, to the disturbance of all really useful discussion, wherever social equals assemble in conclave, without having some official preses, uniting the weight of strong and quick intellect, with the calmness and moderation of a brave spirit, and the conciliating grace of habitual courtesy. Presumption, dogmatism, and arrogance shrunk from the over-awing contrast of his modest greatness: the poison of every little passion was shamed and neutralized beneath the charitable dignity of his penetration: and jealousy, fretfulness, and spleen felt themselves transmuted in the placid atmosphere of good sense, good humour, and good manners. And whoever might be apt to plead off on the score of personal duty of any sort, Scott had always leisure as well as temper at command, when invited to take part in any business connected with a rational hope of public advantage. These things opened, like the discovery of some new element of wealth, upon certain eager spirits who considered the Royal Society as the great local parent and minister of practical inventions and mechanical improvements; and they found it no hard matter to inspire their genial chief with a warm sympathy in not a few of their then predominant speculations. He was invited, for example, to place himself at the head of a new company for improving the manufacture of oil gas, and in the spring of this year began to officiate regularly in that capacity. Other associations of a like kind called for his countenance, and received it. The fame of his ready zeal and happy demeanour grew and spread; and from this time, until bodily infirmities disabled him, Sir Walter occupied, as the most usual, acceptable, and successful chairman of public meetings of almost every sort, apart from politics, a very prominent place among the active citizens of his native town. Any foreign

student of statistics who should have happened to peruse the files of an Edinburgh newspaper for the period to which I allude, would, I think, have concluded that there must be at least two Sir Walter Scotts in the place— one the miraculously fertile author whose works occupied two-thirds of its literary advertisements and critical columns—another some retired magistrate or senator of easy fortune and indefatigable philanthropy, who devoted the rather oppressive leisure of an honourable old age to the promotion of patriotic ameliorations, the watchful guardianship of charities, and the ardent patronage of educational institutions.

The reader of his correspondence will find hints about various little matters connected with Scott's own advancing edifice, in which he may trace the President of the Royal Society and the Chairman of the Gas Company. But I cannot say that the "century of inventions" at Abbotsford turned out very happily. His bells to move by compression of air in a piston proved a poor succedaneum for the simple wire; and his application of gas-light to the interior of a dwelling-house was in fact attended with so many inconveniences, that erelong all his family heartily wished it had never been thought of. Moreover, he had deceived himself as to the expense of such an apparatus when constructed and maintained for the use of a single domestic establishment. The effect of the apparatus was at first superb. In sitting down to table, in Autumn, no one observed that in each of three chandeliers there lurked a tiny bead of red light. Dinner passed off, and the sun went down, and suddenly, at the turning of a screw, the room was filled with a gush of splendour worthy of the palace of Aladdin; but, as in the case of Aladdin, the old lamp would have been better in the upshot. Jewelry sparkled, but cheeks and lips looked cold and wan in this fierce illumination; and the eye was wearied, and the brow ached, if the sitting was at all protracted. I confess, however, that my chief enmity to the whole affair arises

from my conviction that Sir Walter's own health was damaged, in his latter years, in consequence of his habitually working at night under the intense and burning glare of a broad star of gas.

In June Quentin Durward was published; and surpassing as its popularity was eventually, Constable, who was in London at the time, wrote in cold terms of its immediate reception.

Very shortly before the bookseller left Edinburgh for that trip, he had concluded another bargain (his last of the sort) for the purchase of Waverley copyrights—acquiring the author's property in the Pirate, Nigel, Peveril, and also Quentin Durward, out and out, at the price of five thousand guineas. He had thus paid for the copyright of novels (over and above the half profits of the early separate editions) the sum of L.22,500; and his advances upon "works of fiction" still in embryo, amounted at this moment to L.10,000 more. He began, in short, and the wonder is that he began so late, to suspect that the process of creation was moving too rapidly. The publication of different sets of the Tales in a collective shape may probably have had a share in opening his eyes to the fact, that the voluminousness of an author is anything but favourable to the rapid diffusion of his works as library books—the great object with any publisher who aspires at founding a solid fortune. But he merely intimated on this occasion that, considering the usual chances of life and health, he must decline contracting for any more novels until those already bargained for were written. Scott himself appears to have admitted for a moment the suspicion that he had been overdoing in the field of romance; and opened the scheme of a work on popular superstitions, in the form of dialogue, for which he had long possessed ample materials in his curious library of *diablerie*. But before Constable had leisure to consider this proposal in all its bearings, Quentin Dur-

ward, from being, as Scott expressed it, *frost-bit*, had emerged into most fervid and flourishing life. In fact, the sensation which this novel on its first appearance created in Paris, was extremely similar to that which attended the original Waverley in Edinburgh, and Ivanhoe afterwards in London. For the first time Scott had ventured on foreign ground, and the French public, long wearied of the pompous tragedians and feeble romancers, who had alone striven to bring out the ancient history and manners of their country in popular forms, were seized with a fever of delight when Louis XI. and Charles the Bold started into life again at the beck of the Northern Magician. The result of Quentin Durward, as regards the contemporary literature of the Continent, would open a field for ample digression. As concerns the author himself, the rays of foreign enthusiasm speedily thawed the frost of Constable's unwonted misgivings; the Dialogues on Superstition, if he ever began them, were very soon dropped, and the Novelist resumed his pen. He had not sunk under the short-lived frown—for he wrote to Ballantyne, on first ascertaining that a damp was thrown on his usual manufacture,

> "The mouse who only trusts to one poor hole,
> Can never be a mouse of any soul;"

and, while his publisher yet remained irresolute as to the plan of Dialogues, threw off his excellent Essay on Romance for the Encyclopædia Britannica; and I cannot but consider it as another display of his high self-reliance, that, though he well knew to what influence Quentin owed its ultimate success in the British market, he, the instant he found himself encouraged to take up the trade of story-telling again, sprang back to Scotland—nay, voluntarily encountered new difficulties, by selecting the comparatively tame and unpicturesque realities of modern manners in his native province.

A conversation, which much interested me at the time,

had, I fancy, some share at least in this determination. As he, Laidlaw, and myself, were lounging on our ponies, one fine calm afternoon, along the brow of the Eildon Hill where it overhangs Melrose, he mentioned to us gaily the *row*, as he called it, that was going on in Paris about Quentin Durward, and said, "I can't but think that I could make better play still with something German." Laidlaw grumbled at this, and said, like a true Scotchman, "Na, na, sir—take my word for it, you are always best, like Helen MacGregor, when your foot is on your native heath; and I have often thought that if you were to write a novel, and lay the scene *here* in the very year you were writing it, you would exceed yourself."—"Hame's hame," quoth Scott, smiling, "be it ever sae hamely. There's something in what you say, Willie. What suppose I were to take Captain Clutterbuck for a hero, and never let the story step a yard beyond the village below us yonder?"—"The very thing I want," says Laidlaw; "stick to Melrose in July 1823."—"Well, upon my word," he answered, "the field would be quite wide enough—and *what for no?*"—(This pet phrase of Meg Dods was a *Laidlawism.*)—Some fun followed about the different real persons in the village that might be introduced with comical effect; but as Laidlaw and I talked and laughed over our worthy neighbours, his air became graver and graver; and he at length said, "Ay, ay, if one could look into the heart of that little cluster of cottages, no fear but you would find materials enow for tragedy as well as comedy. I undertake to say there is some real romance at this moment going on down there, that, if it could have justice done to it, would be well worth all the fiction that was ever spun out of human brains." He then told us a tale of dark domestic guilt which had recently come under his notice as Sheriff, and of which the scene was not Melrose, but a smaller hamlet, on the other side of the Tweed, full in our view; but the details were not of a kind to be dwelt upon;—anything

more dreadful was never conceived by Crabbe, and he told it so as to produce on us who listened all the effect of another *Hall of Justice.* It could never have entered into his head to elaborate such a tale; but both Laidlaw and I used to think that this talk suggested St Ronan's Well—though my good friend was by no means disposed to accept that as payment in full of his demand, and from time to time afterwards, would give the Sheriff a little poking about "Melrose in July."

Before Sir Walter settled to the new novel, he received Joanna Baillie's long-promised Collection of Poetical Miscellanies, in which appeared his dramatic sketch of Macduff's Cross. When Halidon Hill first came forth, there were not wanting reviewers who hailed it in a style of rapture, such as might have been expected had it been a Macbeth. But this folly soon sunk; and I only mention it as an instance of the extent to which reputation bewilders and confounds even persons who have good brains enough when they find it convenient to exercise them. The second attempt of the class produced no sensation whatever at the time; and both would have been long since forgotten, but that they came from Scott's pen. They both contain some fine passages—Halidon Hill has, indeed, several grand ones. But, on the whole, they always seemed to me unworthy of Sir Walter; and, now that I have read his admirable letters on dramatic composition to Allan Cunningham, it appears doubly hard to account for the rashness with which he committed himself in even such slender attempts on a species of composition, of which, in his cool hour, he so fully appreciated the difficult demands. Nevertheless, I am very far from agreeing with those critics who have gravely talked of Halidon Hill and Macduff's Cross, and the still more unfortunate Doom of Devorgoil, as proving that Sir Walter could not have succeeded in the drama, either serious or comic. It would be as fair to conclude, from the abortive fragment of the Vampyre, that

Lord Byron could not have written a good novel or romance in prose. Scott threw off these things *currente calamo;* he never gave himself time to consider beforehand what could be made of their materials, nor bestowed a moment on correcting them; and neither when they were new, nor even after, did he seem to attach the slightest importance to them.

The month of August 1823 was one of the happiest in Scott's life. Never did I see a brighter day at Abbotsford than that on which Miss Edgeworth first arrived there —never can I forget her look and accent when she was received by him at his archway, and exclaimed, "Everything about you is exactly what one ought to have had wit enough to dream!" The weather was beautiful, and the edifice, and its appurtenances, were all but complete; and day after day, so long as she could remain, her host had always some new plan of gaiety. One day there was fishing on the Cauldshields' Loch, and a dinner on the heathy bank. Another, the whole party feasted by Sir Thomas the Rhymer's waterfall in the glen—and the stone on which Maria that day sat was ever afterwards called *Edgeworth's Stone.* A third day we had to go further a-field. He must needs shew her, not Newark only, but all the upper scenery of the Yarrow, where "fair hangs the apple frae the rock,"—and the baskets were unpacked about sunset, beside the ruined Chapel overlooking St Mary's Loch—and he had scrambled to gather blue-bells and heath-flowers, with which all the young ladies must twine their hair,—and they sang, and he recited, until it was time to go home beneath the softest of harvest moons. Thus a fortnight was passed—and the vision closed; for Miss Edgeworth never saw Abbotsford again during his life; and I am very sure she could never bear to look upon it now that the spirit is fled.

Another welcome guest of the same month was Mr Adolphus—the author of the Letters to Heber; whose reminis-

cences of this and several subsequent visits are singularly vivid and interesting. He says:—"The circumstances under which I presented myself were peculiar, as the only cause of my being under his roof was one which could not without awkwardness be alluded to, while a strict reserve existed on the subject of the Waverley novels. This, however, did not create any embarrassment; and he entered into conversation as if anything that might have been said with reference to the origin of our acquaintance had been said an hour before. I never saw a man who, in his intercourse with all persons, was so perfect a master of courtesy. His manners were so plain and natural, and his kindness took such immediate possession of the feelings, that this excellence in him might for a while pass almost unobserved. I cannot pay a higher testimony to it than by owning that I first fully appreciated it from his behaviour to others. His air and aspect, at the moment of a first introduction, were placid, modest, and, for his time of life, venerable. Occasionally, where he stood a little on ceremony, he threw into his address a deferential tone, which had in it something of old-fashioned politeness, and became him extremely well.

"A point of hospitality in which Sir Walter Scott never failed, whatever might be the pretensions of the guest, was to do the honours of conversation. When a stranger arrived, he seemed to consider it as much a duty to offer him the resources of his mind as those of his table; taking care, however, by his choice of subjects, to give the visiter an opportunity of making his own stores, if he had them, available. To me he addressed himself often as to a member of his own profession; and indeed he seemed always to have a real pleasure in citing from his own experience as an advocate and a law-officer.

"It would, I think, be extremely difficult to give a just idea of his general conversation to any one who had not known him. Considering his great personal and literary po-

pularity, and the wide circle of society in which he had lived, it is perhaps remarkable that so few of his sayings, real or imputed, are in circulation. But he did not affect sayings; the points and sententious turns, which are so easily caught up and transmitted, were not natural to him: though he occasionally expressed a thought very pithily and neatly. For example, he once described the Duke of Wellington's style of debating as 'slicing the argument into two or three parts, and helping himself to the best.' But the great charm of his 'table-talk' was in the sweetness and *abandon* with which it flowed,—always, however, guided by good sense and taste; the warm and unstudied eloquence with which he expressed rather sentiments than opinions; and the liveliness and force with which he narrated and described: and all that he spoke derived so much of its effect from indefinable felicities of manner, look, and tone—and sometimes from the choice of apparently insignificant words—that a moderately faithful transcript of his sentences would be but a faint image of his conversation:—"No one who has seen him can forget the surprising power of change which his countenance showed when awakened from a state of composure. In 1823, his face, which was healthy and sanguine, and the hair about it, which had a strong reddish tinge, contrasted rather than harmonized with the sleek, silvery locks above; a contrast which might seem rather suited to a jovial and humorous, than to a pathetic expression. But his features were equally capable of both. The form and hue of his eyes (for the benefit of minute physiognomists it should be noted that the iris contained some small specks of brown) were wonderfully calculated for shewing great varieties of emotion. Their mournful aspect was extremely earnest and affecting; and when he told some dismal and mysterious story, they had a doubtful, melancholy, exploring look, which appealed irresistibly to the hearer's imagination. Occasionally, when he spoke of something very audacious or eccentric, they would dilate

and light up with a tragi-comic, hare-brained expression, quite peculiar to himself; one might see in it a whole chapter of *Cœur-de-lion* and the Clerk of Copmanhurst. Never, perhaps, did a man go through all the gradations of laughter with such complete enjoyment, and a countenance so radiant. The first dawn of a humorous thought would shew itself sometimes, as he sat silent, by an involuntary lengthening of the upper lip, followed by a shy sidelong glance at his neighbours, indescribably whimsical, and seeming to ask from their looks whether the spark of drollery should be suppressed or allowed to blaze out. In the full tide of mirth he did indeed 'laugh the heart's laugh,' like Walpole, but it was not boisterous and overpowering, nor did it check the course of his words; he could go on telling or descanting, while his lungs did 'crow like chanticleer,' his syllables, in the struggle, growing more emphatic, his accent more strongly Scotch, and his voice plaintive with excess of merriment.

"The habits of life at Abbotsford, when I first saw it, ran in the same easy, rational, and pleasant course which I believe they always afterwards took; though the family was at this time rather straitened in its arrangements, as some of the principal rooms were not finished. After breakfast Sir Walter took his short interval of study in the light and elegant little room afterwards called Miss Scott's. That which he occupied when Abbotsford was complete, though more convenient in some material respects, seemed to me the least cheerful[1] and least private in the house. It had, however, a recommendation which perhaps he was very sensible of, that as he sat at his writing-table, he could look out at his young trees. About one o'clock he walked or rode, generally with some of his visiters. At this period, he used to be a good deal on horseback, and a pleasant sight it was to see the gallant old gentleman, in his seal-

[1] It is, however, the only sitting room in the house that looks *southward.*

skin cap and short green jacket, lounging along a field-side on his mare, Sibyl Grey, and pausing now and then to talk, with a serio-comic look, to a labouring man or woman, and rejoice them with some quaint saying in broad Scotch. The dinner hour was early; the sitting after dinner was hospitably but not immoderately prolonged; and the whole family party (for such it always seemed, even if there were several visiters) then met again for a short evening, which was passed in conversation and music. I once heard Sir Walter say, that he believed there was a 'pair' of cards (such was his antiquated expression) somewhere in the house—but probably there is no tradition of their having ever been used. The drawing-room and library (unfurnished at the time of my first visit) opened into each other, and formed a beautiful evening apartment. By every one who has visited at Abbotsford they must be associated with some of the most delightful recollections of his life. Sir Walter listened to the music of his daughters, which was all congenial to his own taste, with a never-failing enthusiasm. He followed the fine old songs which Mrs Lockhart sang to her harp with his mind, eyes, and lips, almost as if joining in an act of religion. To other musical performances he was a dutiful, and often a pleased listener; but I believe he cared little for mere music—the notes failed to charm him if they were not connected with good words, or immediately associated with some history or strong sentiment, upon which his imagination could fasten. A similar observation might, I should conceive, apply to his feeling of other arts. I do not remember any picture or print at Abbotsford which was remarkable merely as a work of colour or design. All, I think, either represented historical, romantic, or poetical subjects, or related to persons, places, or circumstances in which he took an interest. Even in architecture, his taste had the same bias; almost every stone of his house bore an allusion or suggested a sentiment.

"It seemed at first a little strange, in a scene where so many things brought to mind the Waverley novels, to hear no direct mention of them, or even allusion to their existence. But as forbearance on this head was a rule on which a complete tacit understanding subsisted, there was no embarrassment or appearance of mystery on the subject. Once or twice I have heard a casual reference made, in Sir Walter's presence, to some topic in the novels; no surprise or appearance of displeasure followed, but the conversation, so far as it tended that way, died a natural death. It has, I believe, happened that he himself has been caught unawares on the forbidden ground; I have heard it told by a very acute observer, not now living, that on his coming once to Abbotsford, after the publication of The Pirate, Sir Walter asked him, 'Well, and how is our friend Kemble? glorious John!' and then, recollecting, of course, that he was talking of Claud Halcro, he checked himself, and could not for some moments recover from the false step. Had a man been ever so prone to indiscretion on such subjects, it would have been unpardonable to betray it towards Sir Walter Scott, who (beside all his other claims to respect and affection) was himself cautious, even to nicety, of hazarding an inquiry or remark which might appear to be an intrusion upon the affairs of those with whom he conversed. It may be observed, too, that the publications of the day were by no means the staple of conversation at Abbotsford, though they had their turn; and with respect to his own works, Sir Walter did not often talk even of those which were avowed. If he ever indulged in anything like egotism, he loved better to speak of what he had done and seen than of what he had written.

"After all, there is perhaps hardly a secret in the world which has not its safety-valve. Though Sir Walter abstained strictly from any mention of the Waverley novels, he did not scruple to talk, and that with great zest, of the

plays which had been founded upon some of them, and the characters, as there represented. Soon after our first meeting, he described to me, with his usual dramatic power, the deathbed scene of 'the original Dandie Dinmont;' of course referring, ostensibly at least, to the *opera* of Guy Mannering. He dwelt with extreme delight upon Mackay's performances of the Bailie and Dominie Sampson, and appeared to taste them with all the fresh and disinterested enjoyment of a common spectator. I do not know a more interesting circumstance in the history of the Waverley novels, than the pleasure which their illustrious author thus received, as it were at the rebound, from those creations of his own mind which had so largely increased the enjoyments of all the civilized world.

"In one instance only did he, in my presence, say or do anything which seemed to have an intentional reference to the novels themselves, while they were yet unacknowledged. On the last day of my visit in 1823, I rode out with Sir Walter and his friend Mr Rose, who was then his guest and frequent companion in these short rambles. Sir Walter led us a little way down the left bank of the Tweed, and then into the moors by a track called the Girth Road, along which, he told us, the pilgrims from that side of the river used to come to Melrose. We traced upward, at a distance, the course of the little stream called the Elland. When we had ridden a little time on the moors, he said to me rather pointedly, 'I am going to shew you something that I think will interest you;' and presently, in a wild corner of the hills, he halted us at a place where stood three small ancient towers or castellated houses, in ruins, at short distances from each other. It was plain, upon the slightest consideration of the topography, that one (perhaps any one) of these was the tower of Glendearg, where so many romantic and marvellous adventures happen in The Monastery. While we looked at this forlorn group, I said to Sir Walter that they were what Burns called

'ghaist-alluring edifices.' 'Yes,' he answered carelessly, 'I dare say there are many stories about them.'"

Every friend of Sir Walter's must admire particularly Mr Adolphus's exquisite description of his laugh; but indeed, every word of these memoranda is precious.

In September, the Highland Society, at the request of Sir Henry Stewart of Allanton, sent a deputation to his seat in Lanarkshire, to examine and report upon his famous improvements in the art of transplanting trees. Sir Walter was one of the committee, and he took a lively interest in it; witness his Essay on Landscape Gardening. He himself made several Allantonian experiments at Abbotsford; but found reason in the sequel to abate somewhat of the enthusiasm which his Essay expresses as to *the system*. The question, after all, comes to pounds, shillings, and pence—and, whether Sir Henry's accounts had or had not been accurately kept, the thing turned out greatly more expensive on Tweedside than he found it represented in Clydesdale.

I accompanied Sir Walter on this little expedition, in the course of which we paid several other visits, and explored not a few ancient castles in the upper regions of the Tweed and the Clyde. Even while the weather was most unpropitious, nothing could induce him to remain in the carriage when we approached any ruined or celebrated edifice. If he had never seen it before, his curiosity was like that of an eager stripling: if he had examined it fifty times, he must renew his familiarity, and gratify the tenderness of youthful reminiscences. While on the road, his conversation never flagged—story suggested story, and ballad came upon ballad in endless succession. But what struck me most, was the apparently omniverous grasp of his memory. That he should recollect every stanza of any ancient ditty of chivalry or romance that had once excited his imagination, could no longer surprise me: but it

seemed as if he remembered everything without exception, so it were in anything like the shape of verse, that he had ever read. For example, the morning after we left Allanton, we went across the country to breakfast with his friend Cranstoun (Lord Corehouse), who accompanied us in the same carriage; and his Lordship happening to repeat a phrase, remarkable only for its absurdity, from a Magazine poem of the very silliest feebleness, which they had laughed at when at College together, Scott immediately began at the beginning, and gave it us to the end, with apparently no more effort than if he himself had composed it the day before. I could after this easily believe a story often told by Hogg, to the effect that, lamenting in Scott's presence his having lost his only copy of a long ballad composed by him in his early days, and of which he then could recall merely the subject, and one or two fragments, Sir Walter forthwith said, with a smile,—"Take your pencil, Jamie, and I'll dictate your ballad to you, word for word;"—which was done accordingly.[1]

As this was among the first times that I ever travelled for a few days in company with Scott, I may as well add the surprise with which his literary diligence, when away from home and his books, could not fail to be observed.

[1] "One morning at breakfast, in my father's house, shortly after one of Sir Walter's severe illnesses, he was asked to partake of some of 'the baked meats that coldly did furnish forth the *breakfast*-table.'—No, no, he answered; I bear in mind at present, Bob, the advice of your old friend Dr Weir—

> From season'd meats avert your eyes,
> From hams, and tongues, and pigeon pies—
> A venison pasty set before ye,
> Each bit you eat—*Memento mori.*

This was a verse of a clever rhyming prescription sent some 30 years before, and which my father then remembered to have repeated upon one of their Liddesdale raids. The verses had almost entirely escaped his memory, but Sir Walter was able to give us a long *screed* of them.—*Andrew Shortrede.*"

Wherever we slept, whether in the noble mansion or in the shabbiest of country inns, and whether the work was done after retiring at night or before an early start in the morning, he *very rarely* mounted the carriage again without having a packet of the well-known aspect, ready sealed and corded, and addressed to his printer in Edinburgh. I used to suspect that he had adopted in his latter years the plan of writing everything on paper of the quarto form, in place of the folio which he at an earlier period used, chiefly because in this way, whatever he was writing, and wherever he wrote, he might seem to casual observers to be merely engaged upon a common letter; and the rapidity of his execution, taken with the shape of his sheet, has probably deceived hundreds; but when he had finished his two or three letters, St Ronan's Well, or whatever was in hand, had made a chapter in advance.

The novel just mentioned was published in December, and in its English reception there was another falling off, which of course somewhat dispirited the bookseller for the moment. Scotch readers in general dissented stoutly from this judgment, alleging (as they might well do) that Meg Dods deserved a place by the side of Monkbarns, Bailie Jarvie, and Captain Dalgetty;—that no one, who had lived in the author's own country, could hesitate to recognise vivid and happy portraitures in Touchwood, Mac-Turk, and the recluse minister of St Ronan's;—that the descriptions of natural scenery might rank with any he had given;—and, finally, that the whole character of Clara Mowbray, but especially its development in the third volume, formed an original creation, destined to be classed by posterity with the highest efforts of tragic romance. Some Edinburgh critics, however—(both talkers and writers)—received with considerable grudgings certain sarcastic shetches of the would-be-fine life of the watering-place—sketches which their Southern brethren had kindly suggested *might* be drawn from *Northern* observation, but

could never appear better than fantastic caricatures to any person who had visited even a third-rate English resort of the same nominal class. There is no doubt that the author dashed off these minor personages with, in the painter's phrase, *a rich brush;* but I must confess my belief that they have far more truth about them than his countrymen seemed at the time willing to allow; and that while the Continent was shut, as it was in the days of Sir Walter's youthful wanderings, a trip to such a sequestrated place as Gilsland, or Moffat, or Innerleithen—(almost as inaccessible to London duns and bailiffs as the Isle of Man was then, or as Boulogne and Dieppe are now)—may have supplied the future novelist's note-book with authentic materials even for such worthies as Sir Bingo and Lady Binks, Dr Quackleben, and Mr Winterblossom. It should moreover be borne in mind, that during our insular blockade, northern watering-places were not alone favoured by the resort of questionable characters from the south. The comparative cheapness of living, and especially of education, procured for Sir Walter's "own romantic town" a constant succession of such visitants, so long as they could have no access to the *tables d'hôte* and dancing-masters of the Continent. When I first mingled in the society of Edinburgh, it abounded with English, broken in character and in fortune, who found a mere title (even a baronet's one) of consequence enough to obtain for them, from the proverbially cautious Scotch, a degree of attention to which they had long been unaccustomed nearer home; and I heard many name, when the novel was new, a booby of some rank, in whom they recognised a sufficiently accurate prototype for Sir Bingo.

Sir Walter had shewn a remarkable degree of good-nature in the completion of this novel. When the end came in view, James Ballantyne suddenly took vast alarm about a particular feature in the history of the heroine. In the original conception, and in the book as actually

written and printed, Miss Mowbray's mock marriage had not halted at the profaned ceremony of the church ; and the delicate printer shrunk from the idea of obtruding on the fastidious public the possibility of any personal contamination having been incurred by a high-born damsel of the nineteenth century. Scott was at first inclined to dismiss his friend's scruples as briefly as he had done those of Blackwood in the case of the Black Dwarf:—"You would never have quarrelled with it," he said, "had the thing happened to a girl in gingham:—the silk petticoat can make little difference." James reclaimed with double energy, and called Constable to the rescue;—and after some pause, the author very reluctantly consented to cancel and re-write about twenty-four pages, which was enough to obliterate to a certain extent the dreaded scandal—and in a similar degree, as he always persisted, to perplex and weaken the course of his narrative and the dark effect of its catastrophe.

Whoever might take offence with different parts of the book, it was rapturously hailed by the inhabitants of Innerleithen, who immediately identified the most striking of its localities with those of their own pretty village and picturesque neighbourhood, and foresaw in this celebration a chance of restoring the popularity of their long neglected *Well*;—to which Scott had occasionally escorted his mother and sister in the days of boyhood. The notables of the little town voted by acclamation that the old name of Innerleithen should be, as far as possible, dropped thenceforth, and that of St Ronan's adopted. Nor were they mistaken in their auguries. An unheard-of influx of water-bibbers forthwith crowned their hopes; and spruce *hottles* and huge staring lodging-houses soon arose to disturb wofully every association that had induced Sir Walter to make Innerleithen the scene of a romance. Nor were they who profited by these invasions of the *genius loci* at all sparing in their demonstrations of gratitude;—the tra-

veller reads on the corner of every new erection there, *Abbotsford Place*, *Waverley Row*, *The Marmion Hotel*, or some inscription of the like coinage.

Among other consequences of the revived fame of the place, a yearly festival was instituted for the celebration of *The St Ronan's Border Games.* A club of *Bowmen of the Border*, arrayed in doublets of Lincoln green, with broad blue bonnets, and having the Ettrick Shepherd for Captain, assumed the principal management of this exhibition ; and Scott was well pleased to be enrolled among them, and during several years was a regular attendant, both on the Meadow, where (besides archery) leaping, racing, wrestling, stone-heaving, and hammer-throwing, went on opposite to the noble old Castle of Traquair, and at the subsequent banquet, where Hogg in full costume always presided as master of the ceremonies. A gayer spectacle than that of *The St Ronan's Games* in those days could not well have been desired. The Shepherd, even when on the verge of threescore, seldom failed to carry off some of the prizes, to the astonishment of his vanquished juniors ; and the *bon-vivants* of Edinburgh mustered strong among the gentry and yeomanry of Tweeddale to see him afterwards in his glory filling the president's chair with eminent success, and commonly supported on this—which was, in fact, the grandest evening of his year—by Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, Sir Adam Fergusson, and *Peter* Robertson.

CHAPTER IV.

Publication of Redgauntlet—Abbotsford completed—Marriage of Captain Scott—Constable's Miscellany projected—Life of Napoleon begun—Tales of the Crusaders published—Tour in Ireland—Visit to Windermere—Moore at Abbotsford—Rumours of evil among the Booksellers.—1824–1825.

IMMEDIATELY on the conclusion of St Ronan's Well, Sir Walter began *Redgauntlet;*—but it had made considerable progress at press before Constable and Ballantyne could persuade him to substitute that title for *Herries.* The book was published in June 1824, and was received at the time somewhat coldly, though it has since, I believe, found more justice. The rëintroduction of the adventurous hero of 1745, in the dulness and dimness of advancing age and fortunes hopelessly blighted—and the presenting him—with whose romantic portraiture at an earlier period historical truth had been so admirably blended—as the moving principle of events, not only entirely, but notoriously imaginary—this was a rash experiment, and could not fail to suggest disadvantageous comparisons; yet, had there been no Waverley, I am persuaded the fallen and faded Ascanius of Redgauntlet would have been universally pronounced a masterpiece. About the secondary personages there could be little ground for controversy. What novel or drama has surpassed the grotesquely ludicrous, dashed with the profound pathos, of Peter Peebles—the most tragic of farces?—or the still sadder merriment of that human shipwreck, Naptie Ewart?—or Wandering Willie—and his Tale—the wildest and most rueful of dreams told by such a person, and in such a dialect? With posterity, even apart from these grand features, this novel

will yield in interest to none of the series; for it contains perhaps more of *Allan Fairford's* personal experiences than any other of them, or even than all the rest put together.

This year—*mirabile dictu!*—produced but one novel; and it is not impossible that the author had taken deeply into his mind, though he would not *immediately* act upon them, certain hints about the danger of "overcropping," which have been alluded to as dropping from his publishers in 1823. He had, however, a labour of some weight to go through in a second edition of his Swift. The additions to this reprint were numerous, and he corrected his notes, and the Life of the Dean throughout, with care. He also threw off several reviews and other petty miscellanies—among the rest his memorable tribute to the memory of Lord Byron, written immediately after the news of the catastrophe at Missolonghi reached him.

The arrangement of his library and museum was, however, the main care of the summer; and his woods were now in such a state that his most usual exercise out of doors was thinning them. He was an expert as well as powerful wielder of the axe, and competed with his ablest subalterns as to the paucity of blows by which a tree could be brought down. The wood rang ever and anon with laughter while he shared their labours; and if he had taken, as he every now and then did, a whole day with them, they were sure to be invited home to Abbotsford, to sup gaily at Tom Purdie's. One of Sir Walter's transatlantic admirers, by the way, sent him a complete assortment of the tools employed in clearing the Back-woods, and both he and Tom made efforts to attain dexterity in using them; but neither succeeded. The American axe, having a longer shaft than ours, and a much smaller and narrower cutting-piece, was, in Tom's opinion, only fit for paring a *kebbuck* (*i. e.* a cheese of skimmed milk). The old fashioned weapon was soon resumed, and the belt that bore it had ac-

commodation also for a chissel, a hammer, and a small saw. Among all the numberless portraits, why was there not one representing the "Belted Knight," accoutred with these appurtenances of his forest-craft, jogging over the heather on a breezy morning, with Thomas at his stirrup, and Maida stalking in advance?

Notwithstanding numberless letters to Terry about his upholstery, the far greater part of it was manufactured at home. The most of the articles from London were only models for the use of two or three neat-handed carpenters whom he had discovered in the villages near him; and he watched and directed their operations as carefully as a George Bullock could have done; and the results were such as even Bullock might have admired. The great table in the library, for example (a most complex and beautiful one), was done entirely in the room where it now stands, by Joseph Shillinglaw of Darnick—the Sheriff planning and studying every turn as zealously as ever an old lady pondered the development of an embroidered cushion. The hangings and curtains, too, were chiefly the work of a little hunch-backed tailor, by name *William* Goodfellow—(save at Abbotsford, where he answered to *Robin*)—who occupied a cottage on Scott's farm of the Broomielees; one of the race who creep from homestead to homestead, welcomed wherever they appear by housewife and handmaiden, the great gossips and newsmen of the parish,—in Scottish nomenclature *cardooers*. Proudly and earnestly did all these vassals toil in his service; and I think it was one of them that, when some stranger asked a question about his personal demeanour, answered in these simple words—"Sir Walter speaks to every man as if they were blood-relations." Not long after he had completed his work at Abbotsford, little Goodfellow fell sick, and as his cabin was near Chiefswood, I had many opportunities of observing the Sheriff's kind attention to him in his affliction. I can never forget the evening on which the poor tailor

died. When Scott entered the hovel he found everything silent, and inferred from the looks of the good women in attendance that their patient had fallen asleep, and that they feared his sleep was the final one. He murmured some syllables of kind regret;—at the sound of his voice the dying tailor unclosed his eyes, and eagerly and wistfully sat up, clasping his hands with an expression of rapturous gratefulness and devotion, that, in the midst of deformity, disease, pain, and wretchedness, was at once beautiful and sublime. He cried with a loud voice, "The Lord bless and reward you!" and expired with the effort.

In the painting too Sir Walter personally directed everything. He abominated the commonplace daubing of walls, panels, doors, and window-boards, with coats of white, blue, or grey, and thought that sparklings and edgings of gilding only made their baldness and poverty more noticeable. Except in the drawing-room, which he abandoned to Lady Scott's taste, all the roofs were in appearance at least of antique carved oak, relieved by coats of arms duly blazoned at the intersections of beams, and resting on cornices to the eye of the same material, but composed of casts in plaster of Paris, after the foliage, the flowers, the grotesque monsters and dwarfs, and sometimes the beautiful heads of nuns and confessors, on which he had doated from infancy among the cloisters of Melrose and Roslin. In the painting of these things, also, he had instruments who considered it as a labour of love. The master-limner, in particular (Mr D. R. Hay), had a devoted attachment to his person; and this was not wonderful, for he, in fact, owed a prosperous fortune to Scott's kind and sagacious counsel tendered at the very outset of his career. As a printer's apprentice, he had attracted notice by his attempts with the pencil, and Sir Walter was called upon, after often admiring his skill in representing dogs and horses and the like, to assist him with his advice, as ambition had been stirred, and the youth would fain

give himself to the regular training of an artist. Scott took him into his room, and conversed with him at some length. He explained the difficulties and perils of this aspiring walk; and ended with saying, "It has often struck me that some clever fellow might make a good hit, if, in place of enrolling himself among the future Raphaels and Vandykes of the Royal Academy, he should resolutely set himself to introducing something of a more elegant style of house-painting."

Meantime, the progress of Abbotsford stimulated both friends and strangers to contribute articles of curiosity towards its adornment. Mr Train's gift of this year was a handsome chair made from the oak of the house of Robroyston, the traditionary scene of the betrayal of Wallace by Menteith. This Sir Walter placed in his own *sanctum:* where there was no other chair but the one on which he sat at work. But the arrivals were endless: among the rest came, I think within the same week, a copy of Montfauçon's Antiquities, in fifteen volumes folio, richly bound in scarlet, the gift of King George IV., and a set of the Variorum Classics, in a hundred and forty volumes, together with a couple of really splendid carved chairs, the spoils of some Venetian palace, from Mr Constable. These were his tokens of gratitude, by the way, for the MSS. of the Novels, which, on Lord Kinnedder's death, Scott drew from that friend's secret repositories, and transferred, with strict injunctions of watchfulness, to his delighted publisher.

Towards the close of this year, Sir Walter heard of the death of his dear brother Thomas, whose only son had been for some time domesticated at Abbotsford. In October, his own son Charles began his residence at Brazennose College, Oxford. The adoption of this plan implied finally dropping an appointment in the civil service of the East-India Company, which had been placed at his disposal by Lord Bathurst in 1820; a step which, were

there any doubt on that subject, would alone be sufficient to prove that the young gentleman's father at this time considered his own worldly fortunes as in a highly prosperous situation. A writership in India is early independence;—in the case of a son of Scott, so conducting himself as not to discredit the name he inherited, it could hardly have failed to be early wealth. And Sir Walter was the last man to deprive his boy of such safe and easy prospects of worldly advantage, turning him over to the precarious chances of a learned profession in Great Britain, unless in the confidence that his own resources were so great as to render ultimate failure in such a career a matter of no primary importance.

By Christmas the Tales of the Crusaders were begun, and Abbotsford was at last rid of carpenters and upholsterers. Young Walter arrived to see his father's house complete, and filled with a larger company than it could ever before accommodate. One of the guests was Captain Basil Hall, always an agreeable one: a traveller and a *savant*, full of stories and theories, inexhaustible in spirits, curiosity, and enthusiasm. Sir Walter was surprised and a little annoyed on observing that the Captain kept a note-book on his knee while at table, but made no remark. He kindly allowed me, in 1836, to read his Abbotsford Diaries, &c., and make what use of them I might then think proper. On the present occasion I must give but a specimen:—

"On coming to a broad path in the middle of the woods, we took notice of a finger-post, on which was written 'The *Rod* to Selkirk.' We made some remark about Tom's orthography, upon which he laughed, and said that that finger-post had gained him great popularity in the neighbourhood. 'I cannot say,' he remarked, 'that I had any such view when I ordered it to be put up. The public road, it is true, is not far off, and this leads through the very centre of my grounds, but I never could bring myself to make that a reason for excluding any person who finds

it agreeable or advantageous to take over the hill if he likes. But although my practice in this respect had always been well known, the actual admission of it, the avowed establishment of it as a sort of right, by sticking up the finger-post, was received as a kind of boon, and I got a world of credit for a thing which had certainly not any popularity for its object. Nevertheless,' he continued, 'I have no scruple in saying that what I did deserved the good people's acknowledgment; and I seriously disapprove of those proprietors who act on a different principle in these matters. Nothing on earth would induce me to put up boards threatening prosecution, or cautioning one's fellow-creatures to beware of man-traps and spring-guns. I hold that all such things are not only in the highest degree offensive and hurtful to the feelings of people whom it is every way important to conciliate, but that they are also quite inefficient—and I will venture to say, that not one of my young trees has ever been cut, nor a fence trodden down, or any kind of damage done in consequence of the free access which all the world has to my place. Round the house, of course, there is a set of walks set apart and kept private for the ladies—but over all the rest of my land any one may rove as he likes. I please myself with the reflection that many people of taste may be indulging their fancies in these grounds, and I often recollect how much of Burns's inspiration was probably due to his having near him the woods of Ballochmyle to ramble through at his will when he was a ragged callant.' Some one talked of the pains taken to provide the poor with receipts for making good dishes out of their ordinary messes. 'I dislike all such interference,' he said—'all your domiciliary, kind, impertinent visits;—they are all pretty much felt like insults, and do no manner of good: let people go on in their own way, in God's name. How would you like to have a nobleman coming to you to teach you how to dish up your beef-steak into a French kickshaw? Let the poor alone in their

domestic habits: protect them, treat them kindly, trust them; but let them enjoy in quiet their dish of porridge, and their potatoes and herrings, or whatever it may be—for anysake don't torment them with your fashionable soups. And take care,' he added, 'not to give them anything gratis; except when they are under the gripe of immediate *misery* —what *they* think misery—consider it as a sin to do anything that can tend to make them lose the precious feeling of independence. For my part, I very very rarely give anything away. Now, for instance, this pile of branches which has been thinned out this morning, is placed here for sale for the poor people's fires, and I am perfectly certain they are more grateful to me for selling it at the price I do (which, you may be sure, is no great matter), than if I were to give them ten times the quantity for nothing. Every shilling collected in this and other similar manners, goes to a fund which pays the doctor for his attendance on them when they are sick; and this is my notion of charity.' —'I make not a rule to be on intimate terms,' he told us, 'with all my neighbours—that would be an idle thing to do. Some are good—some not so good, and it would be foolish and ineffectual to treat all with the same cordiality; but to live in harmony with all is quite easy, and surely very pleasant. Some of them may be rough and *gruff* at first, but all men, if kindly used, come about at last, and by going on gently, and never being eager or noisy about what I want, and letting things glide on leisurely, I always find in the end that the object is gained on which I have set my heart, either by exchange or purchase, or by some sort of compromise by which both parties are obliged, and good-will begot if it did not exist before—strengthened if it did exist.'—I have never seen any person on more delightful terms with his family. The youngest of his nephews and nieces can joke with him, and seem at all times perfectly at ease in his presence—his coming into the room only increases the laugh, and never checks it—he

either joins in what is going on or passes. No one notices him any more than if he were one of themselves. These are things which cannot be got up."

Another entry says:—"Last night there was a dance in honour of Sir Walter Scott's eldest son, who had recently come from Sandhurst College, after having passed through some military examinations with great credit. We had a great clan of Scotts. There were no less than nine Scotts of Harden, and ten of other families. There were others besides from the neighbourhood—at least half a dozen Fergussons, with the jolly Sir Adam at their head—Lady Fergusson, her niece Miss Jobson, the pretty heiress of Lochore," &c. But with all his acuteness, Hall does not seem to have caught any suspicion of the real purpose and meaning of this ball. That evening was one of the very proudest and happiest in Scott's brilliant existence. Its festivities were held in honour of the young lady, whom the Captain names cursorily as "the pretty heiress of Lochore." It was known to not a few of the party, and I should have supposed it might have been surmised by the rest, that those halls were displayed for the first time in all their splendour, on an occasion not less interesting to the Poet than the conclusion of a treaty of marriage between the heir of his name and fortunes, and the amiable niece of his friends Sir Adam and Lady Fergusson. It was the first regular ball given at Abbotsford, and the last. Nay, I believe nobody has ever danced under that roof since then. I myself never again saw the whole range of apartments thrown open for the reception of company except once—on the day of Sir Walter Scott's funeral.

The lady's fortune was a handsome one, and her guardians exerted the powers with which they were invested, by requiring that the marriage-contract should settle Abbotsford (with reservation of Sir Walter's own liferent) upon the affianced parties. To this condition he gave a ready assent, and the moment he had signed the deed, he

exclaimed—"I have now parted with my lands with more pleasure than I ever derived from the acquisition or possession of them; and if I be spared for ten years, I think I may promise to settle as much more again upon these young folks." It was well for himself and his children that his auguries, which failed so miserably as to the matter of worldly wealth, were destined to no disappointment as respected considerations of a higher description.

The marriage took place at Edinburgh on the 3d day of February, and when the young couple left Abbotsford two or three weeks afterwards, Sir Walter promised to visit them at their regimental quarters in Ireland in the course of the summer. Before he fulfilled that purpose he had the additional pleasure of seeing his son gazetted as Captain in the King's Hussars—a step for which Sir Walter advanced the large sum of L.3500.

In May, Terry, and his able brother comedian, Frederick Yates, entered on a negotiation, which terminated in their becoming joint lessees and managers of the Adelphi Theatre. Terry requested Scott and Ballantyne to assist him on this occasion by some advance of money, or if that should be inconvenient, by the use of their credit. They were both very anxious to serve him; but Sir Walter had a poor opinion of speculations in theatrical property; and, moreover, entertained suspicions, too well justified by the result, that Terry was not much qualified for conducting the pecuniary part of such a business. Ultimately Ballantyne, who shared these scruples, became Terry's security for a considerable sum (I think L.500), and Sir Walter pledged his credit in like manner to the extent of L.1250. He had, in the sequel, to pay off both this sum and that for which the printer had engaged.

But at this time the chief subject of concern was a grand scheme of revolution in the whole art and traffic of publishing, which Constable first opened in detail one Saturday at Abbotsford—none being present except Sir Walter, Bal-

lantyne, and myself. After dinner, there was a little pause of expectation, and the brave schemer suddenly started *in medias res*, saying:—"Literary genius may, or may not, have done its best; but the trade are in the cradle." Scott eyed the florid bookseller's beaming countenance, and the solemn stare with which the equally portly printer was listening, and pushing round the bottles with a hearty chuckle, bade me "Give our twa *sonsie babbies* a drap mother's milk." Constable sucked in fresh inspiration, and proceeded to say that, wild as we might think him, certain new plans, of which we had all already heard some hints, had been suggested by, and were in fact mainly grounded upon, a sufficiently prosaic authority—namely, the annual schedule of assessed taxes, a copy of which interesting document he drew from his pocket, and substituted for his *D'Oyley*. It was copiously diversified, "text and margent," by figures and calculations in his own handwriting, which I for one might have regarded with less reverence, had I known at the time this "great arithmetician's" rooted aversion and contempt for all examination of his own balance-sheet. He had, however, taken vast pains to fill in the number of persons who might fairly be supposed to pay the taxes for each separate article of luxury, armorial bearings, hunters, racers, four-wheeled carriages, &c., &c.; and having demonstrated that hundreds of thousands held, as necessary to their comfort and station, articles upon articles of which their forefathers never dreamt, said, that our self-love never deceived us more grossly than when we fancied our notions as to the matter of books had advanced in at all a corresponding proportion. "On the contrary," cried Constable, "I am satisfied that the demand for Shakspeare's plays, contemptible as we hold it to have been, in the time of Elizabeth and James, was more creditable to the classes who really indulged in any sort of elegance then, than the sale of Childe Harold or Waverley, is to this nineteenth century."

Scott helped him on by interposing, that at that moment he had a rich valley crowded with handsome houses under his view, and yet much doubted whether any laird within ten miles spent ten pounds per annum on the literature of the day. "No," said Constable, "there is no market among them that's worth one's thinking about. They are contented with a review or a magazine, or at best with a paltry subscription to some circulating library forty miles off. But if I live for half-a-dozen years, I'll make it as impossible that there should not be a good library in every decent house in Britain as that the shepherd's ingle-nook should want the *saut poke*. Ay, and what's that?" he continued, warming and puffing; "why should the ingle-nook itself want a shelf for *the novels?*"—"I see your drift, my man," says Sir Walter;—"you're for being like Billy Pitt in Gilray's print—you want to get into the salt-box yourself."—"Yes," he responded (using a favourite adjuration)—"I have hitherto been thinking only of the wax lights, but before I'm a twelvemonth older I shall have my hand upon the tallow."—"Troth," says Scott, "you are indeed likely to be 'The grand Napoleon of the realms of *print*.'"—"If you outlive me," says Constable, with a regal smile, "I bespeak that line for my tomb-stone, but, in the meantime, may I presume to ask you to be my right-hand man when I open my campaign of Marengo? I have now settled my outline of operations—a three shilling or half-crown volume every month, which must and shall sell, not by thousands or tens of thousands, but by hundreds of thousands—ay, by millions! Twelve volumes in the year, a halfpenny of profit upon every copy of which will make me richer than the possession of all the copy-rights of all the quartos that ever were, or will be, hot-pressed!—twelve volumes, so good that millions must wish to have them, and so cheap that every butcher's callant may have them, if he pleases to let me tax him sixpence a-week!"

Many a previous consultation, and many a solitary meditation, too, prompted Scott's answer.—"Your plan," said he, "cannot fail, provided the books be really good; but you must not start until you have not only leading columns, but depth upon depth of reserve in thorough order. I am willing to do my part in this grand enterprise. Often, of late, have I felt that the vein of fiction was nearly worked out; often, as you all know, have I been thinking seriously of turning my hand to history. I am of opinion that historical writing has no more been adapted to the demands of the increased circles among which literature does already find its way, than you allege as to the shape and price of books in general. What say you to taking the field with a Life of the *other* Napoleon?"

The reader does not need to be told that the series of cheap volumes, subsequently issued under the title of "Constable's Miscellany," was the scheme on which this great bookseller was brooding. Before he left Abbotsford, it was arranged that the first number of this collection should consist of one half of Waverley; the second, of the first section of a "Life of Napoleon Bonaparte by the author of Waverley;" that this Life should be comprised in four of these numbers; and that, until the whole series of his novels had been issued, a volume every second month, in this new and uncostly form, he should keep the Ballantyne press going with a series of historical works, to be issued on the alternate months.

Some circumstances in the progress of the Tales of the Crusaders, now on the eve of publication, must have been uppermost in Scott's mind when he met Constable's proposals with so much alacrity. The story of *The Betrothed* —(to which he was mainly prompted by the lively conversation on Welsh antiquities of Archdeacon Williams)—found no favour as it advanced with Ballantyne; and so heavily did his critical remonstrances weigh on the author, that he at

length determined to cancel it for ever. The tale, however, all but a chapter or two, had been printed off, and both publisher and printer paused about committing such a mass to the flames. The sheets were hung up meanwhile, and Scott began The Talisman—of which also James criticised the earlier chapters in such a strain that Scott was deeply vexed. "Is it wise," he wrote, "to mend a dull overloaded fire by heaping on a shovelful of wet coals?" and hinted some doubts whether he should proceed. He did so, however; the critical printer by degrees warmed to the story, and he at last pronounced The Talisman such a masterpiece, that The Betrothed might venture abroad under its wing. Sir Walter was now reluctant on that subject, and said he would rather write two more new novels than the few pages necessary to complete his unfortunate Betrothed. But while he hesitated, the German newspapers announced "*a new romance by the author of Waverley*" as about to issue from the press of Leipsig. There was some ground for suspecting that a set of the suspended sheets might have been purloined and sold to a pirate, and this consideration put an end to his scruples. And when the German did publish the fabrication, entitled *Walladmor*, it could no longer be doubtful that some reader of Scott's sheets had communicated at least the fact that he was breaking ground in Wales.

Early in June, then, the Tales of the Crusaders were put forth; and, as Mr Ballantyne had predicted, the brightness of the Talisman dazzled the eyes of the million as to the defects of the twin-story. Few of these publications had a more enthusiastic greeting; and Scott's literary plans were, as the reader will see reason to infer, considerably modified in consequence of the new burst of applause which attended the brilliant procession of his Saladin and Cœur de Lion.

To return for a moment to our merry conclave at Abbotsford. Constable's vast chapter of embryo schemes was

discussed more leisurely on the following Monday morning, when we drove to the crags of Smailholm and the Abbey of Dryburgh, both poet and publisher talking over the past and the future course of their lives, and agreeing, as far as I could penetrate, that the years to come were likely to be more prosperous than any they had as yet seen. In the evening, too, this being his friend's first visit since the mansion had been completed, Scott (though there were no ladies and few servants) had the hall and library lighted up, that he might shew him everything to the most sparkling advantage. With what serenity did he walk about those apartments, handling books, expounding armour and pictures, and rejoicing in the Babylon which he had built!

He began, without delay, what was meant to be a very short preliminary sketch of the French Revolution, prior to the appearance of his hero upon the scene of action. This, he thought, might be done almost *currente calamo;* for his recollection of all the great events as they occurred was vivid, and he had not failed to peruse every book of any considerable importance on these subjects as it issued from the press. He apprehended the necessity, on the other hand, of more laborious study in the way of reading than he had for many years had occasion for, before he could enter with advantage upon Buonaparte's military career; and Constable accordingly set about collecting a new library of printed materials, which continued from day to day pouring in upon him, till his little parlour in Castle Street looked more like an auctioneer's premises than an author's. The first waggon delivered itself of about a hundred huge folios of the Moniteur; and London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Brussels, were all laid under contribution to meet the bold demands of his purveyor.

In the meantime he advanced with his Introduction; and, catching fire as the theme expanded before him, had so soon several chapters in his desk, without having travelled over half the ground assigned for them, that Con-

stable saw it would be in vain to hope for the completion of the work within four duodecimos. They resolved that it should be published, in the first instance, as a separate book, in four volumes of the same size with the Tales of the Crusaders, but with more pages and more letterpress to each page. Scarcely had this been settled before it became obvious, that four such volumes would never suffice; and the number was week after week extended—with corresponding alterations as to the rate of the author's payment. Constable still considered the appearance of the second edition of the Life of Napoleon in his Miscellany as the great point on which the fortunes of that undertaking were to turn; and its commencement was in consequence adjourned; which, however, must have been the case at any rate, as the stock of the Novels was greater than he had calculated; and some interval must elapse, before, with fairness to the retail trade, he could throw that long series into any cheaper form.*

Before the Court rose in July, Sir Walter had made considerable progress in his Sketch of the French Revolution; but it was agreed that he should make his promised excursion to Ireland before any MS. went to the printers. He had seen no more of the sister island than Dunluce and the Giant's Causeway; his curiosity about the scenery and the people was lively; and besides the great object of seeing his son and daughter-in-law under their own roof, and the scarcely inferior pleasure of another meeting with Miss Edgeworth, he looked forward to renewing his acquaintance with several accomplished persons who had been serviceable to him in his labours upon Swift. But, illustriously as Ireland has contributed to the English Library, he had always been accustomed to hear that almost no books were now published there, and fewer sold than in any other country calling itself civilized; and he had naturally concluded that apathy and indifference prevailed as to literature itself, and of course as to literary men.

He had not, therefore, formed the remotest anticipation of the kind of reception which awaited him. Miss Anne Scott and myself accompanied him. We left Edinburgh on the 8th of July in a light open carriage, and embarked at Glasgow for Belfast. The steam-boat, besides a crowd of passengers of all possible classes, was lumbered with a cargo offensive enough to the eye and the nostrils, but still more disagreeable from the anticipations and reflections it could not fail to suggest. Hardly had our carriage been lashed on the deck before it disappeared from our view amidst mountainous packages of old clothes;—the cast-off raiment of the Scotch beggars was on its way to a land where beggary is the staple of life. A voyage down the Firth of Clyde, however, is enough to make anybody happy: nowhere can the home tourist, at all events, behold, in the course of one day, such a succession and variety of beautiful, romantic, and majestic scenery: on one hand, dark mountains and castellated shores—on the other, rich groves and pastures, interspersed with elegant villas and thriving towns—the bright estuary between, alive with shipping, and diversified with islands. It may be supposed how delightful such a voyage was in a fine day of July, with Scott, always as full of glee on any trip as a schoolboy; crammed with all the traditions and legends of every place we passed; and too happy to pour them out for the entertainment of his companions on deck. After dinner, too, he was the charm of the table. A worthy old Bailie of Glasgow sat by him, and shared fully in the general pleasure; though his particular source of interest and satisfaction was, that he had got into such close quarters with a live Sheriff and Clerk of Session,—and this gave him the opportunity of discussing sundry knotty points of police law, as to which our steerage passengers might perhaps have been more curious than most of those admitted to the symposium of the cabin. Sir Walter, however, was as ready for the rogueries of the Broomielaw, as for the mystic antiquities of Balclutha, or

the discomfiture of the Norsemen at Largs, or Bruce's adventures in Arran. The Bailie insisted for a second bowl of punch, and volunteered to be the manufacturer; "for," quoth he slily, "I am reckoned a fair hand, though not equal to *my father the deacon.*" Scott smiled in acquiescence.

We reached Belfast next morning. When we halted at Drogheda, a retired officer of dragoons, discovering that the party was Sir Walter's, sent in his card, with a polite offer to attend him over the field of the battle of the Boyne, about two miles off, which of course was accepted;—Sir Walter rejoicing the veteran's heart by his vigorous recitation of the famous ballad (*The crossing of the Water*), as we proceeded to the ground, and the eager and intelligent curiosity with which he received his explanations of it.

On Thursday the 14th we reached Dublin in time for dinner, and found young Walter and his bride established in one of those large and noble houses in St Stephen's Green (the most extensive square in Europe), the founders of which little dreamt that they should ever be let at an easy rate as garrison lodgings. Never can I forget the fond joy and pride with which Sir Walter looked round him, as he sat for the first time at his son's table. I could not but recall Pindar's lines, in which, wishing to paint the gentlest rapture of felicity, he describes an old man with a foaming wine-cup in his hand at his child's wedding-feast.

In the evening arrived a deputation from the Royal Society of Dublin, inviting Sir Walter to a public dinner; and next morning he found on his breakfast-table a letter from the Provost of Trinity College (Dr Kyle, afterwards Bishop of Cork), announcing that the University desired to pay him the high compliment of a degree of Doctor of Laws by *diploma.* The Archbishop of Dublin (Dr Magee) was among the earliest of his visitors; another was the Right Honourable Anthony Blake, who was the bearer of a mes-

sage from the Marquis Wellesley, then Lord-Lieutenant, inviting him to dine next day at his Excellency's country residence, Malahide Castle. It would be endless to enumerate the distinguished persons who, morning after morning, crowded his *levee* in St Stephen's Green. The courts of law were not then sitting, and most of the judges were out of town; but all the other great functionaries, and the leading noblemen and gentlemen of the city and its neighbourhood, of whatever sect or party, hastened to tender every conceivable homage and hospitality. But all this was less surprising to the companions of his journey (though, to say the truth, we had, no more than himself, counted on such eager enthusiasm among any class of Irish society), than the demonstrations of respect which, after the first day or two, awaited him, wherever he moved, at the hands of the less elevated orders of the Dublin population. If his carriage was recognised at the door of any public establishment, the street was sure to be crowded before he came out again, so as to make his departure as slow as a procession. When he entered a street, the watchword was passed down both sides like lightning, and the shopkeepers and their wives stood bowing and curtseying all the way down.

From Dublin, we made an excursion of some days into Wicklow, halting for a night at the villa of the Surgeon-General, Sir Philip Crampton, who kindly did the honours of Lough Breagh and the Dargle; and then for two or three at Old Connaught, near Bray, the seat of the Attorney-General, afterwards Lord Plunkett. Here there was a large and brilliant party assembled; and from hence, under the guidance of Mr Attorney and his amiable family, we perambulated to all possible advantage the classical resorts of the Devil's Glyn, Rosanna, Kilruddery, and Glendalough, with its seven churches, and *St Kevin's Bed*—the scene of the fate of Cathleen, celebrated in Moore's ballad—

"By that lake whose gloomy shore
Skylark never warbles o'er," &c.

It is a hole in the sheer surface of the rock, in which two or three people might sit. The difficulty of getting into this place has been exaggerated, as also the danger, for it would only be falling thirty or forty feet into very deep water. Yet I never was more pained than when Scott, in spite of all remonstrances, would make his way to it, crawling along the precipice. After he was gone, Plunkett told the female guide he was a poet. Cathleen treated this with indignation, as a quiz of Mr Attorney's.—"*Poet!*" said she; "the devil a bit of him—but an honourable gentleman: he gave me half-a-crown."

On the 1st of August we proceeded from Dublin to Edgeworthstown, the party being now reinforced by Captain and Mrs Scott, and also by the delightful addition of the Surgeon-General. A happy meeting it was: we remained there for several days, making excursions to Loch Oel and other scenes of interest in Longford and the adjoining counties; the gentry everywhere exerting themselves with true Irish zeal to signalize their affectionate pride in their illustrious countrywoman, and their appreciation of her guest; while her brother, Mr Lovell Edgeworth, had his classical mansion filled every evening with a succession of distinguished friends, the *élite* of Ireland. Here, above all, we had the opportunity of seeing in what universal respect and comfort a gentleman's family may live in that country, and in far from its most favoured district, provided only they live there habitually, and do their duty as the friends and guardians of those among whom Providence has appointed their proper place. Here we found neither mud hovels nor naked peasantry, but snug cottages and smiling faces all about. Here there was a very large school in the village, of which masters and pupils were in a nearly equal proportion Protestants and Roman Catholics—the Protestant squire himself making it

a regular part of his daily business to visit the scene of their operations, and strengthen authority and enforce discipline by his personal superintendence. It is a curious enough coincidence that Oliver Goldsmith and Maria Edgeworth should both have derived their early love and knowledge of Irish character and manners from the same identical district. He received part of his education at this very school of Edgeworthstown; and Pallasmore (the *locus cui nomen est Pallas* of Johnson's epitaph), the little hamlet where the author of the Vicar of Wakefield first saw the light, is still, as it was in his time, the property of the Edgeworths. It may well be imagined with what lively interest Sir Walter surveyed the scenery with which so many of the proudest recollections of Ireland must ever be associated, and how curiously he studied the rural manners it presented to him, in the hope (not disappointed) of being able to trace some of his friend's bright creations to their first hints and germs. On the delight with which he contemplated her position in the midst of her own domestic circle, I need say still less. The reader is aware by this time how deeply he condemned and pitied the conduct and fate of those who, gifted with preëminent talents for the instruction and entertainment of their species at large, fancy themselves entitled to neglect those every-day duties and charities of life, from the mere shadowing of which in imaginary pictures the genius of poetry and romance has always reaped its highest and purest, perhaps its only true and immortal honours. In Maria he hailed a sister spirit—one who, at the summit of literary fame, took the same modest, just, and, let me add, *Christian* view of the relative importance of the feelings, the obligations, and the hopes in which we are all equally partakers, and those talents and accomplishments which may seem, to vain and short-sighted eyes, sufficient to constitute their possessors into an order and species apart from the rest of their kind. Such fantastic conceits found no shelter with either of these

powerful minds. I was then a young man, and I cannot forget how much I was struck at the time by some words that fell from one of them, when, in the course of a walk in the park at Edgeworthstown, I happened to use some phrase which conveyed (though not perhaps meant to do so) the impression that I suspected Poets and Novelists of being a good deal accustomed to look at life and the world only as materials for art. A soft and pensive shade came over Scott's face as he said—" I fear you have some very young ideas in your head :—are you not too apt to measure things by some reference to literature—to disbelieve that anybody can be worth much care, who has no knowledge of that sort of thing, or taste for it? God help us! what a poor world this would be if that were the true doctrine! I have read books enough, and observed and conversed with enough of eminent and splendidly cultivated minds, too, in my time; but I assure you, I have heard higher sentiments from the lips of poor *uneducated* men and women, when exerting the spirit of severe yet gentle heroism under difficulties and afflictions, or speaking their simple thoughts as to circumstances in the lot of friends and neighbours, than I ever yet met with out of the pages of the Bible. We shall never learn to feel and respect our real calling and destiny, unless we have taught ourselves to consider everything as moonshine, compared with the education of the heart." Maria did not listen to this without some water in her eyes—(her tears are always ready when any generous string is touched;—for, as Pope says, " the finest minds, like the finest metals, dissolve the easiest;")—but she brushed them gaily aside, and said, " You see how it is—Dean Swift said he had written his books in order that people might learn to treat him like a great lord—Sir Walter writes his in order that he may be able to treat his people as a great lord ought to do."

Lest I should forget to mention it, I put down here a rebuke which, later in his life, Sir Walter once gave in my

hearing to his daughter Anne. She happened to say of something, I forget what, that she could not abide it—it was *vulgar*. "My love," said her father, "you speak like a very young lady; do you know, after all, the meaning of this word *vulgar?* 'Tis only *common;* nothing that is common, except wickedness, can deserve to be spoken of in a tone of contempt; and when you have lived to my years, you will be disposed to agree with me in thanking God that nothing really worth having or caring about in this world is *uncommon*."

Miss Edgeworth, her sister Harriet, and her brother William, were easily persuaded to join our party for the rest of our Irish travels. We were anxious to make the best of our way to the Lakes of Killarney; but posting was not to be very rapidly accomplished in those regions by so large a company as had now collected—and we were more agreeably delayed by the hospitalities of Miss Edgeworth's old friends, and Sir Walter's new ones, at various mansions on our line of route—of which I must note especially Judge Moore's, at Lamberton, near Maryborough, because Sir Walter pronounced its beneficence to be even beyond the usual Irish scale; for, on reaching our next halting place, which was an indifferent country inn, we discovered that we need be in no alarm as to our dinner at all events, the Judge's people having privately packed up in one of the carriages, a pickled salmon, a most lordly venison pasty, and half-a-dozen bottles of champaign. But most of these houses seemed, like the Judge's, to have been constructed on the principle of the Peri Banou's tent. They seemed to have room not only for the lion and lioness, and their respective tails, but for all in the neighbourhood who could be held worthy to inspect them at feeding-time.

It was a succession of festive gaiety wherever we halted; and in the course of our movements we saw many castles, churches, and ruins of all sorts—with more than enough

of mountain, wood, lake, and river, to have made a similar progress in perhaps any other part of Europe truly delightful. But those to whom the south of Ireland was new, had almost continually before them spectacles of abject misery, which robbed these things of more than half their charm. Sir Walter, indeed, with the habitual hopefulness of his temper, persisted that what he saw even in Kerry was better than what books had taught him to expect; and insured, therefore, that improvement, however slow, was going on. But, ever and anon, as we moved deeper into the country, there was a melancholy in his countenance, and, despite himself, in the tone of his voice, which I for one could not mistake. The constant passings and repassings of bands of mounted policemen, armed to the teeth, and having quite the air of highly disciplined soldiers on sharp service;—the rueful squalid poverty that crawled by every way-side, and blocked up every village where we had to change horses, with exhibitions of human suffering and degradation, such as it had never entered into our heads to conceive;—and, above all, the contrast between these naked clamorous beggars, who seemed to spring out of the ground at every turn like swarms of vermin, and the boundless luxury and merriment surrounding the thinly scattered magnates who condescended to inhabit their ancestral seats, would have been sufficient to poison those landscapes, had nature dressed them out in the verdure of Arcadia, and art embellished them with all the temples and palaces of Old Rome and Athens. It is painful enough even to remember such things; but twenty years can have had but a trifling change in the appearance of a country which, so richly endowed by Providence with every element of wealth and happiness, could, at so advanced a period of European civilization, sicken the heart of the stranger by such wide-spread manifestations of the wanton and reckless profligacy of human mismanagement, the withering curse of feuds and factions, and the tyrannous selfishness of ab-

senteeism ; and I fear it is not likely that any contemporary critic will venture to call my melancholy picture overcharged. A few blessed exceptions—such an aspect of ease and decency, for example, as we met everywhere on the vast domain of the Duke of Devonshire—served only to make the sad reality of the rule more flagrant and appalling.

There were, however, abundance of ludicrous incidents to break this gloom ; and no traveller ever tasted either the humours or the blunders of Paddy more heartily than did Sir Walter. I find recorded in one letter a very merry morning at Limerick, where, amidst the ringing of all the bells, in honour of the advent, there was ushered in a brother-poet, who must needs pay his personal respects to the author of Marmion. He was a scare-crow figure—by name O'Kelly ; and he had produced on the spur of the occasion this modest parody of Dryden's famous epigram :—

> " Three poets, of three different nations born,
> The United Kingdom in this age adorn ;
> Byron of England, Scott of Scotia's blood,
> And Erin's pride—O'Kelly great and good."

Sir Walter's five shillings were at once forthcoming ; and the bard, in order that Miss Edgeworth might display equal generosity, pointed out, in a little volume of his works (for which, moreover, we had all to subscribe), this pregnant couplet—

> " Scott, Morgan, Edgeworth, Byron, prop of Greece,
> Are characters whose fame not soon will cease."

We were still more amused (though there was real misery in the case) with what befel on our approach to a certain pretty seat, in a different county, where there was a collection of pictures and curiosities not usually shewn to travellers. A gentleman, whom we had met in Dublin, had been accompanying us part of the day's journey, and

volunteered, being acquainted with the owner, to procure us easy admission. At the entrance of the domain, to which we proceeded under his wing, we were startled by the dolorous apparition of two undertaker's men, in voluminous black scarfs, though there was little or nothing of black about the rest of their habiliments, who sat upon the highway before the gate, with a whisky-bottle on a deal-table between them. They informed us that the master of the house had died the day before, and that they were to keep watch and ward in this style until the funeral, inviting all Christian passengers to drink a glass to his repose. Our cicerone left his card for the widow—having previously, no doubt, written on it the names of his two lions. Shortly after we regained our post-house, he received a polite answer from the lady. To the best of my memory it was in these terms:—"Mrs —— presents her kind compliments to Mr ——, and much regrets that she cannot shew the pictures to-day, as Major —— died yesterday evening by apoplexy; which Mrs —— the more regrets, as it will prevent her having the honour to see Sir Walter Scott and Miss Edgeworth." Sir Walter said it reminded him of a woman in Fife, who, summing up the misfortunes of a black year in her history, said—"Let me see, sirs; first we lost our wee callant—and then Jenny—and then the gudeman himsel died—and then the *coo* died too, poor hizzey; but, to be sure, *her* hide brought me fifteen shillings."

At one county gentleman's table where we dined, though two grand full-length daubs of William and Mary adorned the walls of the room, there was a mixed company—about as many Catholics as Protestants, all apparently on cordial terms, and pledging each other lustily in bumpers of capital claret. About an hour after dinner, however, punch was called for; tumblers and jugs of hot water appeared, and with them two magnums of whisky—the one bearing on its label KING'S, the other QUEEN'S. We did not at

first understand these inscriptions; but it was explained, *sotto voce*, that the King's had paid the duty, the Queen's was of contraband origin; and, in the choice of liquors, we detected a new shibboleth of party. The jolly Protestants to a man stuck to the King's bottle—the equally radiant Papists paid their duty to the Queen's.

Since I have alluded at all to the then grand dispute, I may mention, that, after our tour was concluded, we considered with some wonder that, having partaken liberally of Catholic hospitality, and encountered almost every other class of society, we had not sat at meat with one specimen of the Romish priesthood; whereas, even at Popish tables, we had met dignitaries of the Established Church. This circumstance we set down at the time as amounting pretty nearly to a proof that there were few gentlemen in that order; but we afterwards were willing to suspect that a prejudice of their own had been the source of it. The only incivility, which Sir Walter Scott ultimately discovered himself to have encountered—(for his friends did not allow him to hear of it at the time)—in the course of his Irish peregrination, was the refusal of a Roman Catholic gentleman, named O'Connell, who kept stag-hounds near Killarney, to allow of a hunt on the upper lake, the day he visited that beautiful scenery. This he did, as we were told, because he considered it as a notorious fact, that Sir Walter Scott was an enemy to the Roman Catholic claims for admission to seats in Parliament. He was entirely mistaken, however; for, though no man disapproved of Romanism as a system of faith and practice more sincerely than Sir Walter always did, he had long before this period formed the opinion, that no good could come of farther resistance to the claim in question. He on all occasions expressed manfully his belief, that the best thing for Ireland would have been never to relax the strictly *political* enactments of the penal laws, however harsh these might appear. Had they been kept in vigour for another

half century, it was his conviction that Popery would have been all but extinguished in Ireland. But he thought that, after admitting Romanists to the elective franchise, it was a vain notion that they could be permanently or advantageously debarred from using that franchise in favour of those of their own persuasion. The greater part of the charming society into which he fell while in Ireland, entertained views and sentiments very likely to confirm these impressions; and it struck me that considerable pains were taken to enforce them. It was felt, probably, that the crisis of decision drew near; and there might be a natural anxiety to secure the suffrage of the great writer of the time.

Having crossed the hills from Killarney to Cork, where a repetition of the Dublin reception—corporation honours, deputations of the literary and scientific societies, and so forth—awaited him, he gave a couple of days to the hospitality of this flourishing town, and the beautiful scenery of the Lee; not forgetting an excursion to the groves of Blarney, among whose shades we had a right mirthful picnic. Sir Walter scrambled up to the top of the castle, and kissed, with due faith and devotion, the famous *Blarney stone*, one salute of which is said to emancipate the pilgrim from all future visitations of *mauvaise honte:*

> "The stone this is, whoever kisses,
> He never misses to grow eloquent—
> 'Tis he may clamber to a lady's chamber,
> Or be a member of Parliament."

From Cork we proceeded to Dublin by Fermoy, Lismore, Cashel, Kilkenny, and Holycross—at all of which places we were bountifully entertained, and assiduously ciceroned—to our old quarters in St Stephen's Green; and after a morning or two spent in taking leave of many kind faces that he was never to see again, Sir Walter and his original fellow-travellers started for Holyhead on the 18th of August. Our progress through North Wales produced

nothing worth recording, except perhaps the feeling of delight which everything in the aspect of the common people, their dress, their houses, their gardens, and their husbandry, could not fail to call up in persons who had just been seeing Ireland for the first time. Scott had, while at Edgeworthstown, been requested by Mr Canning to meet him at his friend Mr Bolton's, on Windermere. On reaching that lake, we spent a pleasant day with Professor Wilson at Elleray, and he then conducted us to Storrs. A large company had been assembled there in honour of the Minister—among others was Mr Wordsworth. It has not, I suppose, often happened, to a plain English merchant, wholly the architect of his own fortunes, to entertain at one time a party embracing so many illustrious names. He was proud of his guests; they respected him, and honoured and loved each other; and it would have been difficult to say which star in the constellation shone with the brightest or the softest light. There was "high discourse," intermingled with as gay flashings of courtly wit as ever Canning displayed; and a plentiful allowance, on all sides, of those airy transient pleasantries, in which the fancy of poets, however wise and grave, delights to run riot when they are sure not to be misunderstood. There were beautiful and accomplished women to adorn and enjoy this circle. The weather was as Elysian as the scenery. There were brilliant cavalcades through the woods in the mornings, and delicious boatings on the Lake by moonlight; and the last day, "the Admiral of the Lake" presided over one of the most splendid regattas that ever enlivened Windermere. Perhaps there were not fewer than fifty barges following in the Professor's radiant procession, when it paused at the point of Storrs to admit into the place of honour the vessel that carried kind and happy Mr Bolton and his guests. The bards of the Lakes led the cheers that hailed Scott and Canning; and music and sunshine, flags, streamers, and gay dresses, the

merry hum of voices, and the rapid splashing of innumerable oars, made up a dazzling mixture of sensations as the flotilla wound its way among the richly-foliaged islands, and along bays and promontories peopled with enthusiastic spectators.

On at last quitting Storrs, we visited Mr Wordsworth at his charming retreat of Mount Rydal: and he thence accompanied us to Keswick, where we saw Mr Southey in his unrivalled library. Mr Wordsworth and his daughter then turned with us, and passing over Kirkstone to Ulswater, conducted us first to his friend Mr Marshall's elegant villa, near Lyulph's Tower, and on the next day to the noble castle of his lifelong friend and patron Lord Lonsdale. The Earl and Countess had their halls filled with another splendid circle of distinguished persons. Sir Walter remained a couple of days, and perambulated, under Wordsworth's guidance, the superb terraces and groves of the "fair domain" which that poet has connected with the noblest monument of his genius. He reached Abbotsford again on the 1st of September, and said truly that "his tour had been one ovation."

Without an hour's delay he resumed his usual habits of life—the musing ramble among his own glens, the breezy ride over the moors, the merry spell at the woodman's axe, or the festive chase of Newark, Fernilee, Hangingshaw, or Deloraine; the quiet old-fashioned contentment of the little domestic circle, alternating with the brilliant phantasmagoria of admiring, and sometimes admired, strangers—or the hoisting of the telegraph flag that called laird and bonnet-laird to the burning of the water, or the wassail of the hall. The hours of the closet alone had found a change. The preparation for the Life of Napoleon was a course of such hard reading as had not been called for while "the great magician," in the full sunshine of ease, amused himself, and delighted the world, by unrolling, fold

after fold, his endlessly varied panorama of romance. That miracle had to all appearance cost him no effort. Unmoved and serene among the multiplicities of worldly business, and the invasions of half Europe and America, he had gone on tranquilly enjoying, rather than exerting his genius, in the production of those masterpieces which have peopled all our firesides with inexpensive friends, and rendered the solitary supremacy of Shakspeare, as an all-comprehensive and genial painter of man, no longer a proverb.

He had, while this was the occupation of his few desk-hours, read only for his diversion. How much he read even then, his correspondence may have afforded some notion. Those who observed him the most constantly, were never able to understand how he contrived to keep himself so thoroughly up with the stream of contemporary literature of almost all sorts, French and German, as well as English. That a rapid glance might tell him more than another man could gather by a week's poring, may easily be guessed; but the grand secret was his perpetual practice of his own grand maxim, *never to be doing nothing.* He had no " unconsidered trifles" of time. Every moment was turned to account; and thus he had leisure for everything—except, indeed, the newspapers, which consume so many precious hours now-a-days with most men, and of which, during the period of my acquaintance with him, he certainly read less than any other man I ever knew that had any habit of reading at all. I should also except, speaking generally, the Reviews and Magazines of the time. Of these he saw few, and of the few he read little.

He had now to apply himself doggedly to the mastering of a huge accumulation of historical materials. He read, and noted, and indexed with the pertinacity of some pale compiler in the British Museum; but rose from such employment, not radiant and buoyant, as after he had been feasting himself among the teeming harvests of Fancy, but with an aching brow, and eyes on which the dimness of

years had begun to plant some specks, before they were subjected again to that straining over small print and difficult manuscript which had, no doubt, been familiar to them in the early time, when in (Shortreed's phrase) "he was making himself." It was a pleasant sight when one happened to take a passing peep into his den, to see the white head erect, and the smile of conscious inspiration on his lips, while the pen, held boldly, and at a commanding distance, glanced steadily and gaily along a fast-blackening page of "The Talisman." It now often made me sorry to catch a glimpse of him, stooping and poring with his spectacles, amidst piles of authorities—a little note-book ready in the left hand, that had always used to be at liberty for patting Maida.

About this time, being again a traveller, I lost the opportunity of witnessing his reception of several eminent persons;—among others the late admirable Master of the Rolls, Lord Gifford, and his Lady—Dr Philpotts, now Bishop of Exeter; and Mr Thomas Moore. This last fortunately found Sir Walter in an interval of repose — no one with him at Abbotsford but Lady and Miss Scott—and no company at dinner except the Fergussons and Laidlaw. The two poets had thus the opportunity of a great deal of quiet conversation; and from the hour they met, they seemed to have treated each other with a full confidence, the record of which, however touchingly honourable to both, could hardly be made public *in extenso* while one of them survives. The first day they were alone after dinner, and the talk turned chiefly on the recent death of Byron—from which Scott passed unaffectedly to his own literary history. Mr Moore listened with great interest to details, now no longer new, about the early days of Mat Lewis, the Minstrelsy, and the Poems; and "at last," says he, "to my no small surprise, as well as pleasure, he mentioned the novels, without any reserve, as his own. He gave me an account of the original progress of those extraordinary

works, the hints supplied for them, the conjectures and mystification to which they had given rise, &c. &c. :" he concluded with saying, "they have been a mine of wealth to me—but I find I fail in them now—I can no longer make them so good as at first." This frankness was met as it should have been by the brother poet; and when he entered Scott's room next morning, "he laid his hand," says Mr Moore, "with a sort of cordial earnestness on my breast, and said—*Now, my dear Moore, we are friends for life.*" They sallied out for a walk through the plantations, and among other things, the commonness of the poetic talent in these days was alluded to. "Hardly a Magazine is now published," said Moore, "that does not contain verses which some thirty years ago would have made a reputation."—Scott turned with his look of shrewd humour, as if chuckling over his own success, and said, "Ecod, we were in the luck of it to come before these fellows;" but he added, playfully flourishing his stick as he spoke, "we have, like Bobadil, taught them to beat us with our own weapons."—"In complete novelty," says Moore, "he seemed to think, lay the only chance for a man ambitious of high literary reputation in these days."

Moore says—"I parted from Scott with the feeling that all the world might admire him in his works, but that those only could learn to love him as he deserved who had seen him at Abbotsford. I give you *carte blanche*, to say what you please of my sense of his cordial kindness and gentleness; perhaps a not very dignified phrase would express my feeling better than any fine one—it was that he was a *thorough good fellow.*" What Scott thought of his guest appears from this entry in a private note-book:—"Tom Moore's is the most exquisite warbling I ever heard. . . . There is a manly frankness, with perfect ease and good-breeding, about him, which is delightful. Not the least touch of the poet or the pedant. A little—very little man—less, I think, than Lewis, and something like

him in person ; God knows, not in conversation, for Matt, though a clever fellow, was a bore of the first description. Moreover, he looked always like a schoolboy. Now Moore has none of this insignificance. His countenance is plain, but the expression so very animated, especially in speaking or singing, that it is far more interesting than the finest features could have rendered it. I was aware that Byron had often spoken of Moore and myself in the same breath, and with the same sort of regard ; so I was curious to see what there could be in common betwixt us, Moore having lived so much in the gay world, I in the country, and with people of business, and sometimes with politicians ; Moore a scholar, I none ; he a musician and artist, I without knowledge of a note ; he a democrat, I an aristocrat—with many other points of difference ; besides his being an Irishman, I a Scotchman, and both tolerably national. Yet there is a point of resemblance, and a strong one. We are both good-humoured fellows, who rather seek to enjoy what is going forward than to maintain our dignity as Lions; and we have both seen the world too widely and too well not to contemn in our souls the imaginary consequence of literary people, who walk with their noses in the air, and remind me always of the fellow whom Johnson met in an alehouse, and who called himself '*the great Twalmly—inventor of the flood-gate iron for smoothing linen.*' He also enjoys the *mot pour rire*, and so do I."

The author of Lalla Rookh's Kelso chaise was followed before many days by a more formidable equipage. The much-talked-of lady who began life as Miss Harriet Mellon, a comic actress in a provincial troop, and died Duchess of St Albans, was then making a tour in Scotland as Mrs Coutts, the enormously wealthy widow of the first English banker of his time. No person of such consequence could, in those days, have thought a Scotch progress complete, unless it included a reception at Abbotsford ; but Mrs Coutts had been previously acquainted with Sir Walter,

who indeed had some remote connexion with her late husband's family, through the Stuarts of Allanbank. He had visited her occasionally in London during Mr Coutts's life, and was very willing to do the honours of Teviotdale in return. But although she was considerate enough not to come on him with all her retinue (leaving four of the seven carriages with which she travelled at Edinburgh), the appearance of only three coaches, each drawn by four horses, was rather trying for poor Lady Scott. They contained Mrs Coutts—her future lord the Duke of St Albans—one of his Grace's sisters—a *dame de compagnie*—a brace of physicians—for it had been considered that one doctor might himself be disabled in the course of an expedition so adventurous—and, besides other menials of every grade, two bedchamber women for Mrs Coutts's own person; she requiring to have this article also in duplicate, because, in her widowed condition, she was fearful of ghosts—and there must be one Abigail for the service of the toilette, a second to keep watch by night. With a little puzzling and cramming, all this train found accommodation;—but it so happened that there were already in the house several ladies, Scotch and English, of high birth and rank, who felt by no means disposed to assist their host and hostess in making Mrs Coutts's visit agreeable to her. I need not observe how effectually women of fashion can contrive to mortify, without doing or saying anything that shall expose them to the charge of actual incivility.

Sir Walter, during dinner, did everything in his power to counteract this influence of *the evil eye*, and something to overawe it;—but the spirit of mischief had been fairly stirred, and it was easy to see that Mrs Coutts followed these noble dames to the drawing-room in by no means that complacent mood which was customarily sustained, doubtless, by every blandishment of obsequious flattery, in this mistress of millions. He cut the gentlemen's sederunt short, and soon after joining the ladies, managed to withdraw

the youngest, and gayest, and cleverest, who was also the highest in rank (the late Marchioness of Northampton), into his armorial-hall adjoining. "I said to her" (he told me), "I want to speak a word with you about Mrs Coutts;—we have known each other a good while, and I know you won't take anything I can say in ill part. It is, I hear, not uncommon among the fine ladies in London to be very well pleased to accept invitations, and even sometimes to hunt after them, to Mrs Coutts's grand balls and fêtes, and then, if they meet her in any private circle, to practise on her the delicate *manœuvre* called *tipping the cold shoulder.* This you agree with me is shabby; but it is nothing new either to you or to me, that fine people will do shabbinesses for which beggars might blush, if they once stoop so low as to poke for tickets. I am sure you would not for the world do such a thing; but you must permit me to take the great liberty of saying, that I think the style you have all received my guest Mrs Coutts in, this evening, is, to a certain extent, a sin of the same order. You were all told a couple of days ago that I had accepted her visit, and that she would arrive to-day to stay three nights. Now if any of you had not been disposed to be of my party at the same time with her, there was plenty of time for you to have gone away before she came; and as none of you moved, and it was impossible to fancy that any of you would remain out of mere curiosity, I thought I had a perfect right to calculate on your having made up your minds to help me out with her." Lady Northampton (who had been his ward) answered—"I thank you Sir Walter;—you have done me the great honour to speak as if I had been your daughter, and depend upon it you shall be obeyed with heart and good will." One by one, the other exclusives were seen engaged in a little *tête-à-tête* with her ladyship. Sir Walter was soon satisfied that things had been put into a right train; the Marchioness was requested to sing a particular song, *because* he thought

it would please Mrs Coutts. "Nothing could gratify her more than to please Mrs Coutts." Mrs Coutts's brow smoothed, and in the course of half-an-hour she was as happy and easy as ever she was in her life, rattling away at comical anecdotes of her early theatrical years, and joining in the chorus of Sir Adam's *Laird of Cockpen.* She stayed out her three days[1]—saw, accompanied by all the circle, Melrose, Dryburgh, and Yarrow—and left Abbotsford delighted with her host, and, to all appearance, with his other guests.

It may be said (for the most benevolent of men had in his lifetime, and still has, some maligners) that he was so anxious about Mrs Coutts's comfort, because he worshipped wealth. I dare not deny that he set more of his affections, during great part of his life, upon worldly things, wealth among others, than might have become such an intellect. One may conceive a sober grandeur of mind, not incompatible with genius as rich as even his, but infinitely more admirable than any genius, incapable of brooding upon any of the pomps and vanities of this life—or caring about money at all, beyond what is necessary for the easy sustenance of nature. But we must, in judging the most powerful of minds, take into account the influences to which they were exposed in the plastic period; and where imagination is visibly the predominant faculty, allowance must be made very largely indeed. Scott's autobiographical fragment, and the anecdotes annexed to it, have been printed in vain, if they have not conveyed the notion of such a training of the mind, fancy, and character, as could hardly fail to suggest dreams and aspirations very likely, were temptation presented, to take the shape of active external ambition—to prompt a keen pursuit of those resources, without which visions of worldly splendour cannot

[1] Sir Walter often quoted the maxim of an old lady in one of Miss Ferrier's novels—that a visit should never exceed three days, "the *rest* day—the *drest* day—and the *prest* day."

be realized. But I think the subsequent narrative and his own correspondence must also have satisfied every candid reader that his appetite for wealth was after all essentially a vivid yearning for the means of large beneficence. As to his being capable of the silliness—to say nothing of the meanness—of allowing any part of his feelings or demeanour towards others to be affected by their mere possession of wealth, I cannot consider such a suggestion as worthy of much remark. He had a kindness towards Mrs Coutts, because he knew that, vain and pompous as her displays of equipage and attendance might be, she mainly valued wealth, like himself, as the instrument of doing good. Even of her apparently most fantastic indulgences he remembered, as Pope did when ridiculing the "lavish cost and little skill" of his Timon,

> "Yet hence the poor are clothed, the hungry fed;"

but he interfered, to prevent her being made uncomfortable in his house, neither more nor less than he would have done, had she come there in her original character of a comic actress, and been treated with coldness as such by his Marchionesses and Countesses.

Since I have been led to touch on what many always considered as the weak part of his character—his over respect for worldly things in general,—I must say one word as to the matter of rank, which undoubtedly had far more effect on him than money. In the first place, he was all along courted by the great world—not it by him; and, secondly, pleased as he was with its attentions, he derived infinitely greater pleasure from the trusting and hearty affection of his old equals, and the inferiors whose welfare he so unweariedly promoted. But, thirdly, he made acute discriminations among the many different orders of claimants who jostle each other for prëeminence in the curiously complicated system of modern British society. His imagination had been constantly exercised in

recalling and embellishing whatever features of the past it was possible to connect with any pleasing ideas, and a historical name was a charm that literally stirred his blood. But not so a mere title. He reverenced the Duke of Buccleuch—but it was not as a Duke, but as the head of his clan, the representative of the old knights of Branxholm. In the Duke of Hamilton he saw not the premier peer of Scotland, but the lineal heir of the heroic old Douglasses; and he had profounder respect for the chief of a Highland Clan, without any title whatever, and with an ill-paid rental of two or three thousand a-year, than for the haughtiest magnate in a blue ribbon, whose name did not call up any grand historical reminiscence. I remember once when he had some young Englishmen of high fashion in his house, there arrived a Scotch gentleman of no distinguished appearance, whom he received with a sort of eagerness and *empressement* of reverential courtesy that struck the strangers as quite out of common. His name was that of a Scotch Earl, however, and no doubt he was that nobleman's son. "Well," said one of the Southrons to me,—"I had never heard that the Earl of —— was one of your very greatest lords in this country; even a second son of his, booby though he be, seems to be of wonderful consideration." The young English lord heard with some surprise, that the visitor in question was a poor lieutenant on half-pay, heir to a tower about as crazy as Don Quixote's, and noways related (at least according to English notions of relationship) to the Earl of ——. "What, then," he cried, "what *can* Sir Walter mean?" "Why," said I, "his meaning is very clear. This gentleman is the male representative (which the Earl of —— may possibly be in the female line) of a knight who is celebrated by our old poet Blind Harry, as having signalized himself by the side of Sir William Wallace, and from whom every Scotchman that bears the name of —— has at least the ambition of being supposed to descend."—Sir Walter's own title came

unsought; and that he accepted it, not in the foolish fancy that such a title, or any title, could increase his own personal consequence, but because he thought it fair to embrace the opportunity of securing a certain external distinction to his heirs at Abbotsford, was proved pretty clearly by his subsequently declining the greatly higher, but intransmissible rank of a Privy-Councillor. At the same time, I dare say his ear liked the knightly sound; and undoubtedly he was much pleased with the pleasure his wife took, and gaily acknowledged she took, in being My Lady.

The circumstances of the King's visit in 1822, and others already noted, leave no doubt that imagination enlarged and glorified for him many objects to which it is very difficult for ordinary men in our generation to attach much importance; and perhaps he was more apt to attach importance to such things, during the prosperous course of his own fortunes, than even a liberal consideration of circumstances can altogether excuse. To myself it seems to have been so; yet I do not think the severe critics on this part of his story have kept quite sufficiently in mind how easy it is for us all to undervalue any species of temptation to which we have not happened to be exposed. I am aware, too, that there are examples of men of genius, situated to a certain extent like him, who have resisted and repelled the fascinations against which he was not entirely proof; but I have sometimes thought that they did so at the expense of parts of their character nearer the marrow of humanity than those which his weakness in this way tended to endamage; that they mingled, in short, in their virtuous self-denial, some grains of sacrifice at the shrine of a cold, unsocial, even sulky species of self-conceit. But this digression has already turned out much longer than I intended. It is time to open occurrences which contrast sadly with the summer scenes of 1825.

Towards the end of September I returned to Scotland

from a visit to London on some personal business. During that visit I had heard a great deal more than I understood about the commercial excitement of the time. There had been several years of extravagant speculation. Even persons who had extensive and flourishing businesses in their hands, partook the general rage of infatuation. He whose own shop, counting-house, or warehouse, had been sufficient to raise him to a decent and safely-increasing opulence, and was more than sufficient to occupy all his attention, drank in the vain delusion that he was wasting his time and energy on things unworthy of a masculine ambition, and embarked the resources necessary for the purposes of his lawful calling, in schemes worthy of the land-surveyors of El Dorado. It was whispered that *the trade* (so called, *par excellence*) had been bitten with this fever; and persons of any foresight who knew the infinitely curious links by which booksellers, and printers, and paper-makers (and therefore authors) are bound together, for good and for evil, already began to prophesy that, whenever the general crash, which must come ere long, should arrive, its effects would be felt far and wide among all classes connected with the productions of the press. When it was rumoured that this great bookseller, or printer, had become a principal holder of South American mining shares—that another was the leading director of a gas company—while a third house had risked about £100,000 in a cast upon the most capricious of all agricultural products, *hops*—it was no wonder that bankers should begin to calculate balances, and pause upon discounts.

Among other hints were some concerning a bookselling establishment in London, with which I knew Constable to be closely connected. Little suspecting the extent to which any mischance of Messrs Hurst and Robinson must involve Sir Walter's own responsibilities, I transmitted to him the rumours in question. Before I could have his answer, a legal friend told me that people were talking doubtfully

about Constable's own stability. I thought it probable, that if Constable fell into any embarrassments, Scott might suffer the inconvenience of losing the copy-money of his last novel. Nothing more serious occurred to me. But I thought it my duty to tell him this whisper also; and heard from him, almost by return of post, that, shake who might in London, his friend in Edinburgh was " rooted, as well as branched, like the oak."

A few days, however, after my arrival at Chiefswood, I received a letter from the legal friend already alluded to —(Mr William Wright, the eminent barrister of Lincoln's Inn,—who, by the way, was also on habits of great personal familiarity with Constable, and liked *the Czar* exceedingly)—which renewed my apprehensions, or rather, for the first time, gave me any suspicion that there really might be something " rotten in the state of *Muscovy.*" Mr Wright informed me that it was reported in London that Constable's London banker had thrown up his book. This letter reaching me about five o'clock, I rode over to Abbotsford, and found Sir Walter alone over his glass of whisky and water and cigar—at this time, whenever there was no company, " his custom always in the afternoon." I gave him Mr Wright's letter to read. He did so, and returning it, said, quite with his usual tranquil good-humour of look and voice, " I am much obliged to you for coming over; but you may rely upon it Wright has been hoaxed. I promise you, were the Crafty's book thrown up, there would be a pretty decent scramble among the bankers for the keeping of it. There may have been some little dispute or misunderstanding, which malice and envy have exaggerated in this absurd style; but I shan't allow such nonsense to disturb my *siesta.*"

Seeing how coolly he treated my news, I went home relieved and gratified. Next morning, as I was rising, behold Peter Mathieson at my door, his horses evidently off a journey, and the Sheriff rubbing his eyes as if the halt

had shaken him out of a sound sleep. I made what haste I could to descend, and found him by the side of the brook looking somewhat worn, but with a serene and satisfied countenance, busied already in helping his little grandson to feed a fleet of ducklings.—" You are surprised," he said, " to see me here. The truth is, I was more taken aback with Wright's epistle than I cared *to let on;* and so, as soon as you left me, I ordered the carriage to the door, and never stopped till I got to Polton, where I found Constable putting on his nightcap. I staid an hour with him, and I have now the pleasure to tell you that *all is right.* There was not a word of truth in the story—he is fast as Ben Lomond; and as Mamma and Anne did not know what my errand was, I thought it as well to come and breakfast here, and set Sophia and you at your ease before I went home again."

We had a merry breakfast, and he chatted gaily afterwards as I escorted him through his woods, leaning on my shoulder all the way, which he seldom as yet did, except with Tom Purdie, unless when he was in a more than commonly happy and affectionate mood. But I confess the impression this incident left on my mind was not a pleasant one. It was then that I first began to harbour a suspicion, that if anything should befall Constable, Sir Walter would suffer a heavier loss than the nonpayment of some one novel. The night journey revealed serious alarm. My wife suggested, as we talked things over, that his alarm had been, not on his own account, but Ballantyne's, who, in case evil came on the great employer of his types, might possibly lose a year's profit on them, which neither she nor I doubted must amount to a large sum—any more than that a misfortune of Ballantyne's would grieve her father as much as one personal to himself. His warm regard for his printer could be no secret; we well knew that James was his confidential critic—his trusted and trustworthy friend from boyhood. Nor was I ignorant that Scott had

a share in the property of Ballantyne's Edinburgh Weekly Journal. That had been commonly reported before I was acquainted with them ; and all doubt was removed at the time of the Queen's trial in 1820, when they had some warm debates in my presence as to the side to be taken on that unhappy question. But that Sir Walter was, and had all along been James's partner in the great printing concern, neither I, nor, I believe, any member of his family, had entertained the slightest suspicion prior to the coming calamities which were now "casting their shadows before."

It is proper to add here, that the story about the banker's throwing up Constable's book was groundless. Sir Walter's first guess as to its origin proved correct.

A few days afterwards, Mr Murray sent me a transcript of Lord Byron's Ravenna Diary, with permission for my neighbour also to read it if he pleased. Sir Walter read those extraordinary pages with the liveliest interest, and filled several of the blank leaves and margins with illustrative annotations and anecdotes. In perusing what Byron had jotted down from day to day in the intervals of regular composition, it very naturally occurred to him that the noble poet had done well to avoid troubling himself by any adoption or affectation of plan or order—giving an opinion, a reflection, a reminiscence, serious or comic, or the incidents of the passing hour, just as the spirit moved him ;—and seeing what a mass of curious things, such as "after times would not willingly let die," had been thus rescued from oblivion at a very slight cost of exertion,—he resolved to attempt keeping thenceforth a somewhat similar record. A thick quarto volume, bound in vellum, with a lock and key, was forthwith procured. The occupation of a few stray minutes in his dressing room at getting up in the morning, or after he had retired for the night, was found a pleasant variety for him. He also kept the book by him when in his study, and often had recourse to it when any-

thing puzzled him and called for a halt in the prosecution of what he considered (though posterity will hardly do so) a more important task. It was extremely fortunate that he took up this scheme exactly at the time when he settled seriously to the history of Buonaparte's personal career. The sort of preparation which every chapter of that book now called for has been already alluded to; and —although, when he had fairly read himself up to any one great cycle of transactions, his old spirit roused itself in full energy, and he traced the record with as rapid and glowing a pencil as he had ever wielded—there were minutes enough, and hours,—possibly days of weariness, depression, and langour, when (unless this silent confidant had been at hand) even he perhaps might have made no use of his writing-desk.

Even the new resource of journalizing, however, was not sufficient. He soon convinced himself that it would facilitate, not impede, his progress with Napoleon, to have a work of imagination in hand also. The success of the Tales of the Crusaders had been very high; and Constable, well aware that it had been his custom of old to carry on two romances at the same time, was now too happy to encourage him in beginning *Woodstock*, to be taken up whenever the historical MS. should be in advance of the press.

Thenceforth, as the Diary shews, he continued to divide his usual desk-hours accordingly: but before he had filled many pages of the private Quarto, it begins to record alarm—from day to day deepening—as to Constable, and the extent to which the great publisher's affairs had by degrees come to be connected and bound up with those of the printing firm.

Till John Ballantyne's death, as already intimated, the pecuniary management of that firm had been wholly in his hands. Of his conduct in such business I need add no more: the burden had since been on his surviving brother;

and I am now obliged to say that, though his deficiencies were of a very different sort from John's, they were, as respected his commercial career and connexions, great and unfortunate.

He had received the education, not of a printer, but of a solicitor; and he never, to his dying day, had the remotest knowledge or feeling of what the most important business of a master-printer consists in. He had a fine taste for the effect of types—no establishment turned out more beautiful specimens of the art than his; but he appears never to have understood that types need watching as well as setting. If the page looked handsome, he was satisfied. He had been instructed that on every L.50 paid in his men's wages, the master-printer is entitled to an equal sum of gross profit; and beyond this *rule of thumb* calculation, no experience could bring him to penetrate his *mystery*. In a word, James never comprehended that in the greatest and most regularly employed manufactory of this kind (or indeed of any kind) the profits are likely to be entirely swallowed up, unless the acting master keeps up a most wakeful scrutiny, from week to week, and from day to day, as to the machinery and the materials. So far was he from doing this, that during several of the busiest and most important years of his connexion with the establishment in the Canongate, he seldom crossed its doors. He sat in his own elbow-chair, in a comfortable library, situated in a different street—not certainly an idle man—quite the reverse, though naturally indolent—but the most negligent and inefficient of master-printers.

He was busy, indeed; and inestimably serviceable to Scott was his labour; but it consisted solely in the correction and revisal of proof-sheets. It is most true, that Sir Walter's hurried method of composition rendered it absolutely necessary that whatever he wrote should be subjected to far more than the usual amount of inspection required at the hands of a printer; and it is equally so, that it

would have been extremely difficult to find another man willing and able to bestow such time and care on his proof-sheets as they uniformly received from James. But this was, in fact, not the proper occupation of the man who was at the head of the establishment—who had undertaken the pecuniary management. In every other great printing-house that I have known anything about, there are intelligent and well-educated men, called, technically, *readers*, who devote themselves to this species of labour, and who are, I fear, seldom paid in proportion to its importance. Dr Goldsmith, in his early life, was such a *reader* in the printing-house of Richardson; but the author of Clarissa did not disdain to look after the presses and types himself, or he would never have accumulated the fortune that enabled him to be the liberal employer of *readers* like Goldsmith. In a letter addressed to John Ballantyne, when the bookselling-house was breaking up, Scott says,—"One or other of you will need to be constantly in the printing-office *henceforth;* it is the sheet anchor." This was *ten* years after that establishment began. Thenceforth James, in compliance with this injunction, occupied, during many hours of every day, a cabinet within the premises in the Canongate; but whoever visited him there, found him at the same eternal business, that of a literator, not that of a printer. He was either editing his newspaper—or correcting sheets, or writing critical notes to the Author of Waverley. Shakespeare, Addison, Johnson, and Burke, were at his elbow; but not the ledger. We may thus understand poor John's complaint, in what I may call his dying memorandum, of the "large sums abstracted from the bookselling house for the use of the printing-office." Yet that bookselling house was from the first a hopeless one; whereas, under accurate superintendence, the other ought to have produced the partners a dividend of from L.2000 to L.3000 a-year, at the very least.

On the other hand, the necessity of providing some

remedy for this radical disorder must very soon have forced itself upon the conviction of all concerned, had not John introduced his fatal enlightenment on the subject of facilitating discounts, and raising cash by means of accommodation-bills. Hence the perplexed *states* and *calendars*—the wildernesses and labyrinths of ciphers, through which no eye but that of a professed accountant could have detected any clue ; hence the accumulation of bills and counter-bills drawn by both bookselling and printing-house, and gradually so mixed up with other obligations, that John died in utter ignorance of the condition of their affairs. The pecuniary detail then devolved upon James ; and I fancy it will be only too apparent that he never made even one serious effort to master the formidable array of figures thus committed to his sole trust.

The reader has been enabled to trace from its beginnings the connexion between Constable and the two Ballantyne firms. It has been seen how much they both owed to his interference on various occasions of pressure and alarm. But when he, in his over-weening self-sufficiency, thought it involved no mighty hazard to indulge his better feelings, as well as his lordly vanity, in shielding these firms from commercial dishonour, he had estimated but loosely the demands of the career of speculation on which he was himself entering. And by and by, when advancing by one mighty plunge after another in that vast field, he felt in his own person the threatenings of more signal ruin than could have befallen them, this "Napoleon of the press"—still as of old buoyed up to the ultimate result of his grand operations by the most fulsome flatteries of imagination—appears to have tossed aside very summarily all scruples about the extent to which he might be entitled to tax their sustaining credit in requital. The Ballantynes, if they had comprehended all the bearings of the case, were not the men to consider grudgingly demands of this nature, founded on service so important ; and who

can doubt that Scott viewed them from a chivalrous altitude? It is easy to see, that the moment the obligations became reciprocal, there arose extreme peril of their coming to be hopelessly complicated. It is equally clear, that Scott ought to have applied on these affairs, as their complication thickened, the acumen which he exerted, and rather prided himself in exerting, on smaller points of worldly business, to the utmost. That he did not, I must always regard as the enigma of his personal history; but various incidents in that history, which I have already narrated, prove incontestably that he had never done so; and I am unable to account for this having been the case, except on the supposition that his confidence in the resources of Constable and the prudence of James Ballantyne was so entire, that he willingly absolved himself from all duty of active and thoroughgoing superinspection.

It is the extent to which the confusion had gone that constitutes the great puzzle. I have been told that John Ballantyne, in his hey-day, might be heard whistling for his clerk, John Stevenson (often alluded to in Scott's correspondence as *True* Jock), from the *sanctum* behind the shop with, "Jock, you lubber, fetch ben a sheaf o' stamps." Such things might well enough be believed of that hair-brained creature; but how sober solemn James could have made up his mind, as he must have done, to follow much the same wild course whenever any pinch occurred, is to me, I must own, incomprehensible. The books were kept at the printing-house; and of course Sir Walter (who alone in fact had capital at stake) might have there examined them as often as he liked: but it is to me very doubtful if he ever once attempted to do so: and it is certain that they were *never balanced* during the latter years of the connexion. During several years it was almost daily my custom to walk home with Sir Walter from the Parliament-house, calling at James's on our way. For the most part I used to amuse myself with a newspaper or proof-sheet in the outer

room, while they were closeted in the little cabinet at the corner; and merry were the tones that reached my ear while they remained in colloquy. If I were called in, it was because James, in his ecstasy, must have another to enjoy the dialogue that his friend was improvising—between Meg Dods and Captain Mac-Turk, for example, or Peter Peebles and his counsel.

The reader may perhaps remember a page in a former chapter where I described Scott as riding with Johnny Ballantyne and myself round the deserted halls of the ancient family of Riddell, and remarking how much it increased the wonder of their ruin that the late baronet had kept "day-book and ledger as regularly as any *cheesemonger in the Grassmarket.*" It is nevertheless true, that Sir Walter kept from first to last as accurate an account of his own *personal* expenditure as Sir John Riddell could have done of his extravagant outlay on agricultural experiments. I could, I believe, place before my reader the sum-total of sixpences that it had cost him to ride through turnpike-gates during a period of thirty years. This was, of course, an early habit mechanically adhered to: but how strange that the man who could persist, however mechanically, in noting down every shilling that he actually drew from his purse, should have allowed others to pledge his credit, year after year, upon sheafs of accommodation paper, without keeping any efficient watch—without knowing any one Christmas, for how many thousands he was responsible as *a printer in the Canongate!*

This is sufficiently astonishing—and had this been all, the result must sooner or later have been sufficiently uncomfortable; but it must be admitted that Scott could never have foreseen a step which Constable took in the frenzied excitement of his day of pecuniary alarm. Owing to the original habitual irregularities of John Ballantyne, it had been adopted as the regular plan between that person and Constable, that, whenever the latter signed a

bill for the purpose of the other's raising money among the bankers, there should, in case of his neglecting to take that bill up before it fell due, be deposited a counter-bill, signed by Ballantyne, on which Constable might, if need were, raise a sum equivalent to that for which he had pledged his credit. I am told that this is an usual enough course of procedure among speculative merchants; and it may be so. But mark the issue. The plan went on under James's management, just as John had begun it. Under his management also—such was the incredible looseness of it—the *counter-bills*, meant only for being sent into the market in the event of the *primary bills* being threatened with dishonour—these instruments of safeguard for Constable against contingent danger were allowed to lie uninquired about in Constable's desk, until they had swelled to a truly monstrous "sheaf of stamps." Constable's hour of distress darkened about him, and he rushed with these to the money-changers. And thus it came to pass, that, supposing Ballantyne and Co. to have at the day of reckoning, obligations against them, in consequence of bill transactions with Constable, to the extent of L.25,000, they were legally responsible for L.50,000.

It is not my business to attempt any detailed history of the house of Constable. The sanguine man had, almost at the outset of his career, been "lifted off his feet," in Burns's phrase, by the sudden and unparalleled success of the Edinburgh Review. Scott's poetry and Scott's novels followed: and had he confined himself to those three great and triumphant undertakings, he must have died in possession of a princely fortune. But his "appetite grew with what it fed on," and a long series of less meritorious publications, pushed on, one after the other, in the craziest rapidity, swallowed up the gains which, however vast, he never counted, and therefore always exaggerated to himself. Finally, what he had been to the Ballantynes, certain other still more audacious "Sheafmen" had been to

him. Hurst, Robinson, and Co. had long been his London correspondents; and he had carried on with them the same traffic in bills and counter-bills that the Canongate Company did with him—and upon a still larger scale. They had done what he did not—or at least did not to any very culpable extent: they had carried their adventures out of the line of their own business. It was they, for example, that must needs be embarking such vast sums in a speculation on hops! When ruin threatened them, they availed themselves of Constable's credit without stint or limit—while he, feeling darkly that the net was around him, struggled and splashed for relief, no matter who might suffer, so he escaped! And Sir Walter Scott, sorely as he suffered, was too plainly conscious of the "strong tricks" he had allowed his own imagination to play, not to make merciful allowance for all the apparently monstrous things that I have now been narrating of Constable.

For the rest, his friends, and above all posterity, are not left to consider his fate without consoling reflections. They who knew and loved him, must ever remember that the real nobility of his character could not have exhibited itself to the world at large, had he not been exposed in his later years to the ordeal of adversity. And others as well as they may feel assured, that had not that adversity been preceded by the perpetual spur of pecuniary demands, he who began life with such quick appetites for all its ordinary enjoyments, would never have devoted himself to the rearing of that gigantic monument of genius, labour, and power, which his works now constitute. The imagination which has bequeathed so much to delight and humanize mankind, would have developed few of its miraculous resources, except in the embellishment of his own personal existence. The enchanted spring might have sunk into earth with the rod that bade it gush, and left us no living waters. We cannot understand, but we may nevertheless

respect even the strangest caprices of the marvellous combination of faculties to which our debt is so weighty. We should try to picture to ourselves what the actual intellectual life must have been, of the author of such a series of romances. We should ask ourselves whether, filling and discharging so soberly and gracefully as he did the common functions of social man, it was not, nevertheless, impossible but that he must have passed most of his life in other worlds than ours; and we ought hardly to think it a grievous circumstance that their bright visions should have left a dazzle sometimes on the eyes which he so gently reopened upon our prosaic realities. He had, on the whole, a command over the powers of his mind—I mean, that he could control and direct his thoughts and reflections with a readiness, firmness, and easy security of sway—beyond what I find it possible to trace in any other *artist's* recorded character and history; but he could not habitually fling them into the region of dreams throughout a long series of years, and yet be expected to find a corresponding satisfaction in bending them to the less agreeable considerations which the circumstances of any human being's practical lot in this world must present in abundance. The training to which he accustomed himself could not leave him as he was when he began. He must pay the penalty, as well as reap the glory of this life-long abstraction of reverie, this self-abandonment of Fairyland.

This was for him the last year of many things; among others, of Sybil Grey and *the Abbotsford Hunt.* Towards the close of a hard run on his neighbour Gala's ground, he adventured to leap *the Catrail*—that venerable relic of the days of

"Reged wide and fair Strath-Clyde."

He was severely bruised and shattered; and never afterwards recovered the feeling of confidence, without which there can be no pleasure in horsemanship. He often talked of this accident with a somewhat superstitious mournfulness.

CHAPTER V.

Ruin of the Houses of Constable and Ballantyne—Death of Lady Scott—Publication of Woodstock—Journey to London and Paris—Publication of the Life of Napoleon.—1825–1827.

JAMES BALLANTYNE says, in a paper dictated from his deathbed:—"I need not here enlarge upon the unfortunate facility which, at the period of universal confidence and indulgence, our and other houses received from the banks. Suffice it to say that all our appearances of prosperity, as well as those of Constable, and Hurst and Robinson, were merely shadows, and that from the moment the bankers exhibited symptoms of doubt, it might have been easy to discover what must be the ultimate result. During weeks, and even months, however, our house was kept in a state of very painful suspense. The other two, I have no doubt, saw the coming events more clearly. I must here say, that it was one of Sir Walter's weaknesses to shrink too much from looking evil in the face, and that he was apt to carry a great deal too far—'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' I do not think it was more than three weeks before the catastrophe that he became fully convinced it was impending—if indeed his feelings ever reached the length of conviction at all. Thus, at the last, his fortitude was very severely tried indeed."

Mr Ballantyne had never seen Scott's Diary, and its entries from the 20th November 1825 (when it begins) until the middle of January 1826, are in perfect accordance with this statement. The first on the subject is in these terms: —"Here is matter for a May morning, but much fitter

for a November one. The general distress in the city has affected H. and R., Constable's great agents. Should they *go*, it is not likely that Constable can stand; and such an event would lead to great distress and perplexity on the part of J. B. and myself. Thank God, I have enough to pay more than 20s. in the pound, taking matters at the very worst. But much inconvenience must be the consequence. I had a lesson in 1814 which should have done good; but success and abundance erased it from my mind. But this is no time for journalizing or moralizing either. Necessity is like a sourfaced cook-maid, and I a turn-spit she has flogged, ere now, till he mounted his wheel. If Woodstock can be out by 25th January it will do much, —and it is possible."

Thus he continued to labour on at his romance; from time to time arrested amidst his visions by some fresh omen of the coming reality: but after suggesting or concurring in the commercial measure that seemed feasible, immediately commanding his mind into oblivion of whatever must prevent his pursuance of the task that depended solely on himself. That down to the 14th of December he was far indeed from having brought home to himself anything like the extent of his danger, is clear enough from the step recorded in that day's entry—namely, his consenting to avail himself of the power he had retained of borrowing L.10,000 on the lands of Abbotsford, and advancing that sum to the struggling houses. Ballantyne hints that in his opinion both Constable and his London agents must have foreseen more clearly the issue of the struggle; and it is certain that the only point in Constable's personal conduct which Scott afterwards considered himself entitled to condemn and resent, was connected with these last advances.

My residence had been removed to London before Sir Walter felt, or acknowledged, serious apprehensions: nor can I on this occasion quote his Diary so largely as would enable the reader to follow from day to day the fluctuations

of hope, anxiety, and fear. I must limit myself to a few of what seem the most remarkable passages of that record. On the 18th of December he writes thus:—"If things go badly in London, the magic wand of the Unknown will be shivered in his grasp. He must then, faith, be termed the Too-well-known. The feast of fancy will be over with the feeling of independence. He shall no longer have the delight of waking in the morning with bright ideas in his mind, hasten to commit them to paper, and count them monthly, as the means of planting such scaurs and purchasing such wastes; replacing dreams of fiction by other prospective visions of walks by

> 'Fountain heads, and pathless groves;
> Places which pale passion loves.'

This cannot be; but I may work substantial husbandry, *i.e.* write history, and such concerns. They will not be received with the same enthusiasm; at least, I much doubt the general knowledge that an author must write for his bread, at least for improving his pittance, degrades him and his productions in the public eye. He falls into the second-rate rank of estimation:

> 'While the harness sore galls, and the spurs his side goad,
> The high-mettled racer 's a hack on the road.'

It is a bitter thought; but if tears start at it, let them flow. My heart clings to the place I have created—there is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me.—What a life mine has been!—half-educated, almost wholly neglected, or left to myself; stuffing my head with most nonsensical trash, and undervalued by most of my companions for a time; getting forward, and held a bold and a clever fellow, contrary to the opinion of all who thought me a mere dreamer; broken-hearted for two years; my heart handsomely pieced again—but the crack will remain till my dying day. Rich and poor four or five times; once on the verge of ruin, yet opened a new source of wealth

almost overflowing. Now to be broken in my pitch of pride, and nearly winged (unless good news should come :) because London chooses to be in an uproar, and in the tumult of bulls and bears, a poor inoffensive lion like myself is pushed to the wall. But what is to be the end of it? God knows; and so ends the catechism.—Nobody in the end can lose a penny by me—that is one comfort. Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall will make them higher, or seem so at least. I have the satisfaction to recollect that my prosperity has been of advantage to many, and to hope that some at least will forgive my transient wealth on account of the innocence of my intentions, and my real wish to do good to the poor. Sad hearts, too, at Darnick, and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest?—how live a poor indebted man where I was once the wealthy, the honoured? I was to have gone there on Saturday in joy and prosperity to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish—but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things! I must get them kind masters! There may be yet those who, loving me, may love my dog because it has been mine. I must end these gloomy forebodings, or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress. I feel my dogs' feet on my knees—I hear them whining and seeking me everywhere. This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things may be.—An odd thought strikes me—When I die, will the journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford, and read with wonder, that the well-seeming Baronet should ever have experienced the risk of such a hitch?—or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of chivalry had hung up his

scutcheon, and where one or two old friends will look grave, and whisper to each other, 'Poor gentleman'—'a well-meaning man'—'nobody's enemy but his own'—'thought his parts would never wear out'—'family poorly left'—pity he took that foolish title.' Who can answer this question?—Poor Will Laidlaw!—poor Tom Purdie!—such news will wring your hearts, and many a poor fellow's besides, to whom my prosperity was daily bread.

"Ballantyne behaves like himself, and sinks the prospect of his own ruin in contemplating mine. I tried to enrich him indeed, and now all—all is in the balance. He will have the Journal still, that is a comfort, for sure they cannot find a better editor. *They*—alas, who will *they* be—the *unbekannten obern*[1] who may have to dispose of my all as they will? Some hard-eyed banker—some of these men of millions!—I have endeavoured to give vent to thoughts naturally so painful, by writing these notes—partly to keep them at bay by busying myself with the history of the French Convention. I thank God I can do both with reasonable composure. I wonder how Anne will bear such an affliction. She is passionate, but stout-hearted and courageous in important matters, though irritable in trifles. I am glad Lockhart and his wife are gone. Why? I cannot tell—but I *am* pleased to be left to my own regrets, without being melted by condolences, though of the most sincere and affectionate kind.—*Half-past eight.* I closed this book under the impression of impending ruin. I open it an hour after (thanks be to God) with the strong hope that matters will be got over safely and honourably, in a mercantile sense. Cadell came at eight to communicate a letter from Hurst and Robinson, intimating they had stood the storm. I shall always think the better of Cadell for this—not merely because 'his feet are beautiful on the mountains who brings good tidings,' but because he shewed feeling—deep feel-

[1] *Unbekannten obern*—unknown rulers.

ing, poor fellow. He, who I thought had no more than his numeration-table, and who, if he had had his whole counting-house full of sensibility, had yet his wife and children to bestow it upon—I will not forget this, if all keeps right. I love the virtues of rough-and-round men—the others are apt to escape in salt rheum, sal-volatile, and a white pocket handkerchief.

"*December* 19.—Ballantyne here before breakfast. He looks on last night's news with confidence. Constable came in and sat an hour. The old gentleman is firm as a rock. He talks of going to London next week. But I must go to work.

"*December* 21.—Dined with James Ballantyne, and met R. Cadell, and my old friend Mathews the comedian. The last time I saw him before, he dined with me in company with poor Sir Alexander Boswell, who was killed within a week. I never saw Sir A. more. The time before was in 1815, when Gala and I were returning from France, and passed through London, when we brought Mathews down as far as Leamington. Poor Byron made an early dinner with us at Long's, and a most brilliant day we had of it. I never saw Byron so full of fun, frolic, wit, and whim; he was as playful as a kitten. Well, I never saw *him* again. So this man of mirth, with his merry meetings, has brought me no luck. I could not help thinking, in the midst of the glee, what gloom had lately been over the minds of three of the company. What a strange scene if the surge of conversation could suddenly ebb like the tide, and show us the state of people's real minds!

'No eyes the rocks discover
Which lurk beneath the deep.'

Life could not be endured were it seen in reality. Things keep mending in London.

"*December* 22.—I wrote six of my close pages yesterday, which is about twenty-four pages in print. What is more,

I think it comes off twangingly. The air of *Bonnie Dundee* running in my head to-day, I wrote a few verses to it before dinner, taking the key-note from the story of Clavers leaving the Scottish Convention of Estates in 1688-9. I wonder if they are good. Ah, poor Will Erskine ! thou couldst and wouldst have told me. I must consult J. B., who is as honest as was W. E. But then, though he has good taste too, there is a little of *Big bow-wow* about it. Can't say what made me take a frisk so uncommon of late years as to write verses of free-will. I suppose the same impulse which makes birds sing when the storm has blown over.

" *December* 24.—Constable has a new scheme of publishing the works of the Author of Waverley in a superior style, at L.1, 1s. volume. He says he will answer for making L.20,000 of this, and liberally offered me any share of the profits. I have no great claim to any, as I have only to contribute the notes, which are light work ; yet a few thousands coming in will be a good thing—besides the Printing Office. Constable, though valetudinary, and cross with his partner, is certainly as good a pilot in these rough seas as ever man put faith in.

" *December* 25.—*Abbotsford.*—Arrived here last night at seven. Our halls are silent compared to last year, but let us be thankful—*Barbarus has segetes ? Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia.* There shall be no lack of wisdom. But come—*il faut cultiver notre jardin.* I will accept no invitation for dinner, save one to Newton-Don, and Mertoun to morrow, instead of Christmas-Day. On this day of general devotion, I have a particular call for gratitude.

" *January* 14.—An odd mysterious letter from Constable, who has gone post to London. It strikes me to be that sort of letter which I have seen men write when they are desirous that their disagreeable intelligence should be rather apprehended than expressed. I thought he had been in London a fortnight ago, disposing of property to

meet this exigence, and so I think he should. Well, I must have patience. But these terrors and frights are truly annoying. .... A letter from J. B., mentioning Constable's journey, but without expressing much apprehension. He knows C. well, and saw him before his departure, and makes no doubt of his being able easily to extricate whatever may be entangled. I will not therefore make myself uneasy. I can help doing so surely, if I will. At least, I have given up cigars since the year began, and have now no wish to return to the habit, as it is called. I see no reason why one should not, with God's assistance, shun noxious thoughts, which foretell evil, and cannot remedy it."

A few days after Sir Walter penned the last-quoted paragraph, Mr Constable made his appearance in London. I saw him immediately. Having deferred his journey imprudently, he had performed it very rapidly; and this exertion, with mental excitement, had brought on a sharp access of gout, which confined him for a couple of days to his hotel in the Adelphi—*reluctantem draconem*. A more impatient spirit never boiled in a feverish frame. It was then that I received my first information of Sir W. Scott's implication as a partner in the firm of Ballantyne. It was then also for the first time, that I saw full swing given to the tyrannical temper of *the Czar*. He looked, spoke, and gesticulated like some hoary despot, accustomed to nothing but the complete indulgence of every wish and whim, against whose sovereign authority his most trusted satraps and tributaries had suddenly revolted—open rebellion in twenty provinces—confusion in the capital—treason in the palace. I will not repeat his haughty ravings of scorn and wrath. I listened to these with wonder and commiseration; nor were such feelings mitigated when, having exhausted his violence of vituperation against many persons of whom I had never before heard him speak but as able and trusted friends, he cooled down sufficiently

to answer my question as to the practical business on which the note announcing his arrival in town had signified his urgent desire to take my advice. Constable told me that he had already seen one of the Hurst and Robinson firm, and that the storm which had seemed to be "blown over" had, he was satisfied, only been lulled for a moment to burst out in redoubled fury. If they went, however, he must follow. He had determined to support them through the coming gale as he had done through the last; and he had the means to do so effectually, provided Sir Walter Scott would stand by him heartily and boldly.

The first and most obvious step was to make large sales of copyrights; and it was not surprising that Constable should have formed most extravagant notions of the marketable value of the property of this nature in his possession. Every bookseller is very apt to do so. A manuscript is submitted to him; he inspects it with coldness and suspicion; with hesitation offers a sum for it; obtains it, and sends it to be printed. He has hardly courage to look at the sheets as they are thrown off; but the book is at last laid on his counter, and he from that moment regards it with an eye of parental fondness. It is *his;* he considers it in that light quite as much as does the author, and is likely to be at least as sorely provoked by anything in the shape of hostile criticism. If this be the usual working of self-love or self-interest in such cases, what wonder that the man who had at his disposal (to say nothing of innumerable minor properties) the copyrights of the Encyclopædia Britannica, a moiety of the Edinburgh Review, nearly all Scott's Poetry, the Waverley Novels, and the advancing Life of Napoleon—who had made, besides, sundry contracts for novels by Scott, as yet unwritten—and who seriously viewed his plan of the new Miscellany as in itself the sure foundation of a gigantic fortune—what wonder that the sanguine Constable should have laid to his soul the flattering unction, that he

had only to display such resources in some quarter totally above the momentary pressure of *the trade*, and command an advance of capital adequate to relieve him and all his allies from these unfortunate difficulties about a few paltry "sheafs" of stamped paper? To be brief, he requested me to accompany him, as soon as he could get into his carriage, to the Bank of England, and support him (as a confidential friend of the *Author of Waverley*) in his application for a loan of from L.100,000 to L.200,000 on the security of the copyrights in his possession. It is needless to say that, without distinct instructions from Sir Walter, I could not take upon me to interfere in such a business as this. Constable, when I refused, became livid with rage. After a long silence, he stamped on the ground, and swore that he could and would do alone. I left him in stern indignation.

There was another scene of the same kind a day or two afterwards, when his object was to get me to back his application to Sir Walter to borrow L.20,000 in Edinburgh, and transmit it to him in London. I promised nothing but to acquaint Scott immediately with his request, and him with Scott's answer. Sir Walter, ere the message reached him, had been candidly told by Constable's own partner that any further advances would be mere folly.

Constable lingered on, fluctuating between wild hope and savage despair, until, I seriously believe, he at last hovered on the brink of insanity. When he returned to Edinburgh, it was to confront creditors whom he knew he could not pay.

Scott's Diary has—"*Edinburgh, January* 16.—Came through cold roads to as cold news. Hurst and Robinson have suffered a bill to come back upon Constable, which I suppose infers the ruin of both houses. We shall soon see. Dined with the Skenes."—Mr Skene assures me that he appeared that evening quite in his usual spirits, conversing on whatever topic was started as easily and gaily

as if there had been no impending calamity; but at parting he whispered—"Skene, I have something to speak to you about; be so good as to look in on me as you go to the Parliament-House to-morrow." When Skene called in Castle Street, about half-past nine o'clock next morning, he found Scott writing in his study. He rose, and said—"My friend, give me a shake of your hand—mine is that of a beggar." He then told him that Ballantyne had just been with him, and that his ruin was certain and complete; explaining, briefly, the nature of his connexion with the three houses, whose downfall must that morning be made public. He added—"Don't fancy I am going to stay at home to brood idly on what can't be helped. I was at work upon Woodstock when you came in, and I shall take up the pen the moment I get back from Court, I mean to dine with you again on Sunday, and hope then to report progress to some purpose."—When Sunday came, he reported accordingly, that in spite of all the numberless interruptions of meetings and conferences with his partner and men of business—to say nothing of his anxieties on account of his wife and daughter—he had written a chapter of his novel every intervening day. And the Diary gives the precise detail. His exertions, he there says, were suspended for the 17th and 18th; but in the course of the 19th, 20th, and 21st, he wrote 38 pages of his novel—such pages that 70 of them made "half a volume of the usual size."

Diary.—"*January* 17.—James Ballantyne this morning, good honest fellow, with a visage as black as the crook. He hopes no salvation; has indeed taken measures to stop. It is hard, after having fought such a battle. Have apologized for not attending the Royal Society Club, who have a *gaudeamus* on this day, and seemed to count much on my being the preses. My old acquaintance, Miss Elizabeth Clerk, sister of Willie, died suddenly. I cannot choose but wish it had been Sir W. S.; and yet the feel-

ing is unmanly. I have Anne, my wife, and Charles, to look after. I felt rather sneaking as I came home from the Parliament-House—felt as if I were liable *monstrari digito* in no very pleasant way. But this must be borne *cum cœteris;* and, thank God, however uncomfortable, I do not feel despondent."

The reader may be curious to see what account Ballantyne's memorandum gives of that dark announcement on the morning of Tuesday the 17th. It is as follows:—"On the evening of the 16th, I received from Mr Cadell a distinct message putting me in possession of the truth. I called immediately in Castle Street, but found Sir Walter had gained an unconscious respite by being engaged out at dinner. It was between eight and nine next morning that I made the final communication. No doubt he was greatly stunned—but, upon the whole, he bore it with wonderful fortitude. He then asked—'Well, what is the actual step we must first take? I suppose we must do something?' I reminded him that two or three thousand pounds were due that day, so that we had only to do what we must do—refuse payment—to bring the disclosure sufficiently before the world. He took leave of me with these striking words—'Well, James, depend upon that, I will never forsake you.'"

In the course of that unhappy yet industrious week, Sir Walter's situation as Ballantyne's partner, became universally known. Mr Ballantyne, as an individual, had no choice but to resolve on the usual course of a commercial man unable to meet engagements: but Scott from the first moment determined to avoid, if by his utmost efforts it could be avoided, the necessity of participating in such steps. He immediately placed his whole affairs in the hands of three trustees (James Jollie, W.S., Alex. Monypenny, W.S., and John Gibson, W.S.), all men of the highest honour and of great professional experience; and declined every offer of private assistance. These were very

numerous :—his eldest son and his daughter-in-law eagerly tendered the whole fortune at their disposal, and the principal banks of Edinburgh, especially the house of Sir William Forbes & Co., which was the one most deeply involved in Ballantyne's obligations, sent partners of the first consideration, who were his personal friends, to offer liberal additional accommodation. What, I think, affected him most of all, was a letter from Mr Poole, his daughters' harp-master, offering L.500,—"probably," says the Diary, "his all." From London, also, he received various kind communications. Among others, one tendering an instant advance of L.30,000—a truly munificent message, conveyed through a distinguished channel, but the source of which was never revealed to him, nor to me until some years after his death, and even then under conditions of secrecy. To all, his answer was the same. And within a few days he had reason to believe that the creditors would, as a body, assent to let things go in the course which he and his trustees suggested.

His Diary has this entry for the 24th January :—"I went to the Court for the first time to-day, and, like the man with the large nose, thought every body was thinking of me and my mishaps. Many were, undoubtedly, and all rather regrettingly ; some obviously affected. It is singular to see the difference of men's manner whilst they strive to be kind or civil in their way of addressing me. Some smiled as they wished me good-day, as if to say, 'Think nothing about it, my lad ; it is quite out of our thoughts.' Others greeted me with the affected gravity which one sees and despises at a funeral. The best-bred—all I believe meaning equally well—just shook hands and went on. A foolish puff in the papers, calling on men and gods to assist a popular author, who having choused the public of many thousands, had not the sense to keep wealth when he had it. If I am hard pressed, and measures used against me, I must use all means of legal defence, and subscribe

myself bankrupt in a petition for sequestration. It is the course one should, at any rate, have advised a client to take. But for this I would, in a Court of Honour, deserve to lose my spurs. No,—if they permit me, I will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds (or what may sell for such) to make good my engagements, not to enrich myself. And this from no reluctance to be called the Insolvent, which I probably am, but because I will not put out of the power of my creditors the resources, mental or literary, which yet remain to me."

Jan. 26.—"Gibson comes with a joyful face, announcing that almost all the creditors had agreed to a private trust. This is handsome and confidential, and must warm my best efforts to get them out of the scrape. I will not doubt—to doubt is to lose. Sir William Forbes took the chair, and behaved, as he has ever done, with the generosity of ancient faith and early friendship. That House is more deeply concerned than most. In what scenes have Sir William and I not borne share together! desperate and almost bloody affrays, rivalries, deep drinking matches, and finally, with the kindliest feelings on both sides, somewhat separated by his retiring much within the bosom of his family, and I moving little beyond mine. It is fated our planets should cross, though, and that at the periods most interesting for me. Down — down — a hundred thoughts."

There soon, however, emerged new difficulties. It would indeed have been very wonderful if all the creditors of three companies, whose concerns were inextricably intertangled, had at once adopted the views of the meeting, composed entirely of eminent citizens of Edinburgh, over which Sir William Forbes presided on the 26th of January; nor, it is proper to add, was Scott himself aware, until some days later, of the extent to which the debts of the two houses of Constable and Hurst exceeded their assets;

circumstances necessarily of the greatest importance to the holders of Ballantyne's paper. In point of fact, it turned out that the obligations of the three firms had, by what is termed cross-rankings, reached respectively sums far beyond the calculations of any of the parties. On the full revelation of this state of things, some of the printers' creditors felt great disinclination to close with Scott's proposals; and there ensued a train of harassment, the detail of which must be left in his Diary, but which was finally terminated according to his own original, and really most generous suggestion.

The day of calamity revealed the fact that James Ballantyne personally possessed no assets whatever. The claims against Sir Walter, as the sole really responsible partner in the printing firm, and also as an individual, settled into a sum of about L.130,000. On much heavier debts Constable & Co. paid ultimately 2s. 9d. in the pound; Hurst & Robinson about 1s. 3d. The Ballantyne firm had as yet done nothing to prevent their following the same line of conduct. It might still have allowed itself (and not James Ballantyne merely as an individual) to be declared bankrupt, and obtained a speedy discharge, like these booksellers, from all its obligations. But for Scott's being a partner, the whole affair must have been settled in a very short time. If he could have at all made up his mind to let commercial matters take the usual commercial course, the creditors of the firm would have brought into the market whatever property, literary or otherwise, Scott at the hour of failure possessed; they would have had a right to his liferent of Abbotsford, among other things—and to his reversionary interest in the estate, in case either his eldest son or his daughter-in-law should die without leaving issue, and thus void the provisions of their marriage-contract. All this being disposed of, the result would have been a dividend very far superior to what the creditors of Constable and Hurst received; and in return, the partners in

the printing firm would have been left at liberty to reap for themselves the profits of their future exertions. Things were, however, complicated in consequence of the transfer of Abbotsford in January 1825. Some creditors now had serious thoughts of contesting the validity of that transaction; but a little reflection and examination satisfied them that nothing could be gained by such an attempt. On the other hand, Sir Walter felt that he had done wrong in placing any part of his property beyond the reach of his creditors, by entering into that marriage-contract without a previous most deliberate examination into the state of his responsibilities. He must have felt in this manner, though I have no sort of doubt, that the result of such an examination in January 1825, if accompanied by an instant calling in of all *counter-bills*, would have been to leave him at perfect liberty to do all that he did upon that occasion. However that may have been, and whatever may have been his delicacy respecting this point, he persisted in regarding the embarrassment of his commercial firm with the feelings not of a merchant but of a gentleman. He thought that by devoting the rest of his life to the service of his creditors, he could, in the upshot, pay the last farthing he owed them. They (with one or two exceptions) applauded his honourable intentions and resolutions, and partook, to a certain extent, in the self-reliance of their debtor. Nor had they miscalculated as to their interest. Nor had Sir Walter calculated wrongly. He paid the penalty of health and life, but he saved his honour and his self-respect:—

"The glory dies not, and the grief is past."[1]

As to the difficulty that occurred in February, a single extract from his Diary must here suffice. On the 16th he writes thus:—"'Misfortune's growling bark' comes louder and louder. By assigning my whole property to

[1] Sonnet on Scott's death, by Sir E. Brydges.

trustees for behoof of creditors, with two works in progress and nigh publication, and with all my future literary labours, I conceived I was bringing into the field a large fund of payment, which could not exist without my exertions, and that thus far I was entitled to a corresponding degree of indulgence. I therefore supposed, on selling this house, and various other property, and on receiving the price of Woodstock and Napoleon, that they would give me leisure to make other exertions, and be content with the rents of Abbotsford, without attempting a sale. But Gibson last night came in after dinner, and gave me to understand that the Bank of Scotland see this in a different point of view, and consider my contribution of the produce of past, present, and future labours, as compensated *in full* by their accepting of the trust-deed, instead of pursuing the mode of sequestration, and placing me in the Gazette. They therefore expect the trustees to commence a lawsuit to reduce the marriage-settlement which settles the estate upon Walter; thus loading me with a most expensive suit, and I suppose selling library and whatever else they can lay hold on. Now this seems unequal measure, and would besides of itself totally destroy any power of fancy—of genius, if it deserves the name, which may remain to me. A man cannot write in the House of Correction; and this species of *peine forte et dure* which is threatened, would render it impossible for one to help himself or others. So I told Gibson I had my mind made up as far back as the 24th of January, not to suffer myself to be harder pressed than law would press me. If they take the sword of the law, I must lay hold of the shield. If they are determined to consider me as an irretrievable bankrupt, they have no title to object to my settling upon the usual terms which the statute requires. They probably are of opinion, that I will be ashamed to do this by applying publicly for a sequestration. Now, my feelings are different. I am ashamed to owe debts I cannot pay; but I am not ashamed

of being classed with those to whose rank I belong. The disgrace is in being an actual bankrupt, not in being made a legal one. I had like to have been too hasty in this matter. I must have a clear understanding that I am to be benefited or indulged in some way, if I bring in two such funds as those works in progress, worth certainly from L.10,000 to L.15,000."

It was by and bye settled that he should be left in the undisturbed possession of Abbotsford, on his pledging himself to dispose immediately of all his other property, of what kind soever, for the behoof of the creditors—to limit his personal expenses henceforth within his official salary—and, continuing his literary labour with his best diligence, to pay in all its profits until the debt should be wholly obliterated. Excepting from a single London Jew, a creditor originally of Hurst's, no practical interference with this arrangement was ever subsequently threatened. Scott, meanwhile, laboured on at his desk. In the very darkest period of his anxieties, he not only continued his Novel and his Bonaparte, but threw off his graceful and humorous, as well as sagacious and instructive reviewal of Pepys' Diary: and before that was published, he had also most effectually displayed his self-possession by a political demonstration under a new but thin disguise.

As soon as Parliament met, the recent convulsion in the commercial world became the subject of some very remarkable debates in the Lower House; and the Ministers, tracing it mainly to the rash facility of bankers in yielding credit to speculators, proposed to strike at the root of the evil by taking from private banks the privilege of circulating their own notes as money, and limiting even the Bank of England to the issue of notes of L.5 value and upwards. The Government designed that this regulation should apply to Scotland as well as England; and the northern public received the announcement with almost universal reprobation. The Scotch banks apprehended a most serious cur-

tailment of their profits; and the merchants and traders of every class were well disposed to back them in opposing the Ministerial innovation. Scott, ever sensitively jealous as to the interference of English statesmen with the internal affairs of his native kingdom, took the matter up with as much zeal as he could have displayed against the Union had he lived in the days of Queen Anne. His national feelings may have been somewhat stimulated, perhaps, by his deep sense of gratitude for the generous forbearance which several Edinburgh banking-houses had just been exhibiting toward himself; and I think it need not be doubted, moreover, that the *splendida bilis* which, as the Diary confesses, his own misfortunes had engendered, demanded some escape-valve. Hence the three *Letters of Malachi Malagrowther*, which appeared first in the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, and were afterwards collected into a pamphlet by the late Mr Blackwood, who, on that occasion, for the first time, had justice done to his personal character by " the Black Hussar of Literature."

These diatribes produced in Scotland a sensation not, perhaps, inferior to that of the Drapier's letters in Ireland; a greater one, certainly, than any political tract had excited in the British public at large since the appearance of Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution. They were answered most elaborately and acutely in the London Courier (then the semi-official organ of Lord Liverpool's Government) by Sir Walter's friend, the secretary of the Admiralty, Mr Croker: who perhaps hazarded, in the heat of his composition, a few personal allusions that might as well have been spared, and which might have tempted a less good-natured antagonist to a fiery rejoinder. Meeting, however, followed meeting, and petition on petition came up with thousands of signatures; and the Ministers erelong found that the opposition, of which Malachi had led the van, was, in spite of all their own speeches and Mr Croker's essays, too strong and too rapidly strengthening,

to be safely encountered. The Scotch part of the measure was dropt; and Scott, having carried his practical object, was not at all disposed to persist in a controversy which, if farther pursued, could scarcely, as he foresaw, fail to interrupt the kindly feelings that Croker and he had for many years entertained for each other, and also to aggravate and prolong, unnecessarily, the resentment with which several of his friends in the Cabinet had regarded his unlooked for appearance as a hostile agitator.

When the Court of Session was to rise for the spring vacation he had to take farewell of his house in Castle Street. Henceforth, his family were to stay always, as he designed, in the country—and a small hired lodging was to suffice for himself when his duty called him to be in Edinburgh. In one day's diary he says,—"Looked out a quantity of things, to go to Abbotsford; for we are flitting, if you please. It is with a sense of pain that I leave behind a parcel of trumpery prints and little ornaments, once the pride of Lady S——'s heart, but which she sees consigned with indifference to the chance of an auction. Things that have had their day of importance with me I cannot forget, though the merest trifles. But I am glad that she, with bad health, and enough to vex her, has not the same useless mode of associating recollections with this unpleasant business."—Again, on the 13th March—"I have hinted in these notes, that I am not entirely free from a sort of gloomy fits, with a fluttering of the heart and depression of spirits, just as if I knew not what was going to befall me. I can sometimes resist this successfully, but it is better to evade than to combat it. The hang-dog spirit may have originated in the confusion and chucking about of our old furniture, the stripping of walls of pictures, and rooms of ornaments; the leaving of a house we have so long called our home, is altogether melancholy enough. Meanwhile, to make my recusant spirit do penance, I have set to work to clear

away papers and pack them for my journey. What a strange medley of thoughts such a task produces! There lie letters which made the heart throb when received, now lifeless and uninteresting—as are perhaps their writers—riddles which have been read—schemes which time has destroyed or brought to maturity—memorials of friendships and enmities which are now alike faded. Thus does the ring of Saturn consume itself. To-day annihilates yesterday, as the old tyrant swallowed his children, and the snake its tail. But I must say to my journal as poor Byron did to Moore—" D—n it, Tom, don't be poetical."

"*March* 14.—J. B. called this morning to take leave, and receive directions about proofs, &c. Talks of the uproar about Malachi; but I am tired of Malachi—the humour is off, and I have said what I wanted to say, and put the people of Scotland on their guard, as well as Ministers, if they like to be warned. They are gradually destroying what remains of nationality, and making the country *tabula rasa* for doctrines of bold innovation. Their loosening and grinding down all those peculiarities which distinguished us as Scotsmen, will throw the country into a state in which it will be universally turned to democracy, and instead of canny Saunders, they will have a very dangerous North-British neighbourhood. Some lawyer expressed to Lord Elibank an opinion, that at the Union the English law should have been extended all over Scotland. 'I cannot say how that might have answered our purpose,' said Lord Patrick, who was never nonsuited for want of an answer, 'but it would scarce have suited *yours*, since by this time the *Aberdeen Advocates*[1] would have possessed themselves of all the business in Westminster Hall.' "

"*March* 15.—This morning I leave No. 39 Castle Street, for the last time. 'The cabin was convenient,' and habit had made it agreeable to me. I never reckoned upon

[1] The *Solicitors* of Aberdeen enjoy somehow the title of *Advocates*.

a change in this particular so long as I held an office in the Court of Session. In all my former changes of residence it was from good to better—this is retrograding. I leave this house for sale, and I cease to be an Edinburgh citizen, in the sense of being a proprietor, which my father and I have been for sixty years at least. So farewell, poor 39, and may you never harbour worse people than those who now leave you. Not to desert the Lares all at once, Lady S. and Anne remain till Sunday. As for me, I go, as aforesaid, this morning.

'Ha til mi tulidh'!—"[1]

Sir Walter's Diary begins to be clouded with a darker species of distress than mere loss of wealth could bring to his spirit. His darling grandson is sinking at a distance from him under incurable disease. At home the misfortunes against which his manhood struggled with stern energy were encountered by his affectionate wife under the disadvantages of enfeebled health; and it seems but too evident that mental pain and mortification had a great share in hurrying her ailments to a fatal end. Nevertheless, all his afflictions do not seem to have interrupted for more than a day or two his usual course of labour. With rare exceptions he appears, all through this trying period, to have finished his daily task—thirty printed pages of Woodstock—until that novel was completed; or, if he paused in it, he gave a similar space of time to some minor production; such as his paper on the Life of Kemble. He also corresponded much as usual (notwithstanding all he says about indolence on that score) with his absent friends; and I need scarcely add, that his duties as Sheriff claimed many hours every week. The picture of resolution and industry which this portion of his Journal presents, is certainly as remarkable as the boldest imagination could have conceived.

[1] I return no more.

"*Abbotsford, March* 17.—A letter from Lockhart. My worst augury is verified;—the medical people think poor Johnnie is losing strength; he is gone with his mother to Brighton. The bitterness of this probably impending calamity is extreme. The child was almost too good for this world;—beautiful in features; and though spoiled by every one, having one of the sweetest tempers as well as the quickest intellect I ever saw; a sense of humour quite extraordinary in a child, and, owing to the general notice which was taken of him, a great deal more information than suited his years. The poor dear love had so often a slow fever, that when it pressed its little lips to mine, I always foreboded to my own heart what all I fear are now aware of.

"*March* 18.—Slept indifferently, and under the influence of Queen Mab, seldom auspicious to me. Dreamed of reading the tale of the Prince of the Black Marble Islands to Little Johnnie, extended on a paralytic chair, and yet telling all his pretty stories about Ha-Papa, as he calls me, and Chiefswood—and waked to think I should see the little darling no more, or see him as a thing that had better never have existed. Oh misery! misery! that the best I can wish for him is early death, with all the wretchedness to his parents that is likely to ensue!

"*March* 19.—Lady S., the faithful and true companion of my fortunes, good and bad, for so many years, has, but with difficulty, been prevailed on to see Dr Abercrombie, and his opinion is far from favourable. Her asthmatic complaints are fast terminating in hydropsy, as I have long suspected; yet the announcement of the truth is overwhelming. They are to stay a little longer in town to try the effects of a new medicine. On Wednesday, they propose to return hither—a new affliction, where there was enough before; yet her constitution is so good, that if she will be guided by advice, things may be yet ameliorated. God grant it! for really these misfortunes come too close upon each other.

"*March* 28.—We have now been in solitude for some time—myself nearly totally so, excepting at meals. One is tempted to ask himself, knocking at the door of his own heart, Do you love this extreme loneliness? I can answer conscientiously, *I do.* The love of solitude was with me a passion of early youth; when in my teens, I used to fly from company to indulge in visions and airy castles of my own, the disposal of ideal wealth, and the exercise of imaginary power. This feeling prevailed even till I was eighteen, when love and ambition awakening with other passions, threw me more into society, from which I have, however, at times withdrawn myself, and have been always even glad to do so. I have risen from a feast satiated; and unless it be one or two persons of very strong intellect, or whose spirits and good humour amuse me, I wish neither to see the high, the low, nor the middling class of society. This is a feeling without the least tinge of misanthropy, which I always consider as a kind of blasphemy of a shocking description. If God bears with the very worst of us, we may surely endure each other. If thrown into society, I always have, and always will endeavour to bring pleasure with me, at least to shew willingness to please. But for all this, 'I had rather live alone,' and I wish my appointment, so convenient otherwise, did not require my going to Edinburgh. But this must be, and in my little lodging I shall be lonely enough.

" *April* 1.—*Ex uno die disce omnes.*—Rose at seven or sooner, studied and wrote till breakfast, with Anne, about a quarter before ten. Lady Scott seldom able to rise till twelve or one. Then I write or study again till one. At that hour to-day I drove to Huntley Burn, and walked home by one of the hundred and one pleasing paths which I have made through the woods I have planted—now chatting with Tom Purdie, who carries my plaid and speaks when he pleases, telling long stories of hits and misses in shooting twenty years back—sometimes chewing the cud

of sweet and bitter fancy—and sometimes attending to the humours of two curious little terriers of the Dandie Dinmont breed, together with a noble wolf-hound puppy which Glengarry has given me to replace Maida. This brings me down to the very moment I do tell—the rest is prophetic. I shall feel drowsy when this book is locked, and perhaps sleep until Dalgleish brings the dinner summons. Then I shall have a chat with Lady S. and Anne ; some broth or soup, a slice of plain meat—and man's chief business, in Dr Johnson's estimation, is briefly despatched. Half an hour with my family, and half an hour's coquetting with a cigar, a tumbler of weak whisky and water, and a novel perhaps, lead on to tea, which sometimes consumes another half hour of chat ; then write and read in my own room till ten o'clock at night ; a little bread, and then a glass of porter, and to bed ; and this, very rarely varied by a visit from some one, is the tenor of my daily life—and a very pleasant one indeed, were it not for apprehensions about Lady S. and poor Johnnie. The former will, I think, do well ; for the latter—I fear—I fear—

" *April* 3.—I have the extraordinary and gratifying news that *Woodstock* is sold for L.8228 ; all ready money —a matchless sale for less than three months' work." [The reader will understand that, the novel being sold for the behoof of J. B. and Co.'s creditors, this sum includes the cost of printing the first edition, as well as paper.] " If Napoleon does as well, or near it, it will put the trust affairs in high flourish. Four or five years of leisure and industry would, with such success, amply replace my losses. I have a curious fancy ; I will go set two or three acorns, and judge by their success in growing whether I shall succeed in clearing my way or not. I have a little toothach keeps me from working much to-day—besides I sent off copy for Napoleon."

The price received for *Woodstock* shews what eager competition had been called forth among the booksellers, when,

after the lapse of several years, Constable's monopoly of Sir Walter's novels was abolished by their common calamity. The interest excited, not only in Scotland and England, but all over civilized Europe, by the news of Scott's misfortunes, must also have had its influence in quickening this commercial rivalry. The reader need hardly be told, that the first meeting of James Ballantyne & Company's creditors witnessed the transformation, a month before darkly prophesied, of the "Great Unknown" into the "Too-well-known." Even for those who had long ceased to entertain any doubt as to the main source at least of the Waverley romances, there would have been something stirring in the first confession of the author; but it in fact included the avowal, that he had stood alone in the work of creation; and when the mighty claim came in the same breath with the announcement of personal ruin, the effect on the community of Edinburgh was electrical. It is, in my opinion, not the least striking feature in his Diary, that it contains no allusion (save the ominous one of 18th December) to this long withheld revelation. He notes his painful anticipation of returning to the Parliament-House—*monstrari digito*—as an insolvent. It does not seem even to have occurred to him, that when he appeared there the morning after his creditors had heard his confession, there could not be many men in the place but must gaze on his familiar features with a mixture of curiosity, admiration, and sympathy, of which a hero in the moment of victory might have been proud—which might have swelled the heart of a martyr as he was bound to the stake. The universal feeling was, I believe, much what the late amiable and accomplished Earl of Dudley expressed to Mr Morritt when these news reached them at Brighton.—"Scott ruined!" said he, "the author of Waverley ruined! Good God! let every man to whom he has given months of delight give him a sixpence, and he will rise to-morrow morning richer than Rothschild!"

It is no wonder that the book, which it was known he had been writing during this crisis of distress, should have been expected with solicitude. Shall we find him, asked thousands, to have been master truly of his genius in the moment of this ordeal? Shall we trace anything of his own experiences in the construction of his imaginary personages and events?—I know not how others interpreted various passages in Woodstock, but there were not a few that carried deep meaning for such of Scott's own friends as were acquainted with, not his pecuniary misfortune alone, but the drooping health of his wife, and the consolation afforded him by the dutiful devotion of his daughter Anne, in whose character and demeanour a change had occurred exactly similar to that painted in poor Alice Lee: "A light joyous air, with something of a humorous expression, which seemed to be looking for amusement, had vanished before the touch of affliction, and a calm melancholy supplied its place, which seemed on the watch to administer comfort to others." In several *mottoes*, and other scraps of verse, the curious reader will find similar traces of the facts and feelings recorded in the author's Diary. As to the novel itself, though none can pretend to class it in the very highest rank of his works, since we feel throughout the effects of the great fundamental error, likened by a contemporary critic to that of the writer who should lay his scene at Rome immediately after the battle of Philippi, and introduce Brutus as the survivor in that conflict, and Cicero as his companion in victory; yet even this censor is forced to allow that Woodstock displays certain excellencies, not exemplified in all the author's fictions, and which attest, more remarkably than any others could have done, the complete self-possession of the mind when composing it. The success of the book was great: large as the price was, its publishers had no reason to repent their bargain; and of course the rapid receipt of such a sum as L.8000, the product of

hardly three months' labour, highly gratified the body of creditors, whose debtor had devoted to them whatever labour his health should henceforth permit him to perform.

His Diary shews that he very soon began another work of fiction; and that he from the first designed the *Chronicles of the Canongate* to be published by Mr Robert Cadell. That gentleman's connexion with Constable was, from circumstances of which the reader may have traced various little indications, not likely to be renewed after the catastrophe of their old copartnership. They were now endeavouring to establish themselves in separate businesses; and each was, of course, eager to secure the countenance of Sir Walter. He did not hesitate a moment. In the prudence at least of the senior there could no longer be any confidence; and Cadell's frank conduct in warning him against Constable's last mad proposal about a guarantee for L.20,000, had produced a strong impression.

The progress of the domestic story will be best given by a few more extracts from the Diary:—

"*April* 8.—We expect a *raid* of folks to visit us this morning, whom we must have *dined* before our misfortunes. Save time, wine, and money, these misfortunes—and so far are convenient things—Besides, there is a dignity about them when they come only like the gout in its mildest shape, to authorize diet and retirement, the night-gown and the velvet shoe:—when the one comes to chalk-stones and you go to prison through the other, it is the devil. Or compare the effects of Sieur Gout and absolute poverty upon the stomach—the necessity of a bottle of laudanum in the one case, the want of a morsel of meat in the other. Laidlaw's infant, which died on Wednesday, is buried to-day. The people coming to visit prevent my going—and I am glad of it. I hate funerals—always did;—there is such a mixture of mummery with real grief—the actual mourner perhaps heart-broken, and all the rest making solemn faces, and whispering observations on the weather and public

news, and here and there a greedy fellow enjoying the cake and wine. I saw the poor child's funeral from a distance. Ah, that *Distance!* What a magician for conjuring up scenes of joy or sorrow, smoothing all asperities, reconciling all incongruities, veiling all absurdities, softening every coarseness, doubling every effect by the influence of the imagination. A Scottish wedding should be seen at a distance;—the gay band of dancers just distinguished amid the elderly group of the spectators—the glass held high, and the distant cheers as it is swallowed, should be only a sketch, not a finished Dutch picture, when it becomes brutal and boorish. Scotch psalmody, too, should be heard from a distance. The grunt and the snivel, and the whine and the scream, should all be blended in that deep and distant sound, which, rising and falling like the Eolian harp, may have some title to be called the praise of one's Maker. Even so the distant funeral: the few mourners on horseback, with their plaids wrapt around them—the father heading the procession as they enter the river, and pointing out the ford by which his darling is to be carried on the last long road—none of the subordinate figures in discord with the general tone of the incident, but seeming just accessions, and no more; this *is* affecting.

"*April* 24.—Constable is sorely broken down.

> 'Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
> That's sorry yet for thee.'

His conduct has not been what I deserved at his hand; but I believe that, walking blindfold himself, he misled me without *malice prepense.* It is best to think so at least, until the contrary be demonstrated. To nourish angry passions against a man whom I really liked, would be to lay a blister on my own heart.

"*May* 6.—The same scene of hopeless (almost) and unavailing anxiety. Still welcoming me with a smile, and asserting she is better. I fear the disease is too deeply

entwined with the principles of life. I am a tolerable Stoic, but preach to myself in vain.

> 'Are these things, then, necessities?
> Then let us meet them like necessities.'

"*May* 11. Charlotte was unable to take leave of me, being in a sound sleep, after a very indifferent night. Perhaps it was as well. Emotion might have hurt her; and nothing I could have expressed would have been worth the risk. I have foreseen, for two years and more, that this menaced event could not be far distant. I have seen plainly, within the last two months, that recovery was hopeless. And yet to part with the companion of twenty-nine years, when so very ill—that I did not, could not foresee. It withers my heart to think of it, and to recollect that I can hardly hope again to seek confidence and counsel from that ear to which all might be safely confided."

His niece Miss Anne Scott (daughter of Thomas) had kindly arrived before he was thus forced to quit the scene, and repair alone to his new lodgings in Edinburgh:—

"*Diary—Mrs Brown's Lodgings, North St David Street.*—*May* 14.—A fair good-morrow to you, Mr Sun, who are shining so brightly on these dull walls. Methinks you look as if you were looking as bright on the banks of the Tweed; but look where you will, Sir Sun, you look upon sorrow and suffering.—Hogg was here yesterday in danger, from having obtained an accommodation of L.100 from James Ballantyne, which he is now obliged to repay. I am unable to help the poor fellow, being obliged to borrow myself. But I long ago remonstrated against the transaction at all, and gave him L.50 out of my pocket to avoid granting the accommodation,—but it did no good.

"*May* 15.—Received the melancholy intelligence that all is over at Abbotsford.

"*Abbotsford*, *May* 16.—She died at nine in the morn-

ing, after being very ill for two days—easy at last. I arrived here late last night. Anne is worn out, and has had hysterics, which returned on my arrival. Her broken accents were like those of a child—the language as well as the tones broken, but in the most gentle voice of submission. 'Poor mamma—never return again—gone for ever—a better place.' Then, when she came to herself, she spoke with sense, freedom, and strength of mind, till her weakness returned. It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger—what was it then to the father and the husband? For myself, I scarce know how I feel—sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the water that breaks on it. I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is, with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne; an impoverished, an embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone.—Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.

"I have seen her. The figure I beheld is, and is not, my Charlotte—my thirty years' companion. There is the same symmetry of form, though those limbs are rigid which were once so gracefully elastic—but that yellow masque, with pinched features, which seems to mock life rather than emulate it,—can it be the face that was once so full of lively expression? I will not look on it again. Anne thinks her little changed, because the latest idea she had formed of her mother is as she appeared under circumstances of extreme pain—mine go back to a period of comparative ease. If I write long in this way, I shall write down my resolution, which I should rather write up if I could. I wonder how I shall do with the large portion of thoughts

which were hers for thirty years. I suspect they will be hers yet, for a long time at least. But I will not blaze cambric and crape in the public eye like a disconsolate widower, that most affected of all characters.

"*May* 18.—Another day, and a bright one to the external world, again opens on us; the air soft, and the flowers smiling, and the leaves glittering. They cannot refresh her to whom mild weather was a natural enjoyment. Cerements of lead and of wood already hold her—cold earth must have her soon. But it is not my Charlotte—it is not the bride of my youth, the mother of my children, that will be laid among the ruins of Dryburgh, which we have so often visited in gaiety and pastime—No! no! She is sentient and conscious of my emotions somewhere—somehow: *where* we cannot tell; *how* we cannot tell; yet would I not at this moment renounce the mysterious yet certain hope that I shall see her in a better world, for all that this world can give me. The necessity of this separation—that necessity which rendered it even a relief,—that and patience must be my comfort. I do not experience those paroxysms of grief which others do on the same occasion. I can exert myself, and speak even cheerfully with the poor girls. But alone, or if anything touches me,—the choking sensation. I have been to her room: there was no voice in it—no stirring; the pressure of the coffin was visible on the bed, but it had been removed elsewhere; all was neat, as she loved it, but all was calm—calm as death. I remembered the last sight of her: she raised herself in bed, and tried to turn her eyes after me, and said, with a sort of smile, 'You all have such melancholy faces.' These were the last words I ever heard her utter, and I hurried away, for she did not seem quite conscious of what she said; when I returned, immediately departing, she was in a deep sleep. It is deeper now. This was but seven days since.

"They are arranging the chamber of death—that which

was long the apartment of connubial happiness, and of whose arrangements (better than in richer houses) she was so proud. They are treading fast and thick. For weeks you could have heard a foot-fall. Oh, my God!

"*May* 19.—Anne, poor love, is ill with her exertions and agitation—cannot walk—and is still hysterical, though less so. We speak freely of her whom we have lost, and mix her name with our ordinary conversation. This is the rule of nature. All primitive people speak of their dead, and I think virtuously and wisely. The idea of blotting the names of those who are gone out of the language and familiar discourse of those to whom they were dearest, is one of the rules of ultra-civilization, which in so many instances strangle natural feeling by way of avoiding a painful sensation. The Highlanders speak of their dead children as freely as of their living members—how poor Colin or Robert would have acted in such or such a situation. It is a generous and manly tone of feeling; and so far as it may be adopted without affectation or contradicting the general habits of society, I reckon on observing it.

"*May* 20.—To-night, I trust, will bring Charles or Lockhart, or both. Sophia's baby was christened on Sunday 14th May, at Brighton, by the name of Walter Scott. May God give him life and health to wear it with credit to himself and those belonging to him! Melancholy to think that the next morning after this ceremony deprived him of so near a relation!

May 22.—Lockhart doubtful if Sophia's health will let him be here. Charles arrived last night, much affected, of course. Anne had a return of her fainting-fits on seeing him, and again upon seeing Mr Ramsay,[1] the gentleman who performs the service. I heard him do so with the utmost propriety for my late friend, Lady Alvanley,[2]

[1] The Rev. E. B. Ramsay, now Dean of Edinburgh.

[2] Lady Alvanley died at Edinburgh, in January 1825.

the arrangement of whose funeral devolved upon me. How little I could guess when, where, and with respect to whom, I should next hear those solemn words. Well, I am not apt to shrink from that which is my duty, merely because it is painful; but I wish this day over. A kind of cloud of stupidity hangs about me, as if all were unreal that men seem to be doing and talking about——

"*May* 23.—About an hour before the mournful ceremony of yesterday, Walter arrived, having travelled express from Ireland on receiving the news. He was much affected, poor fellow,—and no wonder. Poor Charlotte nursed him, and perhaps for that reason she was over partial to him. The whole scene floats as a sort of dream before me—the beautiful day, the grey ruins covered and hidden among clouds of foliage and flourish, where the grave, even in the lap of beauty, lay lurking, and gaped for its prey. Then the grave looks, the hasty important bustle of men with spades and mattocks—the train of carriages—the coffin containing the creature that was so long the dearest on earth to me, and whom I was to consign to the very spot which in pleasure-parties we so frequently visited. It seems still as if this could not be really so. But it is so—and duty to God and to my children must teach me patience. Poor Anne has had longer fits since our arrival from Dryburgh than before, but yesterday was the crisis. She desired to hear prayers read by Mr Ramsay, who performed the duty in the most solemn manner. But her strength could not carry it through. She fainted before the service was concluded.

"*May* 24.—Slept wretchedly, or rather waked wretchedly all night, and was very sick and bilious in consequence, and scarce able to hold up my head with pain. A walk, however, with my sons, did me a deal of good;—indeed their society is the greatest support the world can afford me. Their ideas of everything are so just and honourable, kind towards their sisters, and affectionate to me, that I

must be grateful to God for sparing them to me, and continue to battle with the world for their sakes, if not for my own.

"*May* 25.—I had sound sleep to-night, and waked with little or nothing of the strange dreamy feeling which had made me for some days feel like one bewildered in a country where mist or snow has disguised those features of the landscape which are best known to him—This evening Walter left us, being anxious to return to his wife as well as to his regiment.

"*May* 26.—A rough morning makes me think of St George's Channel, which Walter must cross to-night or to-morrow to get to Athlone. His absence is a great blank in our circle, especially I think to his sister Anne, to whom he shews invariably much kindness. But indeed they do so without exception each towards the other; and in weal or wo have shewn themselves a family of love. I will go to town on Monday and resume my labours. Being now of a grave nature, they cannot go against the general temper of my feelings, and in other respects the exertion, as far as I am concerned, will do me good; besides I must rëestablish my fortune for the sake of the children, and of my own character. I have not leisure to indulge the disabling and discouraging thoughts that press on me. Were an enemy coming upon my house, would I not do my best to fight, although oppressed in spirits? and shall a similar despondency prevent me from mental exertion? It shall not, by Heaven! This day and to-morrow I give to the currency of the ideas which have of late occupied my mind, and with Monday they shall be mingled at least with other thoughts and cares.—

"*Abbotsford, Saturday, June* 17.—Left Edinburgh to-day, after Parliament-House. My two girls met me at Torsonce, which was a pleasant surprise, and we returned in the sociable altogether. Found everything right and well at Abbotsford under the new regime. I again took

possession of the family bed-room, and my widowed couch. This was a sore trial, but it was necessary not to blink such a resolution. Indeed, I did not like to have it thought that there is any way in which I can be beaten.

"*September* 12.—I begin to fear Nap. will swell to seven volumes.—As I slept for a few minutes in my chair, to which I am more addicted than I could wish, I heard, as I thought, my poor wife call me by the familiar name of fondness which she gave me. My recollections on waking were melancholy enough. These be

'The airy tongues that syllable men's names.'

"*September* 13.—Wrote my task in the morning, and thereafter had a letter from the sage Privy-counsellor ——. He proposes to me that I shall propose to the —— of ——, and offers his own right honourable intervention to bring so beautiful a business to bear. I am struck dumb—absolutely mute and speechless—and how to prevent him making me farther a fool is not easy, for he has left me no time to assure him of the absurdity of what he proposes; and if he should ever hint at such a piece of d—d impertinence, what must the lady think of my conceit or of my feelings! I will write to his present quarters, however, that he may, if possible, have warning not to continue this absurdity."[1]

Lady Scott had not been quite four months dead, and the entry of the preceding day shews how extremely ill-timed was this communication, from a gentleman with whom Sir Walter had never had any intimacy. Nor will the next entry that I extract diminish this impression. In October he resolved to make a journey to London and Paris, in both which capitals he had reason to expect important material would be submitted to him as the biographer of

[1] This was not the only proposition of the kind that reached him during his widowhood. In the present case there was very high rank and an ample fortune.

Napoleon. At starting he writes:—"*October* 11.—We are ingenious self-tormentors. This journey annoys me more than anything of the kind in my life. My wife's figure seems to stand before me, and her voice is in my ears—'Scott, do not go.' It half frightens me. Strange throbbing at my heart, and a disposition to be very sick. It is just the effect of so many feelings which had been lulled asleep by the uniformity of my life, but which awaken on any new subject of agitation. Poor, poor Charlotte!! I cannot daub it farther. I get incapable of arranging my papers too. I will go out for half an hour. God relieve me!"

His expedition was a very seasonable relief; nor was he disappointed as to its direct object. By the kindness of Earl Bathurst, Colonial Secretary of State, and the Under-secretaries, Mr Wilmot Horton and Mr Robert Hay (who were all attached friends of his) he had access to many unpublished documents preserved in Downing Street, and copious extracts were prepared under his directions. The Duke of Wellington was good enough to give him a MS. commentary of his own on the Russian campaign, and many hours of confidential conversation respecting other parts of Buonaparte's military history. At Paris he was treated with equal kindness by Marshal Macdonald, with whom he had become acquainted a few years before, when the Marshal visited his paternal kindred in Scotland; among others, Sir Walter's constant friend, Hector M'Donald Buchanan. In both cities he was received with the most marked attention. The deep and respectful sympathy with which his misfortunes, and gallant behaviour under them, had been regarded by all classes of men at home and abroad, was brought home to his perception in a way not to be mistaken. Finally, he had the satisfaction of settling his son Charles's destiny: the King personally undertaking that as soon as he had graduated at Oxford, he should be launched in the diplomatic service. I must

confine myself to a very few extracts from the Diary—which will illustrate, among other things, the range of his society on this occasion.

"*Windsor*, *October* 20.—Commanded down to pass a day at Windsor. The Lodge in the Forest, though ridiculed by connoisseurs, seems to be no bad specimen of a royal retirement, and is delightfully situated. A kind of cottage, too large perhaps for the style, but yet so managed that in the walks you only see parts of it at once, and these well composed and grouping with the immense trees. His Majesty received me with the same mixture of kindness and courtesy which has always distinguished his conduct towards me. There was no company besides the royal retinue—Lady Conyngham—her daughter—and two or three other ladies. After we left table, there was excellent music by the royal band, who lay ambushed in a green-house adjoining the apartment. The King made me sit beside him, and talk a great deal—*too much* perhaps—for he has the art of raising one's spirits, and making you forget the *retenue* which is prudent everywhere, especially at court. But he converses himself with so much ease and elegance, that you lose thoughts of the prince in admiring the well-bred and accomplished gentleman. He is in many respects the model of a British Monarch—has little inclination to try experiments on government otherwise than through his Ministers—sincerely, I believe, desires the good of his subjects—is kind towards the distressed, and moves and speaks 'every inch a king.' I am sure such a man is fitter for us than one who would long to head armies, or be perpetually intermeddling with *la grande politique*. A sort of reserve, which creeps on him daily, and prevents his going to places of public resort, is a disadvantage, and prevents his being so generally popular as is earnestly to be desired. This, I think, was much increased by the behaviour of the rabble in the brutal insanity of the Queen's trial, when John Bull, meaning the

best in the world, made such a beastly figure.—*Pall-Mall, October* 21.—Walked in the morning with Sir William Knighton, and had much confidential chat, not fit to be here set down, in case of accidents. Returned to a hasty dinner at Lockhart's, and then hurried away to see honest Dan Terry's theatre, called the Adelphi. The heat was dreadful, and Anne so unwell that she was obliged to be carried into Terry's house,—a curious dwelling no larger than a squirrel's cage, which he has contrived to squeeze out of the vacant space of the theatre, and which is accessible by a most complicated combination of staircases and small passages. There we had rare good porter and oysters after the play."

Sir Walter returned from Paris about the middle of the ensuing month—and his progress from London homewards is indicated in the following entries:—"*Oxford, November* 21.—Breakfasted with Charles in his chambers at Brazen-nose, where he had everything very neat. How pleasant it is for a father to sit at his child's board! It is like the aged man reclining under the shadow of the oak which he has planted. My poor plant has some storms to undergo, but were this expedition conducive to no more than his entrance into life under suitable auspices, I should consider the toil and the expense well bestowed.—*Nov.* 23. Slept at Macclesfield. As we came in between ten and eleven, the people of the inn expressed surprise at our travelling so late, as the general distress of the manufacturers has rendered many of the lower classes desperately outrageous.—*Nov.* 24. Breakfasted at Manchester;—pressed on—and by dint of exertion reached Kendal to sleep; thus getting out of the region of the stern, sullen, unwashed artificers, whom you see lounging sulkily along the streets in Lancashire. God's justice is requiting, and will yet farther requite, those who have blown up this country into a state of unsubstantial opulence, at the expense of the health and morals of the

lower classes.—*Abbotsford, November* 26.—Naturally reflected how much expense has increased since I first travelled. My uncle's servant, during the jaunts we made together while I was a boy, used to have his option of a shilling per diem for board wages, and usually preferred it to having his charges borne. A servant now-a-days, to be comfortable on the road, should have 4s. or 4s. 6d. board wages, which before 1790 would have maintained his master. But if this be pitiful, it is still more so to find the alteration in my own temper. When young, on returning from such a trip as I have just had, my mind would have loved to dwell on all I had seen that was rich and rare, or have been placing, perhaps, in order, the various additions with which I had supplied my stock of information—and now, like a stupid boy blundering over an arithmetical question half obliterated on his slate, I go stumbling on upon the audit of pounds, shillings, and pence. Well,—the skirmish has cost me L.200. I wished for information—and I have had to pay for it."——

On proceeding to Edinburgh to resume his official duties, Sir Walter established himself in a furnished house in Walker Street, it being impossible for him to leave his daughter alone in the country, and the aspect of his affairs being so much ameliorated that he did not think it necessary to carry the young lady to such a place as Mrs Brown's lodgings. During the six ensuing months, however, he led much the same life of toil and seclusion from company which that of Abbotsford had been during the preceding autumn—very rarely dining abroad, except with one or two intimate friends, *en famille*—still more rarely receiving even a single guest at home: all the while, in fact, he suffered great pain (enough to have disturbed effectually any other man's labours, whether official or literary) from successive attacks of rheumatism, which seems to have been fixed on him by the wet sheets of one of his French inns; and his Diary contains, besides, various indications that his consti-

tution was already shaking under the fatigue to which he had subjected it. Formerly, however great the quantity of work he put through his hands, his evenings were almost always reserved for the light reading of an elbow-chair, or the enjoyment of his family and friends. Now he seemed to grudge every minute that was not spent at the desk. The little that he read of new books, or for mere amusement, was done by snatches in the course of his meals; and to walk, when he could walk at all, to the Parliament House, and back again, through the Prince's Street Gardens, was his only exercise and his only relaxation. Every ailment, of whatever sort, ended in aggravating his lameness; and, perhaps, the severest test his philosophy encountered was the feeling of bodily helplessness that from week to week crept upon him. The winter, to make bad worse, was a very cold and stormy one. The growing sluggishness of his blood shewed itself in chilblains, not only on the feet but the fingers, and his handwriting becomes more and more cramped and confused.

He spent a few days at Abbotsford at Christmas, and several weeks during the spring vacation; but the frequent Saturday excursions were now out of the question—if for no other reason, on account of the quantity of books which he must have by him while working at his Napoleon. He says on the 30th of December—"Wrote hard. Last day of an eventful year; much evil—and some good, but especially the courage to endure what Fortunē sends, without becoming a pipe for her fingers. It is *not* the last day of the year; but to-morrow being Sunday, we hold our festival to-day. The Fergussons came, and we had the usual appliances of mirth and good cheer. Yet our party, like the chariot-wheels of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, dragged heavily.—It must be allowed that the regular recurrence of annual festivals among the same individuals has, as life advances, something in it that is melancholy. We meet like the survivors of some perilous expedition, wounded

and weakened ourselves, and looking through diminished ranks to think of those who are no more. Or they are like the feasts of the Caribs, in which they held that the pale and speechless phantoms of the deceased appeared and mingled with the living. Yet where shall we fly from vain repining?—or why should we give up the comfort of seeing our friends, because they can no longer be to us, or we to them, what we once were to each other?"

On again quitting Tweedside after the spring holidays (1827), the Diary has:—"I never could help admiring the concatenation between Ahithopel's setting his house in order and hanging himself.[1] The one seems to follow the other as a matter of course. But what frightens and disgusts me is those fearful letters from those who have been long dead, to those who linger on their wayfare through the valley of tears. Those fine lines of Spencer came into my head—

> "The shade of youthful Hope is there,
> That lingered long, and latest died;
> Ambition all dissolved to air,
> With phantom Honours by his side.
> What empty shadows glimmer nigh?
> They once were Friendship, Truth, and Love!
> Oh! die to thought, to memory die,
> Since lifeless to my heart ye prove."[2]

Ay, and can I forget the author—the frightful moral of his own vision? What is this world?—a dream within a dream: as we grow older, each step is an awakening. The youth awakes, as he thinks, from childhood—the full-grown man despises the pursuits of youth as visionary—the old man looks on manhood as a feverish dream. The grave the last sleep? No; it is the last and final awakening.

"*Edinburgh, May* 15.—It is impossible not to compare

[1] 2d Samuel, xvii. 23.

[2] "Poems by the late Honourable W. R. Spencer," p. 45.

this return to Edinburgh with others in more happy times. But we should rather recollect under what distress of mind I took up my lodgings in Mrs Brown's last summer.—Went to Court and resumed old habits. Heard the true history of ——.[1] Imagination renders us liable to be the victims of occasional low spirits. All belonging to this gifted, as it is called, but often unhappy class, must have felt, that but for the dictates of religion, or the natural recoil of the mind from the idea of dissolution, there have been times when they would have been willing to throw away life as a child does a broken toy. I am sure I know one who has often felt so. O God! what are we?—Lords of nature?—Why, a tile drops from a house-top, which an elephant would not feel more than the fall of a sheet of paste-board, and there lies his lordship. Or something of inconceivably minute origin—the pressure of a bone, or the inflammation of a particle of the brain—takes place, and the emblem of the Deity destroys himself or some one else. We hold our health and our reason on terms slighter than one would desire, were it in their choice, to hold an Irish cabin."

These are melancholy entries. Most of those from which they have been selected begin with R. for Rheumatism, or R. R. for Rheumatism redoubled, and then mark the number of leaves sent to Ballantyne—the proof-sheets corrected for press—or the calculations on which he reluctantly made up his mind to extend the Life of Buonaparte from six to seven, from seven to eight, and finally from eight to nine thick and closely-printed volumes.

During the early months of 1827, however, he executed various minor tracts also: for the Quarterly Review, an article on "Mackenzie's Life and Works of John Home, author of Douglas," which is, in fact, a rich chapter of

[1] Sir Walter had this morning heard of the suicide of a man of warm imagination, to whom, at an earlier period, he was much attached.

Scott's own early reminiscences, and gives many interesting sketches of the literary society of Scotland in the age of which Mackenzie was the last honoured relic;—and for the Foreign Quarterly Review, then newly started under the editorship of Mr R. P. Gillies, an ingenious and elaborate paper on the writings of the German novelist Hoffman. This article, it is proper to observe, was a benefaction to Mr Gillies, whose pecuniary affairs rendered such assistance very desirable. Scott's generosity in this matter—for it was exactly giving a poor brother author L.100 at the expense of considerable time and drudgery to himself—I think it necessary to mention; the date of the exertion requires it of me. But such, in fact, had been in numberless instances his method of serving literary persons who had little or no claim on him, except that they were of that class. I have not conceived it delicate to specify many things of this kind; but I am at liberty to state, that when he wrote his first article for the Encyclopædia Supplement, and the editor of that work, Mr Macvey Napier (a Whig in politics, and with whom he had hardly any personal acquaintance), brought him L.100 as his remuneration, Sir Walter said—"Now tell me frankly, if I don't take this money, does it go into your pocket or your publisher's? for it is impossible for me to accept a penny of it from a literary brother." Mr Napier assured him that the arrangements of the work were such, that the editor had nothing to do with the fund destined for contributions. Scott then pocketed his due, with the observation, that "he had trees to plant, and no conscience as to the purse of his fat friend"—to wit, Constable.

At this period, the Edinburgh Diary very seldom mentions anything that could be called a dinner-party. Skene he often styles "his good Samaritan:" he was now the usual companion of whatever walks he was willing or able to indulge in. He and his daughter partook generally once in every week the family meal of Mr and Mrs Skene; and

they did the like occasionally with a few other old friends, chiefly those of the Clerk's table. When an exception occurs, it is easy to see that the scene of social gaiety was doubly grateful from its rarity. Thus one entry, referring to a party at Mr J. A. Murray's,[1] says—" met Jeffrey, Cockburn, Rutherfurd, and others of that file. Very pleasant—capital good cheer and excellent wine—much laugh and fun. I do not know how it is, but when I am out with a party of my Opposition friends, the day is often merrier than when with our own set. Is it because they are cleverer? Jeffrey and Harry Cockburn are to be sure very extraordinary men; yet it is not owing to that entirely. I believe both parties meet with the feeling of something like novelty—we have not worn out our jests in daily contact. There is also a disposition on such occasions to be courteous, and of course to be pleased." Another evening, spent in Rose Court, seems to have given him especial delight. He says—" I wrote hard till dressing time, when I went to Will Clerk's to dinner. As a bachelor, and keeping a small establishment, he does not do these things often, but they are proportionally pleasant when they come round. He had trusted Sir Adam to bespeak his dinner, who did it *con amore*, so we had excellent cheer, and the wines were various and capital. As I before hinted, it is not every day that M'Nab mounts on horseback,[2] and so our landlord had a little of that solicitude that the party should go off well, which is very flattering to the guests. We had a very pleasant evening. The Chief-Commissioner was there, Admiral Adam, J. A. Murray, Tom Thomson, &c. &c.,—Sir Adam predominat-

[1] Afterwards Lord Advocate, and now a Judge of the Court of Session, by the title of Lord Murray.

[2] That singular personage, the late M'Nab of *that ilk*, spent his life almost entirely in a district where a boat was the usual conveyance. I suspect, however, that there is an allusion to some particular anecdote which I have not recovered.

ing at the head, and dancing what he calls his merry-andrada in great style. In short, we really laughed, and real laughter is a thing as rare as real tears. I must say, too, there was a *heart*—a kindly feeling prevailed over the party. Can London give such a dinner?—it may, but I never saw one—they are too cold and critical to be easily pleased.——I hope the Bannatyne Club will be really useful and creditable. Thomson is superintending a capital edition of Sir James Melville's Memoirs. It is brave to see how he wags his Scots tongue, and what a difference there is in the form and firmness of the language, compared to the mincing English edition in which he has hitherto been alone known."

No wonder that it should be a sweet relief from Buonaparte and Blucher to see M'Nab on horseback, and Sir Adam Fergusson in his merry-andrada exaltation, and laugh over old Scotch stories with the Chief-Commissioner, and hear Mr Thomas Thomson report progress as to the doings of the Bannatyne Club. But I apprehend every reader will see that Sir Walter was misled by his own modesty, when he doubted whether London could afford symposia of the same sort. He forgets that he had never mixed in the society of London except in the capacity of a stranger, a rare visitor, the unrivalled literary marvel of the time, and that every party at which he dined was got up expressly on his account, and constituted, whoever might be the landlord, on the natural principle of bringing together as many as the table could hold—to see and hear Sir Walter Scott. Hence, if he dined with a Minister of State, he was likely to find himself seated with half the Cabinet—if with a Bishop, half the Bench had been collected. As a matter of course, every man was anxious to gratify on so rare an occasion, as many as he could of those who, in case they were uninvited, would be likely to reproach him for the omission. The result was a crowding together of too many rival eminences; and he very seldom, indeed, wit-

nessed the delightful result so constantly produced in London by the intermingling of distinguished persons of various classes, full of facts and views new to each other—and neither chilled nor perplexed by the pernicious and degrading trickery of lionizing. But besides, it was unfair to institute any comparison between the society of comparative strangers and that of old friends dear from boyhood. He could not have his Clerks and Fergussons both in Edinburgh and in London. Enough, however, of commentary on a very plain text.

That season was further enlivened by one public dinner, and this, though very briefly noticed in Scott's Diary, occupied a large space in public attention at the time, and, I believe I may add, several columns in every newspaper in Europe. His good friend William Murray, manager of the Edinburgh Theatre, invited him to preside at the first festival of a charitable fund for decayed performers. He agreed, and on Friday the 23d February took the chair, being supported by the Earl of Fife, Lord Meadowbank, Sir John Hope of Pinkie, Admiral Adam, Robert Dundas of Arniston, *Peter* Robertson, and many other personal friends. Lord Meadowbank had come on short notice, and was asked abruptly on his arrival to take a toast which had been destined for a noble person who had not been able to appear. He knew that this was the first public dinner at which the object of the toast had appeared since his misfortunes, and taking him aside in the anteroom, asked him whether he would now consider it indelicate to hazard a distinct reference to the parentage of the Waverley Novels. Sir Walter smiled, and said, "Do just as you like—only don't say much about so old a story."—In the course of the evening the Judge rose accordingly, and said—

"I would beg leave to propose a toast—the health of one of the Patrons. The clouds have been dispelled—the *darkness visible* has been cleared away—and the Great Unknown—the minstrel of our native land—the mighty magician who has rolled back the

current of time, and conjured up before our living senses the men and the manners of days which have long passed away, stands revealed to the eyes and the hearts of his affectionate and admiring countrymen. We owe to him, as a people, a large and heavy debt of gratitude. He it is who has opened to foreigners the grand and characteristic beauties of our country;—it is to him that we owe that our gallant ancestors and illustrious patriots have obtained a fame no longer confined to the boundaries of a remote and comparatively obscure country—he it is who has conferred a new reputation on our national character, and bestowed on Scotland an imperishable name, were it only by her having given birth to himself. I propose the health of Sir Walter Scott."

Long before Lord Meadowbank ceased speaking, the company had got upon chairs and tables, and the storm of applause that ensued was deafening. When they recovered from the first fever, Sir Walter spoke as follows:—

"I certainly did not think, in coming here to-day, that I should have the task of acknowledging before 300 gentlemen, a secret which, considering that it was communicated to more than twenty people, has been remarkably well kept. I am now at the bar of my country, and may be understood to be on trial before Lord Meadowbank as an offender; and so quietly did all who were *airt and pairt* conduct themselves, that I am sure that, were the *panel* now to stand on his defence, every impartial jury would bring in a verdict of *Not Proven.* I am willing, however, to plead *guilty*—nor shall I detain the Court by a long explanation why my confession has been so long deferred. Perhaps caprice might have a considerable share in the matter. I have now to say, however, that the merits of these works, if they had any, and their faults, are all entirely imputable to myself. Like another Scottish criminal of more consequence, one Macbeth,

'I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not.'—

—I have thus far unbosomed myself, and I know that my confession will be reported to the public. I mean, then, seriously to state, that when I say I am the author, I mean the total and undivided author. With the exception of quotations, there is not a single word that was not derived from myself, or suggested in the

course of my reading. The wand is now broken, and the book buried. You will allow me further to say, with Prospero, it is your breath that has filled my sails, and to crave one single toast in the capacity of the author of these novels. I would fain dedicate a bumper to the health of one who has represented several of those characters, of which I had endeavoured to give the skeleton, with a truth and liveliness for which I may well be grateful. I beg leave to propose the health of my friend Bailie Nicol Jarvie—and I am sure, that when the author of Waverley and Rob Roy drinks to Nicol Jarvie, it will be received with the just applause to which that gentleman has always been accustomed,—nay, that you will take care that on the present occasion it shall be PRO—DI—GI—OUS!" (Long and vehement applause.)

Mr MACKAY.—"My conscience! My worthy father the deacon could never have believed that his son would hae sic a compliment paid to him by the Great Unknown!"

SIR WALTER SCOTT.—"The Small Known now, Mr Bailie!"

The reader may, perhaps, expect that I should endeavour to name the "upwards of twenty persons" whom Sir Walter alluded to on this occasion as having been put into the secret of the Waverley Novels, previously, and without reference, to the catastrophe of 1826. I am by no means sure that I can give the complete list: but in addition to immediate members of the author's own family—(including his mother and his brother Thomas)—there were Constable, Cadell, the two Ballantynes—two persons employed in the printing-office, namely Daniel M'Corkindale and Daniel Robertson—Mr Terry, Mr Laidlaw, Mr Train, and Mr G. H. Gordon—Charles Duke of Buccleuch, Lady Louisa Stuart, Lord Montagu, Lord and Lady Polwarth, Lord Kinnedder, Sir Adam Fergusson, Mr Morritt, Mr and Mrs Skene, Mr William Clerk, Mr Rose, Mr Hay Donaldson, Mr Thomas Shortreed, Mr John Richardson, and Mr Thomas Moore.

We now reach the completion of that severe task—the *Life of Napoleon:* and following instantly, the commencement of the charming *Tales of a Grandfather.*

"*Diary.*—*June* 5.—Proofs. Parliament House till two. Commenced the character of Buonaparte. To-morrow being a Teind-day, I may hope to get it finished.—*June* 10.—Rose with the odd consciousness of being free of my daily task. I have heard that the fish-women go to church of a Sunday with their creels new washed, and a few stones in them for ballast, just because they cannot walk steadily without their usual load. I feel something like them, and rather inclined to take up some light task, than to be altogether idle. I have my proof-sheets, to be sure; but what are these to a whole day? A good thought came in my head to write Stories for little Johnnie Lockhart, from the History of Scotland, like those taken from the History of England. But I will not write mine quite so simply as Croker has done.[1] I am persuaded both children and the lower class of readers hate books which are written *down* to their capacity, and love those that are composed more for their elders and betters. I will make, if possible, a book that a child shall understand, yet a man will feel some temptation to peruse should he chance to take it up. It will require, however, a simplicity of style not quite my own. The grand and interesting consists in ideas, not in words. A clever thing of this kind might have a race."

I received, some years ago, from a very modest and intelligent young man, the late Mr Robert Hogg (a nephew of the Ettrick Shepherd), employed in 1827 as a *reader* in Ballantyne's printing-office, a letter from which I must give an extract:—"Having been for a few days employed

[1] The following note accompanied a copy of the First Series of the Tales of a Grandfather:—

"*To the Right Hon. J. W. Croker.*

"My Dear Croker,—I have been stealing from you, and as it seems the fashion to compound felony, I send you a sample of the *swag*, by way of stopping your mouth......Always yours,

W. Scott."

by Sir Walter Scott, when he was finishing his Life of Buonaparte, to copy papers connected with that work, and to write occasionally to his dictation, it may perhaps be in my power to mention some circumstances relative to Sir Walter's habits of composition, which could not fall under the observation of any one except a person in the same situation with myself. When I waited upon him to be informed of the business in which he needed my assistance, he asked me to attend him the next morning at six o'clock. I was punctual, and found Sir Walter already busy writing. He appointed my tasks, and again sat down at his own desk. We continued to write during the regular work hours till six o'clock in the evening, without interruption, except to take breakfast and dinner, which were served in the room beside us, so that no time was lost. I had no notion it was possible for any man to undergo the fatigue of composition for so long a time at once, and Sir Walter acknowledged he did not usually subject himself to so much exertion, though it seemed to be only the manual part of the operation that occasioned him any inconvenience. Once or twice he desired me to relieve him, and dictated while I wrote. I have performed the same service to several other persons, most of whom walked up and down the apartment while excogitating what was to be committed to writing; they sometimes stopt, too, and, like those who fail in a leap and return upon their course to take the advantage of another race, endeavoured to hit upon something additional by perusing over my shoulder what was already set down,—mending a phrase, perhaps, or recasting a sentence, till they should recover their wind. None of these aids were necessary to Sir Walter: his thoughts flowed easily and felicitously, without any difficulty to lay hold of them, or to find appropriate language; which was evident by the absence of all solicitude (*miseria cogitandi*) from his countenance. He sat in his chair, from

which he rose now and then, took a volume from the book-case, consulted it, and restored it to the shelf—all without intermission in the current of ideas, which continued to be delivered with no less readiness than if his mind had been wholly occupied with the words he was uttering. It soon became apparent to me, however, that he was carrying on two distinct trains of thought, one of which was already arranged, and in the act of being spoken, while at the same time he was in advance considering what was afterwards to be said. This I discovered by his sometimes introducing a word which was wholly out of place—*entertained* instead of *denied*, for example,—but which I presently found to belong to the next sentence, perhaps four or five lines farther on, which he had been preparing at the very moment that he gave me the words of the one that preceded it. Extemporaneous orators of course, and no doubt many writers, think as rapidly as was done by Sir Walter; but the mind is wholly occupied with what the lips are uttering or the pen is tracing. I do not remember any other instance in which it could be said that two threads were kept hold of at once—connected with each other indeed, but grasped at different points."

The *Life of Buonaparte*, then, was at last published about the middle of June 1827. Two years had elapsed since Scott began it; but, by a careful comparison of dates, I have arrived at the conclusion that, his expeditions to Ireland and Paris, and the composition of novels and critical miscellanies, being duly allowed for, the historical task occupied hardly more than twelve months. The book was closely printed; in fact, if it had been printed on the original model of his novels, the life of Buonaparte would have filled from thirteen to fourteen volumes: the work of one twelvemonth—done in the midst of pain, sorrow, and ruin.

The general curiosity with which it was expected, and

the satisfaction with which high and candid minds perused it, cannot be better described than in the words of the author's most illustrious literary contemporary.

"Walter Scott," says Goethe, "passed his childhood among the stirring scenes of the American War, and was a youth of seventeen or eighteen when the French Revolution broke out. Now well advanced in the fifties, having all along been favourably placed for observation, he proposes to lay before us his views and recollections of the important events through which he has lived. The richest, the easiest, the most celebrated narrator of the century, undertakes to write the history of his own time.

"What expectations the announcement of such a work must have excited in me, will be understood by any one who remembers that I, twenty years older than Scott, conversed with Paoli in the twentieth year of my age, and with Napoleon himself in the sixtieth.

"Through that long series of years, coming more or less into contact with the great doings of the world, I failed not to think seriously on what was passing around me, and, after my own fashion, to connect so many extraordinary mutations into something like arrangement and interdependence.

"What could now be more delightful to me, than leisurely and calmly to sit down and listen to the discourse of such a man, while clearly, truly, and with all the skill of a great artist, he recalls to me the incidents on which through life I have meditated, and the influence of which is still daily in operation?"—*Kunst und Altherthum.*

The lofty impartiality with which Scott treats the personal character of Buonaparte, was of course sure to make all ultra-politicians both at home and abroad condemn his representation; and an equally general and better founded exception was taken to the lavish imagery of his historical style. He despised the former clamour—to the latter he bowed submissive. He could not, whatever character he might wish to assume, cease to be one of the greatest of poets. Metaphorical illustrations, which men born with prose in their souls hunt for painfully, and find only to

murder, were to him the natural and necessary offspring and playthings of ever-teeming fancy. He could not write a note to his printer—he could not speak to himself in his Diary—without introducing them. Few will say that his historical style is, on the whole, excellent—none that it is perfect; but it is completely unaffected, and therefore excites nothing of the unpleasant feeling with which we consider the elaborate artifices of a far greater historian—the greatest that our literature can boast—Gibbon. The rapidity of the execution infers many inaccuracies as to minor matters of fact; but it is nevertheless true that no inaccuracy affecting the character of the book as a fair record of great events, has to this hour been detected by the malevolent ingenuity of Jacobin or Buonapartist. Even the most hostile examiners were obliged to acknowledge that the gigantic career of their idol had been traced, in its leading features, with wonderful truth and spirit. No civilian, it was universally admitted, had ever before described modern battles and campaigns with any approach to his daring and comprehensive felicity. The public, ever unwilling to concede a new species of honour to a name already covered with distinction, listened eagerly for a while to the indignant reclamations of nobodies, whose share in mighty transactions had been omitted, or slightly misrepresented; but, ere long, all these pompous rectifications were summed up—and found to constitute nothing but a contemptible monument of self-deluding vanity. The work, devoured at first with breathless delight, had a shade thrown over it for a time by the pertinacious blustering of these angry Lilliputians; but it has now emerged, slowly and surely, from the mist of suspicion—and few, whose opinions deserve much attention, hesitate to avow their conviction that, whoever may be the Polybius of the modern Hannibal, posterity will recognise his Livy in Scott.

Woodstock, as we have seen, placed upwards of L.8000 in the hands of Sir Walter's creditors. The Napoleon

(first and second editions) produced for them a sum which it even now startles me to mention,—L.18,000. As by the time the historical work was published, nearly half of the First Series of Chronicles of the Canongate had been written, it is obvious that the amount to which Scott's literary industry, from the close of 1825, to the 10th of June 1827, had diminished his debt, cannot be stated at less than L.28,000. Had health been spared him, how soon must he have freed himself from all his encumbrances!

CHAPTER VI.

Death of Constable—Controversy with Gourgaud—Excursion to Durham—Publication of the Chronicles of the Canongate and Tales of a Grandfather—Religious Discourses—Fair Maid of Perth—Anne of Geierstein—Threatening of Apoplexy—Death of Thomas Purdie.—1827–1829.

MY wife and I spent the summer of 1827, partly at a sea-bathing place near Edinburgh, and partly in Roxburghshire. The arrival of his daughter and her children at Portobello was a source of constant refreshment to Scott during June; for every other day he came down and dined there, and strolled about afterwards on the beach; thus interrupting, beneficially for his health, and I doubt not for the result of his labours also, the new custom of regular night-work, or, as he called it, of serving double-tides. When the Court released him, and he returned to Abbotsford, his family did what they could to keep him to his ancient evening habits; but nothing was so useful as the presence of his invalid grandson. The poor child was at this time so far restored as to be able to sit his pony again; and Sir Walter, who had, as the reader has observed, conceived, the very day he finished Napoleon, the notion of putting together a series of Tales on the history of Scotland, somewhat in the manner of Mr Croker's on that of England, rode daily among the woods with his "Hugh Littlejohn," and told the story, and ascertained that it suited the comprehension of boyhood, before he reduced it to writing. Sibyl Grey had been dismissed in consequence of the accident at the Catrail; and he had now stooped his pride to a sober, steady creature, of very humble blood; dun, with black mane and legs; by name Douce Davie,

alias the Covenanter. This, the last of his steeds, by the way, had been previously in the possession of a jolly old laird near Peebles, and acquired a distinguished reputation by its skill in carrying him home safely when drunk. Douce Davie, on such occasions, accommodated himself to the swerving balance of his rider with such nice discrimination, that on the laird's death the country people expected a vigorous competition for the sagacious animal; but the club-companions of the defunct stood off to a man when it was understood that the Sheriff coveted the succession.

The Chronicles of the Canongate proceeded *pari passu* with these historical tales; and both works were published before the end of the year. He also superintended, at the same time, the first collection of his Prose Miscellanies, in six volumes 8vo.—several articles being remodelled and extended to adapt them for a more permanent sort of existence than had been originally thought of. Moreover, he penned that autumn his beautiful and instructive Article on the Planting of Waste Lands, which is indeed no other than a precious chapter of his autobiography. What he wrote of new matter between June and December, fills from five to six volumes in the late uniform edition of his works; but all this was light and easy after the perilous drudgery of the preceding eighteen months.

On the 22d of July, his Diary notes the death of Mr Constable:—" This might have been a most important thing to me if it had happened some years ago, and I should then have lamented it much. He has lived to do me some injury; yet, excepting the last L.5000, I think most unintentionally. He was a prince of booksellers. Constable was a violent tempered man with those he dared use freedom with. He was easily overawed by people of consequence; but, as usual, took it out of those whom poverty made subservient to him. Yet he was generous, and far from bad-hearted:—in person good-looking, but

very corpulent latterly; a large feeder, and deep drinker, till his health became weak. He died of water in the chest, which the natural strength of his constitution set long at defiance. I have no great reason to regret him; yet I do. If he deceived me, he also deceived himself."

Constable's spirit had been effectually broken by his downfall. To stoop from being *primus absque secundo* among the Edinburgh booksellers, to be the occupant of an obscure closet of a shop, without capital, without credit, all his mighty undertakings abandoned or gone into other hands, exeept indeed his Miscellany, which he had now no resources for pushing on in the fashion he once contemplated,—this reverse was too much for that proud heart. He no longer opposed a determined mind to the ailments of the body, and sunk on the 21st of this month, having, as I am told, looked, long ere he took to his bed, at least ten years older than he was. He died in his 54th year; but into that space he had crowded vastly more than the usual average of zeal and energy, of hilarity and triumph, and perhaps of anxiety and misery.

Of the 10th of August—when the news of Mr Canning's death reached Abbotsford—and the day following, are these entries: "The death of the Premier is announced—late George Canning—the witty, the accomplished, the ambitious;—he who had toiled thirty years, and involved himself in the most harassing discussions, to attain this dizzy height; he who had held it for three months of intrigue and obloquy—and now a heap of dust, and that is all.—No man possessed a gayer and more playful wit in society; no one, since Pitt's time, had more commanding sarcasm in debate; in the House of Commons he was the terror of that species of orators called the Yelpers. His lash fetched away both skin and flesh, and would have penetrated the hide of a rhinoceros. In his conduct as a statesman he had a great fault: he lent himself too willingly to intrigue. The last composition with the Whigs was a

sacrifice of principle on both sides. To me Canning was always personally most kind. My nerves have for these two or three last days been susceptible of an acute excitement from the slightest causes; the beauty of the evening, the sighing of the summer breeze, bring the tears into my eyes not unpleasantly. But I must take exercise, and case-harden myself. There is no use in encouraging these moods of the mind."

He received about this time a visit from Mr J. L. Adolphus; who had not seen him since 1824—and says:—

"Calamity had borne heavily upon Sir Walter in the interval; but the painful and anxious feeling with which a friend is approached for the first time under such circumstances, gave way at once to the unassumed serenity of his manner. There were some signs of age about him which the mere lapse of time would scarcely have accounted for; but his spirits were abated only, not broken; if they had sunk, they had sunk equably and gently. It was a declining, not a clouded sun. I do not remember any reference to the afflictions he had suffered, except once, when, speaking of his Life of Napoleon, he said in a quiet but affecting tone, 'I could have done it better, if I could have written at more leisure, and with a mind more at ease.' One morning a party was made to breakfast at Chiefswood; and any one who on that occasion looked at and heard Sir Walter Scott, in the midst of his children and grandchildren and friends, must have rejoiced to see that life still yielded him a store of pleasures, and that his heart was as open to their influence as ever. I was much struck by a few words which fell from him on this subject a short time afterwards. After mentioning an accident which had spoiled the promised pleasure of a visit to his daughter in London, he then added—'I have had as much happiness in my time as most men, and I must not complain now.' I said, that whatever had been his share of happiness, no man could have laboured better for it. He answered—'I

consider the capacity to labour as part of the happiness I have enjoyed.'

"A substitute for walking, which he always very cheerfully used, and which at last became his only resource for any distant excursion, was a ride in a four-wheeled open carriage, holding four persons, but not absolutely limited to that number on an emergency. Tame as this exercise might be in comparison with riding on horseback, or with walking under propitious circumstances, yet as he was rolled along to Melrose, or Bowhill, or Yair, his spirits always freshened; the air, the sounds, the familiar yet romantic scenes, wakened up all the poetry of his thoughts, and happy were they who heard it resolve itself into words. At the sight of certain objects—for example, in passing the green foundations of the little chapel of Lindean, where the body of the 'Dark Knight of Liddesdale' was deposited on its way to Melrose,—it would, I suppose, have been impossible for him, unless with a companion hopelessly unsusceptible or preoccupied, to forbear some passing comment, some harping (if the word may be favourably used) on the tradition of the place. This was, perhaps, what he called 'bestowing his tediousness;' but if any one could think these effusions tedious because they often broke forth, such a man might have objected against the rushing of the Tweed, or the stirring of the trees in the wind, or any other natural melody, that he had heard the same thing before.

"Some days of my visit were marked by an almost perpetual confinement to the house; the rain being incessant. But the evenings were as bright and cheerful as the atmosphere of the days was dreary. Not that the gloomiest morning could ever be wearisome where, independently of the resources in society which the house afforded, the visitor might ransack a library, unique, I suppose, in some of its collections, and in all its departments interesting and characteristic of the founder. So

many of the volumes were enriched with anecdotes or comments in his own hand, that to look over his books was in some degree conversing with him. And sometimes this occupation was pleasantly interrupted by a snatch of actual conversation with himself, when he entered from his own room to consult or take away a book. How often have I heard with pleasure, after a long silence, the uneven step, the point of the stick striking against the floor, and then seen the poet himself emerge from his study, with a face of thought but yet of cheerfulness, followed perhaps by Nimrod, who stretched his limbs and yawned, as if tired out with some abstruse investigation.

"On one of the rainy days I have alluded to, when walking at the usual hour became hopeless, Sir Walter asked me to sit with him while he continued his morning occupation, giving me for my own employment the publications of the Bannatyne Club. His study, as I recollect it, was strictly a work-room, though an elegant one. It has been fancifully decked out in pictures, but it had, I think, very few articles of mere ornament. The chief of these was the print of Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrims, which hung over the chimney-piece, and from the place assigned to it must have been in great favour, though Sir Walter made the characteristic criticism upon it that, if the procession were to move, the young Squire who is prancing in the foreground would in another minute be over his horse's head. The shelves were stored with serviceable books; one door opened into the great library, and a hanging-stair within the room itself communicated with his bedroom. It would have been a good lesson to a desultory student, or even to a moderately active amanuensis, to see the unintermitted energy with which Sir Walter Scott applied himself to his work. I conjectured that he was at this time writing the Tales of a Grandfather. When we had sat down to our respective employments, the stillness of the room was unbroken, except by the light

rattle of the rain against the windows, and the dashing trot of Sir Walter's pen over his paper; sounds not very unlike each other, and which seemed to vie together in rapidity and continuance. Sometimes, when he stopped to consult a book, a short dialogue would take place upon the subjects with which I was occupied—about Mary Queen of Scots, perhaps, or Viscount Dundee; or, again, the silence might be broken for a moment by some merry outcry in the hall, from one of the little grandchildren, which would half waken Nimrod, or Bran, or Spice, as they slept at Sir Walter's feet, and produce a growl or a stifled bark —not in anger, but by way of protest. For matters like these, work did not proceed the worse, nor, as it seemed to me, did Sir Walter feel at all discomposed by such interruptions as a message or the entrance of a visitor. One door of his study opened into the hall, and there did not appear to be any understanding that he should not be disturbed. At the end of our morning we attempted a sortie, but had made only a little way in the shrubbery-walks overlooking the Tweed, when the rain drove us back. The river, swollen and discoloured, swept by majestically, and the sight drew from Sir Walter his favourite lines—

'I've seen Tweed's silver streams, glittering in the sunny beams,
Turn drumly and dark, as they rolled on their way.'

There could not have been a better moment for appreciating the imagery of the last line. I think it was in this short walk that he mentioned to me, with great satisfaction, the favourable prospects of his literary industry, and spoke sanguinely of retrieving his losses with the booksellers."

Towards the end of August, Sir Walter's Diary has a good deal about an affair which, however, annoyed his family much more than himself. Among the documents laid before him in the Colonial Office, when he visited London at the close of 1826, were some which represented one of Buonaparte's attendants at St Helena, General

Gourgaud, as having been guilty of gross unfairness, giving the English Government private information that the Emperor's complaints of ill-usage were utterly unfounded, and yet then, and afterwards, aiding and assisting the delusion in France as to the harshness of Sir Hudson Lowe's conduct towards his captive. Sir Walter, when using these remarkable documents, guessed that Gourgaud might be inclined to fix a personal quarrel on himself; and there now appeared in the newspapers a succession of hints that the General was seriously bent on this purpose. He applied, as *Colonel Grogg* would have done forty years before, to *The Baronet.*—He writes to William Clerk on the 27th:—"I am about to claim an especial service from you in the name of our long and intimate friendship. I understand that General Gourgaud has, or is about to set out for London, to *verify* the facts averred concerning him in my history of Napoleon. Now, in case of a personal appeal to me, I have to say that his confessions to Baron Sturmer, Count Balmain, and others at St Helena—confirmed by him in various recorded conversations with Mr Goulburn then Under-Secretary of State—were documents of a historical nature which I found with others in the Colonial Office, and was therefore perfectly entitled to use. If his language has been misrepresented, he has certainly been very unfortunate; for it has been misrepresented by four or five different people to whom he said the same things—true or false, he knows best. I also acted with delicacy towards him, leaving out whatever related to his private quarrels with Bertrand, &c., so that, in fact, he has no reason to complain of me, since it is ridiculous to suppose I was to suppress historical evidence, furnished by him voluntarily, because his present sentiments render it unpleasing for him that those which he formerly entertained should be known. Still, like a man who finds himself in a scrape, General Gourgaud may wish to fight himself out of it; and if the quarrel should be

thrust on me—why, *I will not baulk him, Jackie.* He shall not dishonour the country through my sides, I can assure him. I have, of course, no wish to bring the thing to such an arbitrement. Now, in this case, I shall have occasion for a sensible and resolute friend, and I naturally look for him in the companion of my youth, on whose firmness and sagacity I can with such perfect confidence rely."

Clerk was ready for his part:—but the General, if he had ever meditated a direct call on Scott, did not persevere. The Diary of September 10th says—"Gourgaud's wrath has burst forth in a very distant clap of thunder, in which he accuses me of contriving, with the Ministry, to slander his rag of a reputation. He be d——d for a fool, to make his case worse by stirring. I shall only revenge myself by publishing the whole extracts I made from the records of the Colonial Office, in which he will find enough to make him bite his nails." —Scott accordingly printed a brief letter, with a crushing appendix of documents. This produced a blustering rejoinder from Gourgaud; but Scott declined to prolong the paper war, simply stating in Ballantyne's print, that "while leaving the question to the decision of the British public, he should have as little hesitation in referring it to the French nation, provided the documents he had produced were allowed to be printed in the French newspapers, *from which hitherto they had been excluded.*" And he would indeed have been idle had he said more than this, for his cause had been taken up on the instant by every English journal, of whatever politics; and *The Times* thus summed up its review of the debate:—

"Sir Walter Scott did that which would have occurred to every honest man, whose fair-dealing had violent imputations cast upon it. He produced his authorities. In the General's reply there is enough, even to satiety, of declamation against the English Government,—of subterfuge and equivocation with regard to the words on record against himself,—and of gross abuse and Billings-

gate against the historian who has placarded him; but of direct and successful negative there is not one syllable. The Aide-de-camp of St Helena shews himself to be nothing better than a cross between a blusterer and a sophist."

Before Gourgaud fell quite asleep, Sir Walter received an invitation from Lord and Lady Ravensworth to meet the Duke of Wellington at their castle near Durham. The Duke was then making a progress in the north of England, to which additional importance was given by the condition of politics;—the chance of Lord Goderich's being able to maintain himself as Canning's successor seeming very precarious—and the opinion that his Grace must soon be called to the helm of State gaining ground every day. Sir Walter, who felt for the Great Captain the pure and exalted devotion that might have been expected from some honoured soldier of his banners, accepted this invitation, and witnessed a scene of enthusiasm with which its principal object could hardly have been more gratified than he was. The most remarkable feature was a grand dinner in the Episcopal Castle at Durham—that See being as yet unshorn of its Palatine magnificence. "On the 3d October," says his Diary, "we dined about one hundred and forty or fifty men—a distinguished company—

> 'Lords and Dukes and noble Princes,
> All the pride and flower of Spain.'

We dined in the old baronial hall, impressive from its rude antiquity, and fortunately free from the plaster of former improvement, as I trust it will long be from the gingerbread taste of modern Gothicizers. The bright moon streaming in through the old Gothic windows contrasted strangely with the artificial lights within; spears, banners, and armour, were intermixed with the pictures of old bishops, and the whole had a singular mixture of baronial pomp with the grave and more chastened dignity of prelacy. The conduct of our reverend entertainer suited

the character remarkably well. Amid the welcome of a Count Palatine he did not for an instant forget the gravity of the Church dignitary. All his toasts were gracefully given, and his little speeches well made, and the more affecting that the failing voice sometimes reminded us that our host laboured under the infirmities of advanced life." I was favoured at the time with a letter from Dr Philpotts (now Bishop of Exeter) who said—"I never saw curiosity and enthusiasm so highly excited, and I may add, as to a great part of the company, so nearly balanced. Sometimes I doubted whether the hero or the poet was fixing most attention—the latter, I need hardly tell you, appeared unconscious that he was regarded differently from the others about him, until the good Bishop rose and proposed his health." Another friend, the Honourable Henry Liddell, says—"Bishop Van Mildert gave his health with peculiar felicity, remarking that he could reflect upon the labours of a long literary life, with the consciousness that everything he had written tended to the practice of virtue, and to the improvement of the human race. Sir Walter replied, 'that hereafter he should always reflect with great pride upon that moment of his existence, when his health had been given *in such terms*, by the Bishop of Durham *in his own baronial hall*, surrounded and supported by the assembled aristocracy of the two northern counties, and *in the presence of the Duke of Wellington*.'"

On the 8th Sir Walter reached Abbotsford, and forthwith resumed his Grandfather's Tales, which he composed throughout with the ease and heartiness reflected in this entry:—"This morning was damp, dripping, and unpleasant; so I even made a work of necessity, and set to the Tales like a dragon. I murdered Maclellan of Bomby at the Thrieve Castle; stabbed the Black Douglas in the town of Stirling; astonished King James before Roxburgh; and stifled the Earl of Mar in his bath in the Canongate.

A wild world, my masters, this Scotland of ours must have been. No fear of want of interest; no lassitude in those days for want of work—

' For treason, d'ye see,
Was to them a dish of tea,
And murder bread and butter.' "

Such was his life in Autumn 1827. Before I leave the period, I must note how greatly I admired the manner in which all his dependents appeared to have met the reverse of his fortunes—a reverse which inferred very considerable alteration in the circumstances of every one of them. The butler, Dalgliesh, had been told when the distress came, that a servant of his class would no longer be required—but the man burst into tears, and said, rather than go he would stay without any wages: So he remained—and instead of being the easy chief of a large establishment, was now doing half the work of the house, at probably half his former salary. Old Peter, who had been for five-and-twenty years a dignified coachman, was now ploughman in ordinary, only putting his horses to the carriage upon high and rare occasions; and so on with all the rest that remained of the ancient train. And all, to my view, seemed happier than they had ever done before. Their good conduct had given every one of them a new elevation in his own mind—and yet their demeanour had gained, in place of losing, in simple humility of observance. The great loss was that of William Laidlaw, for whom (the estate being all but a fragment in the hands of the trustees and their agent) there was now no occupation here. The cottage, which his taste had converted into a loveable retreat, had found a rent-paying tenant; and he was living a dozen miles off on the farm of a relation in the Vale of Yarrow. Every week, however, he came down to have a ramble with Sir Walter over their old haunts—to hear how the pecuniary atmosphere was darkening or brightening; and to read in every face at Abbotsford, that it could

never be itself again until circumstances should permit his rëestablishment at Kaeside.

All this warm and respectful solicitude must have had a salutary influence on the mind of Scott, who may be said to have lived upon love. No man cared less about popular admiration and applause; but for the least chill on the affection of any near and dear to him he had the sensitiveness of a maiden. I cannot forget, in particular, how his eyes sparkled when he first pointed out to me Peter Mathieson guiding the plough on the haugh: "Egad," said he, "auld *Pepe*" (this was the children's name for their good friend)—"auld *Pepe's* whistling at his darg. The honest fellow said, a yoking in a deep field would do baith him and the blackies good. If things get round with me, easy shall be Pepe's cushion." In general, during that autumn, I thought Sir Walter enjoyed much his usual spirits; and often, no doubt, he did so. His Diary, however, shews (what perhaps many of his intimates doubted during his lifetime) that, in spite of the dignified equanimity which characterized all his conversation with mankind, he had his full share of the delicate sensibilities, the mysterious ups and downs, the wayward melancholy, and fantastic sunbeams of the poetical temperament. It is only with imaginative minds, in truth, that sorrows of the spirit are enduring. Those he had encountered were veiled from the eye of the world, but they lasted with his life.

The first series of Chronicles of the Canongate—(which title supplanted that of *The Canongate Miscellany, or Traditions of the Sanctuary*)—was published early in the winter. The contents were, the Highland Widow, the Two Drovers, and the Surgeon's Daughter—all in their styles excellent, except that the Indian part of the last does not well harmonize with the rest; and certain preliminary chapters which were generally considered as still better than the stories they introduce. The portraiture of Mrs Murray Keith, under the name of Mrs Bethune Baliol,

and that of Chrystal Croftangry throughout, appear to me unsurpassed in Scott's writings. In the former, I am assured he has mixed up various features of his own beloved mother; and in the latter, there can be no doubt that a good deal was taken from nobody but himself. In fact, the choice of the hero's residence, the original title of the book, and a world of minor circumstances, were suggested by painful circumstances recorded in his Diary of 1827. He had, while toiling his life out for his creditors, received various threatenings of severe treatment from the London Jews formerly alluded to, Messrs Abud and Co.; and, on at least one occasion, he made every preparation for taking shelter in the Sanctuary of Holyroodhouse. Although these people were well aware that at Christmas 1827 a very large dividend would be paid on the Ballantyne debt, they could not bring themselves to comprehend that their interest lay in allowing Scott the free use of his time; that by thwarting and harassing him personally, nothing was likely to be achieved but the throwing up of the trust, and the settlement of the insolvent house's affairs on the usual terms of a sequestration. The Jews would understand nothing, but that the very unanimity of the other creditors as to the propriety of being gentle with him, rendered it extremely probable that their own harshness might be rewarded by immediate payment of their whole demand. They fancied that the trustees would clear off any one debt, rather than disturb the arrangements generally adopted; they fancied that, in case they laid Sir Walter Scott in prison, there would be some extraordinary burst of feeling in Edinburgh—that private friends would interfere;—in short, that in one way or another, they should get hold, without farther delay, of their "pound of flesh."—Two paragraphs from the Diary will be enough as to this unpleasant subject:—

"*October* 31.—Just as I was merrily cutting away among my trees, arrives Mr Gibson with a very melancholy look, and indeed the news he brought was shocking

enough. It seems Mr Abud has given positive orders to take out diligence against me for his debt. This breaks all the measures we had resolved on, and prevents the dividend from taking place, by which many poor persons will be great sufferers. For me—the alternative will be more painful to my feelings than prejudicial to my interests. To submit to a sequestration, and allow the creditors to take what they can get, will be the inevitable consequence. This will cut short my labour by several years, which I might spend, and spend in vain, in endeavouring to meet their demands. I suppose that I, the Chronicler of the Canongate, will have to take up my residence in the Sanctuary, unless I prefer the more airy residence of the Calton Jail, or a trip to the Isle of Man. *November* 4.—Put my papers in some order, and prepared for the journey. It is in the style of the Emperors of Abyssinia, who proclaim, 'Cut down the Kantuffa in the four quarters of the world, for I know not where I am going.' Yet, were it not for poor Anne's doleful looks, I would feel firm as a piece of granite. Even the poor dogs seem to fawn on me with anxious meaning, as if there were something going on they could not comprehend. Set off at twelve, firmly resolved in body and mind. But when I arrived in Edinburgh at my faithful friend Mr Gibson's—lo! the scene had again changed, and a new hare is started."

The "new hare" was this. It transpired in the very nick of time, that a suspicion of usury attached to these Israelites in a transaction with Hurst & Robinson, as to one or more of the bills for which the house of Ballantyne had become responsible. This suspicion assumed a shape sufficiently tangible to justify that house's trustees in carrying the point before the Court of Session. Thus, though the Court decided in favour of the Abuds, time was gained; and as soon as the decision was pronounced, Scott heard also that the Jews' debt was settled. In fact, Sir William

Forbes, whose banking-house was one of Messrs Ballantyne's chief creditors, had crowned his generous efforts for Scott's relief by privately paying the whole of Abud's demand (nearly L.2000) out of his own pocket—ranking as an ordinary creditor for the amount; and taking care at the same time that his old friend should be allowed to believe that the affair had merged quietly in the general measures of the trustees. It was not until some time after Sir William's death, that Sir Walter learned what had been done on this occasion; and I may as well add here, that he died in utter ignorance of some services of a like sort which he owed to the secret liberality of three of his brethren at the Clerks' table—Hector Macdonald Buchanan, Colin Mackenzie, and Sir Robert Dundas. I ought not to omit, that as soon as Sir Walter's eldest son heard of the Abud business, he left Ireland for Edinburgh; but before he reached his father, the alarm had blown over.

This vision of the real Canongate has drawn me away from the Chronicles of Mr Croftangry. The scenery of his patrimonial inheritance was sketched from that of Carmichael, the ancient and now deserted mansion of the noble family of Hyndford; but for his strongly Scottish feelings about parting with his *land*, and stern efforts to suppress them, the author had not to go so far a-field. Christie Steele's brief character of Croftangry's ancestry, too, appears to suit well all that we have on record concerning his own more immediate progenitors of the stubborn race of Raeburn:—"They werena ill to the poor folk, sir, and that is aye something; they were just decent bein bodies. Ony poor creature that had face to beg got an awmous, and welcome; they that were shamefaced gaed by, and twice as welcome. But they keepit an honest walk before God and man, the Croftangrys; and as I said before, if they did little good, they did as little ill. They lifted their rents and spent them; called in their kain and eat them; gaed to the kirk of a Sunday; bowed civilly if

folk took aff their bannets as they gaed by, and lookit as black as sin at them that keepit them on." I shall give no offence by adding that many things in the character and manners of Mr Gideon Gray of Middlemas, in the Tale of the Surgeon's Daughter, were considered at the time by Sir Walter's neighbours on Tweedside as copied from Dr Ebenezer Clarkson of Selkirk. "He was," says the Chronicler, "of such reputation in the medical world, that he had been often advised to exchange the village and its meagre circle of practice for Edinburgh. There is no creature in Scotland that works harder, and is more poorly requited, than the country doctor, unless perhaps it may be his horse. Yet the horse is, and indeed must be, hardy, active, and indefatigable, in spite of a rough coat and indifferent condition; and so you will often find in his master, under a blunt exterior, professional skill and enthusiasm, intelligence, humanity, courage, and science." A true picture—a portrait from the life, of Scott's hard-riding, benevolent, and sagacious old friend, "to all the country dear."

These Chronicles were not received with exceeding favour at the time; and Sir Walter was a good deal discouraged. Indeed he seems to have been with some difficulty persuaded by Cadell and Ballantyne that it would not do for him to "lie fallow" as a novelist; and then, when he in compliance with their entreaties began a Second Canongate Series, they were both disappointed with his MS., and told him their opinions so plainly that his good-nature was sharply tried. The Tales which they disapproved of, were those of My Aunt Margaret's Mirror, and the Laird's Jock; he consented to lay them aside, and began St Valentine's Eve or the Fair Maid of Perth, which from the first pleased his critics. It was in the brief interval occasioned by these misgivings and debates, that his ever elastic mind threw off another charming paper for the Quarterly Review—that on Ornamental Gardening, by

way of sequel to the Essay on Planting Waste Lands. Another fruit of his leisure was a sketch of the life of George Bannatyne, the collector of ancient Scottish poetry, for the Club which bears his name.

He had taken, for that winter, the house No. 6 Shandwick Place, which he occupied by the month during the remainder of his servitude as a Clerk of Session. Very near this house, he was told a few days after he took possession, dwelt the aged mother of his first love; and he expressed to his friend Mrs Skene a wish that she should carry him to renew an acquaintance which seems to have been interrupted from the period of his youthful romance. Mrs Skene complied with his desire, and she tells me that a very painful scene ensued. His Diary says :—"*November* 7.—Began to settle myself this morning after the hurry of mind and even of body which I have lately undergone.—I went to make a visit, and fairly softened myself, like an old fool, with recalling old stories, till I was fit for nothing but shedding tears and repeating verses for the whole night. This is sad work. The very grave gives up its dead, and time rolls back thirty years to add to my perplexities. I don't care. I begin to grow case-hardened, and, like a stag turning at bay, my naturally good temper grows fierce and dangerous. Yet what a romance to tell!—and told, I fear, it will one day be. And then my three years of dreaming, and my two years of wakening, will be chronicled, doubtless. But the dead will feel no pain.—*November* 10.—Wrote out my task and little more. At twelve o'clock I went again to poor Lady Jane to talk over old stories. I am not clear that it is a right or healthful indulgence to be ripping up old sores, but it seems to give her deep-rooted sorrow words, and that is a mental blood-letting. To me these things are now matter of calm and solemn recollection, never to be forgotten, yet scarce to be remembered with pain."

A few days afterwards arrived a very agreeable piece

of intelligence. The King had not forgotten his promise with respect to the poet's second son; and Lord Dudley, then Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, was very well disposed to comply with the royal recommendation. Charles was appointed to a clerkship in the Foreign Office; and his settlement was rapidly followed by more than one fortunate incident in his father's literary and pecuniary history. The first Tales of a Grandfather appeared early in December, and their reception was more rapturous than that of any one of his works since Ivanhoe. He had solved for the first time the problem of narrating history, so as at once to excite and gratify the curiosity of youth, and please and instruct the wisest of mature minds. The popularity of the book has grown with every year that has since elapsed; it is equally prized in the library, the boudoir, the schoolroom, and the nursery; it is adopted as the happiest of manuals, not only in Scotland, but wherever the English tongue is spoken; nay, it is to be seen in the hands of old and young all over the civilized world, and has, I have little doubt, extended the knowledge of Scottish history in quarters where little or no interest had ever before been awakened as to any other parts of that subject, except those immediately connected with Mary Stuart and the Chevalier.

There had been serious doubts, in what proportions the copyright of the Novels, &c. was vested, at the moment of the common calamity, in Scott or in Constable. One of the ablest of the Scotch Judges, John Irving, Lord Newton, undertook the settlement of this complicated question, as private arbiter: and the result of his ultimate award was, that Scott had lost all hold on the copyright of the Novels from Waverley to Quentin Durward; but that Napoleon and Woodstock were wholly his. This decision, however, was not to be expected speedily: it had now become highly expedient to bring the body of copyrights to sale—and it was agreed to do so, the money to be deposited in bank until the

award were given. This sale (on 19th December 1827) comprised all the Novels from Waverley to Quentin Durward inclusive, besides a majority of the shares of the Poetical Works. Mr Cadell's family and private friends were extremely desirous to secure for him part at least of these copyrights; and Sir Walter's were not less so that he should seize this last opportunity of recovering a share in the prime fruits of his genius. The relations by this time established between him and Cadell were those of strict confidence and kindness; and both saw well that the property would be comparatively lost, were it not ensured that thenceforth the whole should be managed as one unbroken concern. The result was, that the copyrights exposed to sale were purchased, one-half for Sir Walter, the other half for Cadell, at the price of L.8500. Well might the "pockpuddings"—for so the Diary styles the English booksellers—rue their timidity on this day; but it was the most lucky one that ever came for Sir Walter's creditors. A dividend of six shillings in the pound was paid at this Christmas on their whole claims. The result of their high-hearted debtor's exertions, between January 1826 and January 1828, was in all very nearly L.40,000. No literary biographer, in all likelihood, will ever have such another fact to record. The creditors unanimously passed a vote of thanks for the indefatigable industry which had achieved so much for their behoof.

On returning to Abbotsford at Christmas, after completing these transactions, he says in his Diary—"My reflections in entering my own gate to-day were of a very different and more pleasing cast than those with which I left this place about six weeks ago. I was then in doubt whether I should fly my country, or become avowedly bankrupt, and surrender up my library and household furniture, with the liferent of my estate, to sale. A man of the world will say I had better done so. No doubt, had I taken this course at once, I might have employed the money I have

made since the insolvency of Constable and Robinson's houses in compounding my debts. But I could not have slept sound, as I now can under the comfortable impression of receiving the thanks of my creditors, and the conscious feeling of discharging my duty as a man of honour and honesty. I see before me a long, tedious, and dark path, but it leads to stainless reputation. If I die in the harrows, as is very likely, I shall die with honour; if I achieve my task, I shall have the thanks of all concerned, and the approbation of my own conscience."

He now took up in earnest two pieces of work, which promised and brought great ultimate advantage; namely, a complete collection of his Poems, with *biographical* prefaces; the other, an uniform edition of his Novels, each to be introduced by an account of the hints on which it had been founded, and illustrated throughout by historical and antiquarian annotations. On this last, commonly mentioned in the Diary as the *Magnum Opus*, Sir Walter bestowed pains commensurate with its importance;—and in the execution of the very delicate task which either scheme imposed, he has certainly displayed such a combination of frankness and modesty as entitles him to a high place in the short list of graceful autobiographers. True dignity is always simple; and perhaps true genius, of the highest class at least, is always humble. These operations took up much time; yet he laboured hard this year both as a novelist and a historian. He contributed, moreover, several articles to the Quarterly Review and the Bannatyne Club library; and to the Journal conducted by Mr Gillies, an excellent Essay on Molière; this last being again a free gift to the editor.

But the first advertisement of 1828 was of a new order; and the announcement that the Author of Waverley had *Sermons* in the press, was received perhaps with as much incredulity in the clerical world, as could have been excited among them by that of a romance from the Arch-

bishop of Canterbury. A thin octavo volume, entitled "Religious Discourses by a Layman," and having "W. S." at the foot of a short preface, did, however, issue in the course of the spring, and from the shop, that all might be in perfect keeping, of Mr Colburn, a bookseller then known almost exclusively as the standing purveyor of what is called light reading—novels of fashionable life and the like pretty ephemera. I am afraid that the Religious Discourses, too, would, but for the author's name, have had a brief existence; but the history of their composition, besides sufficiently explaining the humility of these tracts in a literary as well as a theological point of view, will, I hope, gratify most of my readers.—Sir Walter's cicerone over Waterloo, in August 1815, was a certain Major Pryse Gordon, then on half-pay, and resident at Brussels. The acquaintance, until they met at Sir Frederick Adam's table, had been slight; but the Major was exceedingly attentive during Scott's stay, and afterwards took some pains about collecting reliques of the field for Abbotsford. One evening the poet supped at his house, and there happened to sit next him the host's eldest son, then a lad of nineteen, whose appearance and situation much interested him. He had been destined for the Church of Scotland, but, as he grew up, a deafness, which had come on him in boyhood, became worse and worse, and at length his friends feared that it must incapacitate him for the clerical function. He had gone to spend the vacation with his father, and General Adam offered him a temporary appointment as a clerk in the Commissariat, which he hoped to convert into a permanent one, in case the war continued. At the time of Scott's arrival that prospect was wellnigh gone, and the young man's infirmity, his embarrassment, and other things to which his own memorandum makes no allusion, excited the visitor's sympathy. Though there were lion-hunters of no small consequence in the party, he directed most of his talk into the

poor clerk's ear-trumpet; and at parting, begged him not to forget that he had a friend on Tweedside.

A couple of years elapsed before he heard anything more of George Huntly Gordon, who then sent him his father's little *spolia* of Waterloo, and accompanied them by a letter explaining his situation, and asking advice, in a style which renewed and increased Scott's favourable impression. He had been dismissed from the Commissariat at the general reduction of our establishments, and was now hesitating whether he had better take up again his views as to the Kirk, or turn his eyes towards English orders; and in the meantime he was anxious to find some way of lightening to his parents, by his own industry, the completion of his professional education. There ensued a copious correspondence between him and Scott, who gave him on all points of his case most paternal advice, and accompanied his counsels with offers of pecuniary assistance, of which the young man rarely availed himself. At length he resolved on rëentering the Divinity Class at Aberdeen, and in due time was licensed by the Presbytery there as a Preacher of the Gospel; but though with good connexions, for he was "sprung of Scotia's gentler blood," his deafness operated as a serious bar to his obtaining the incumbency of a parish. The provincial Synod pronounced his deafness an insuperable objection, and the case was referred to the General Assembly. That tribunal heard the young man's cause maintained by all the skill and eloquence of Mr Jeffrey, whose good offices had been secured by Scott's intervention, and they overruled the decision of the Synod. But Gordon, in the course of the discussion, gathered the conviction that a man almost literally stone-deaf could *not* discharge some of the highest duties of a parish-priest in a satisfactory manner, and he with honourable firmness declined to take advantage of the judgment of the Supreme Court. Meantime he had been employed, from the failure of John

Ballantyne's health downwards, as the transcriber of the Waverley MSS. for the press, in which capacity he displayed every quality that could endear an amanuensis to an author; and when the disasters of 1826 rendered it unnecessary for Scott to have his MS. copied, he exerted himself to procure employment for his young friend in one of the Government offices in London. Being backed by the kindness of the Duke of Gordon, his story found favour with the then Secretary of the Treasury, Mr Lushington —and Mr Gordon was named assistant private secretary to that gentleman. The appointment was temporary, but he so pleased his chief that there was hope of better things by and by.—Such was his situation at Christmas 1827; but that being his first Christmas in London, it was no wonder that he then discovered himself to have somewhat miscalculated about money matters. In a word, he knew not whither to look at the moment for extrication, until he bethought him of the following little incident of his life at Abbotsford.

He was spending the autumn of 1824 there, daily copying the MS. of Redgauntlet, and working at leisure hours on the Catalogue of the Library, when the family observed him to be labouring under some extraordinary depression of mind. It was just then that he had at length obtained the prospect of a Living, and Sir Walter was surprised that this should not have exhilarated him. Gently sounding the trumpet, however, he discovered that the agitation of the question about the deafness had shaken his nerves—his scruples had been roused—his conscience was sensitive, —and he avowed that, though he thought, on the whole, he ought to go through with the business, he could not command his mind so as to prepare a couple of sermons, which, unless he summarily abandoned his object, must be produced on a certain day—then near at hand—before his Presbytery. Sir Walter reminded him that his exercises when on trial for the Probationership had given satisfac-

tion ;—but nothing he could say was sufficient to re-brace Mr Gordon's spirits, and he at length exclaimed, with tears, that his pen was powerless,—that he had made fifty attempts, and saw nothing but failure and disgrace before him. Scott answered—"My good young friend, leave this matter to me—do you work away at the Catalogue, and I'll write for you a couple of sermons, that shall pass muster well enough at Aberdeen." Gordon assented with a sigh ; and next morning Sir Walter gave him the MS. of the "Religious Discourses." On reflection, Mr Gordon considered it quite impossible to produce them at Aberdeen as his own : but they had remained in his hands ; and it now occurred to him that, if Sir Walter would allow him to dispose of these to some bookseller, they might possibly bring a price that would float him over his little difficulties of Christmas.

The only entries in the Diary which relate to the business, are the following :—"*December* 28. Huntly Gordon writes me in despair about L.180 of debt which he has incurred. He wishes to publish two sermons which I wrote for him when he was taking orders ; and he would get little money for them without my name. People may exclaim against the undesired and unwelcome zeal of him who stretched his hands to help the ark over, with the best intentions, and cry sacrilege. And yet they will do me gross injustice, for I would, if called upon, die a martyr for the Christian religion, so completely is (in my poor opinion) its divine origin proved by its beneficial effects on the state of society. Were we but to name the abolition of slavery and polygamy, how much has, in these two words, been granted to mankind in the lessons of our Saviour !—*January* 10, 1828. Huntly Gordon has disposed of the two sermons to the bookseller, Colburn, for L.250 ; well sold, I think, and to go forth immediately. I would rather the thing had not gone there, and far rather that it had gone nowhere, yet hang it, if it makes the poor lad easy, what needs I

fret about it? After all, there would be little grace in doing a kind thing, if you did not suffer pain or inconvenience upon the score."

The next literary entry is this:—"Mr Heath, the engraver, invites me to take charge of a yearly publication called the Keepsake, of which the plates are beyond comparison beautiful, but the letter-press indifferent enough. He proposes L.800 a-year if I would become editor, and L.400 if I would contribute from seventy to one hundred pages. I declined both, but told him I might give him some trifling thing or other. To become the stipendiary editor of a New-Year's-Gift Book is not to be thought of, nor could I agree to work regularly, for any quantity of supply, at such a publication. Even the pecuniary view is not flattering, though Mr Heath meant it should be so. One hundred of his close printed pages, for which he offers L.400, are nearly equal to one volume of a novel. Each novel of three volumes brings L.4000, and I remain proprietor of the mine after the first ore is scooped out." The result was that Mr Heath received, for L.500, the liberty of printing in his Keepsake the long-forgotten juvenile drama of the House of Aspen, with Aunt Margaret's Mirror, and two other little tales, which had been omitted, at Ballantyne's entreaty, from the second Chronicles of Croftangry. But Sir Walter regretted having meddled in any way with the toyshop of literature, and would never do so again, though repeatedly offered very large sums—nor even when the motive of private regard was added, upon Mr Allan Cunningham's lending his name to one of these painted bladders. In the same week that Mr Heath made his proposition, Sir Walter received another, which he thus disposes of in his Diary:—"I have an invitation from Messrs Saunders and Ottley, booksellers, offering me from L.1500 to L.2000 annually to conduct a journal; but I am their humble servant. I am too indolent to stand to that sort of work, and I must preserve the

undisturbed use of my leisure, and possess my soul in quiet. A large income is not my object; I must clear my debts; and that is to be done by writing things of which I can retain the property."

He finished his novel by the end of March, and immediately set out for London, where the last budget of proof-sheets reached him. The Fair Maid was, and continues to be, highly popular, and though never classed with his performances of the first file, it has undoubtedly several scenes equal to what the best of them can shew, and is on the whole a work of brilliant variety and most lively interest.

Though the Introduction of 1830 says a good deal on the most original character, that of Connachar, the reader may not be sorry to have one paragraph on that subject from the Diary:—"*December* 5, 1827. The fellow that swam the Tay, and escaped, would be a good ludicrous character. But I have a mind to try him in the serious line of tragedy. Miss Baillie has made her Ethling a coward by temperament, and a hero when touched by filial affection. Suppose a man's nerves, supported by feelings of honour, or say by the spur of jealousy, sustaining him against constitutional timidity to a certain point, then suddenly giving way, I think something tragic might be produced. James Ballantyne's criticism is too much moulded upon the general taste of novels to admit (I fear) this species of reasoning. But what can one do? I am hard up as far as imagination is concerned,—yet the world calls for novelty. Well, I'll try my brave coward or cowardly brave man. *Valeat quantum.*"

I alluded, in an early chapter, to a circumstance in Sir Walter's conduct which it was painful to mention, and added, that in advanced life he himself spoke of it with a deep feeling of contrition. Talking over this character of Connachar, just before the book appeared, he told me the unhappy fate of his brother Daniel, and how

he had declined to be present at his funeral or wear mourning for him. He added—"My secret motive in this attempt was to perform a sort of expiation to my poor brother's manes. I have now learned to have more tolerance and compassion than I had in those days." I said he put me in mind of Samuel Johnson's standing bareheaded, in the last year of his life, on the market-place of Uttoxeter, by way of penance for a piece of juvenile irreverence towards his father. "Well, no matter," said he; "perhaps that's not the worst thing in the Doctor's story."[1]

Sir Walter and Miss Scott remained at this time six weeks in the Regent's Park. His eldest son's regiment was stationed at Hampton Court; the second had recently taken his desk at the Foreign Office, and was living in my house; he had thus looked forward to a happy meeting with all his family—but he encountered scenes of sickness and distress, in consequence of which I saw but little of him in general society. Nor is his Diary particularly interesting: with the exception of a few entries. That for May 1st is:—"Breakfasted with Lord and Lady Francis Gower, and enjoyed the splendid treat of hearing Mrs Arkwright sing her own music, which is of the highest order;—no forced vagaries of the voice, no caprices of tone, but all telling upon and increasing the feeling the words require. This is 'marrying music to immortal verse.' Most people place them on separate maintenance."—Among other songs, Mrs Arkwright delighted Sir Walter with her own set of—

'Farewell! farewell!—The voice you hear
Has left its last soft tone with you;
Its next must join the seaward cheer,
And shout among the shouting crew," &c.

He was sitting by me, at some distance from the lady, and whispered as she closed—"Capital words—whose are they? Byron's, I suppose, but I don't remember them.' He was astonished when I told him that they were his own in The

[1] See *Boswell* under August 1784.

Pirate. He seemed pleased at the moment, but said next minute—"You have distressed me—if memory goes, all is up with me, for that was always my strong point."

"*May* 5.—Breakfasted with Haydon, and sat for my head. I hope this artist is on his legs again. The King has given him a lift, by buying his clever picture of the Mock Election in the King's Bench prison. Haydon was once a great admirer and companion of the champions of the Cockney school, and is now disposed to renounce them and their opinions. To this kind of conversation I did not give much way. A painter should have nothing to do with politics. He is certainly a clever fellow, but too enthusiastic, which, however, distress seems to have cured in some degree. His wife, a pretty woman, looked happy to see me, and that is something. Yet it was very little I could do to help them.[1]—*May* 8.—Dined with Mrs Alexander of Ballochmyle:—Lord and Lady Meath, who were kind to us in Ireland, and a Scottish party, pleasant from having the broad accents and honest thoughts of my native land. A large circle in the evening. A gentleman came up to me and asked 'If I had seen The Casket, a curious work, the most beautiful, the most highly ornamented,—and then the editor or editress—a female so interesting,—might he ask a very great favour?' and out he pulled a piece of this picnic. I was really angry, and said,—for a subscription he might command me; for a contributor—No. This may be misrepresented, but I care not. Suppose this patron of the Muses gives five guineas to his distressed lady, he will think he does a great deal, yet he takes fifty from me with the calmest air in the world; for the communication is worth that if it be worth anything.

[1] Sir Walter had shortly before been one of the contributors to a subscription for Mr Haydon. The imprisonment from which this subscription relieved the artist produced, I need scarcely say, the picture mentioned in the Diary. This clever man concluded an unhappy history in the unhappiest manner in 1846.

There is no equalizing in the proposal.—*May* 11.—Dined with his Majesty in a very private party, five or six only being present. It is impossible to conceive a more friendly manner than that his Majesty used towards me.—*May* 19.—Dined by command with the Duchess of Kent. I was very kindly recognised by Prince Leopold—and presented to the little Princess Victoria—I hope they will change her name—the heir-apparent to the crown as things now stand. How strange that so large and fine a family as that of his late Majesty, should have died off, or decayed into old age, with so few descendants. Prince George of Cumberland is, they say, a fine boy about nine years old—a bit of a Pickle. This little lady is educating with much care, and watched so closely, that no busy maid has a moment to whisper, 'You are heir of England.' I suspect if we could dissect the little heart, we should find that some pigeon or other bird of the air had carried the matter. She is fair, like the royal family—the Duchess herself very pleasing and affable in her manners. I sat by Mr Spring Rice, a very agreeable man. There were also Charles Wynn and his lady—and the evening, for a Court evening, went agreeably off. I am commanded for two days by Prince Leopold, but will send excuses.—*May* 25.—After a morning of letter-writing, leave taking, papers-destroying, and God knows what trumpery, Sophia and I set out for Hampton Court, carrying with us the following lions and lionesses—Samuel Rogers, Tom Moore, Wordsworth, with wife and daughter. We were very kindly and properly received by Walter and his wife, and had a very pleasant day. At parting, Rogers gave me a gold-mounted pair of glasses, which I will not part with in a hurry. I really like S. R., and have always found him most friendly."

Breakfasting one morning with Allan Cunningham, (whose notes are before me) he looked round the table, and said, "What are you going to make of all these

boys, Allan!"—"I ask that question often at my own heart," said Allan, "and I cannot answer it."—"What does the eldest point to?"—"The callant would fain be a soldier, Sir Walter—and I have half a promise of a commission in the King's army for him; but I wish rather he could go to India, for there the pay is a maintenance, and one does not need interest at every step to get on." Scott dropped the subject; but went an hour afterwards to Lord Melville (who was now President of the Board of Control), and begged a cadetship for young Cunningham. Lord Melville promised to inquire if he had one at his disposal, in which case he would gladly serve the son of "honest Allan;" but the point being thus left doubtful, Scott meeting Mr John Loch, one of the East-India Directors, at dinner the same evening, at Lord Stafford's, applied to him, and received an immediate assent. On reaching home at night, he found a note from Lord Melville, intimating that he had inquired, and was happy in complying with his request. Next morning, Sir Walter appeared at Sir F. Chantrey's breakfast-table, and greeted the sculptor (a brother of the angle) with—"I suppose it has sometimes happened to you to catch one trout (which was all you thought of) with the fly, and another with the bobber. I have done so, and I think I shall land them both. Don't you think Cunningham would like very well to have cadetships for two of those fine lads?"—"To be sure he would," said Chantrey, "and if you'll secure the commissions, I'll make the outfit easy." Great was the joy in Allan's household on this double good news; but I should add, that before the thing was done he had to thank another benefactor. Lord Melville, after all, went out of the Board of Control before he had been able to fulfil his promise; but his successor, Lord Ellenborough, on hearing the case, desired Cunningham to set his mind at rest; and both his young men are now prospering in the India service.

"*Rokeby*, *May* 30.—A mile from the house we met

Morritt, looking for us. He is now one of my oldest, and I believe one of my most sincere friends ;—a man unequalled in the mixture of sound good sense, high literary cultivation, and the kindest and sweetest temper that ever graced a human bosom. His nieces are much attached to him, and are deserving and elegant, as well as beautiful young women.—What there is in our partiality to female beauty that commands a species of temporary homage from the aged, as well as ecstatic admiration from the young, I cannot conceive; but it is certain that a very large portion of some other amiable quality is too little to counterbalance the absolute want of this advantage. I, to whom beauty is, and shall henceforward be, a picture, still look upon it with the quiet devotion of an old worshipper, who no longer offers incense on the shrine, but peaceably presents his inch of taper, taking special care in doing so not to burn his own fingers. Nothing in life can be more ludicrous or contemptible than an old man aping the passions of his youth."

Next night Sir Walter rested at Carlisle,—"A sad place," says the Diary, "in my domestic remembrances, since here I married my poor Charlotte. She is gone, and I am following—faster, perhaps, than I wot of. It is something to have lived and loved; and our poor children are so hopeful and affectionate, that it chastens the sadness attending the thoughts of our separation." His feeling and sprightly companion wrote thus a day or two afterwards to her sister:—"Early in the morning before we started, papa took me with him to the Cathedral. This he had often done before; but he said he must stand once more on the spot where he married poor mamma. After that we went to the Castle, where a new showman went through the old trick of pointing out Fergus MacIvor's *very* dungeon. Peveril said—'Indeed?—are you quite sure, sir?' And on being told there could be no doubt, was troubled with a fit of coughing,

which ended in a laugh. The man seemed exceeding indignant: so when papa moved on, I whispered who it was. I wish you had seen the man's start, and how he stared and bowed as he parted from us; and then rammed his keys into his pocket, and went off at a hand-gallop to warn the rest of the garrison. But the carriage was ready, and we escaped a row."

They reached Abbotsford that night, and a day or two afterwards Edinburgh; where Sir Walter was greeted with the satisfactory intelligence that his plans as to the *Opus Magnum* had been considered at a meeting of his trustees, and finally approved *in toto*. As the scheme inferred a large outlay on drawings and engravings, and otherwise, this decision had been looked for with much anxiety by him and Mr Cadell. He says—"I trust it will answer; yet who can warrant the continuance of popularity? Old Nattali Corri, who entered into many projects, and could never set the sails of a windmill to catch the *aura popularis*, used to say he believed that were he to turn baker, it would put bread out of fashion. I have had the better luck to dress my sails to every wind; and so blow on, good wind, and spin round, whirligig." The *Corri* here alluded to was an unfortunate adventurer, who, among many other wild schemes, tried to set up an Italian Opera at Edinburgh.

During the remainder of this year Sir Walter never opened his "locked book." Whether in Edinburgh or the country, his life was such, that he describes himself, in several letters, as having become "a writing automaton." He had completed by Christmas the Second Series of Tales on Scottish History, and made considerable progress in another novel—Anne of Geierstein: he had also drawn up for the Quarterly Review his article on Hajji Baba in England; and that delightful one on Davy's *Salmonia*—which, like those on Planting and Gardening, abounds in

sweet episodes of personal reminiscence. And, whenever he had not proof-sheets to press him, his hours were bestowed on the *opus magnum.*

About this time died Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, the widower of his first love, and the most generous and efficient friend in the late crisis of distress. On this event his letters have some very touching passages—but his feelings towards that admirable person have been sufficiently shewn in preceding extracts.

Visiting Abbotsford at Christmas, I found him apparently well in health (except that he suffered from rheumatism), and enjoying the society, as usual, of the Fergussons, with the welcome addition of Mr Morritt and Sir James Steuart of Allanbank—a gentleman whose masterly pencil had often been employed on subjects from his poetry and novels, and whose conversation on art (like that of Sir George Beaumont and Mr Scrope), being devoid of professional pedantries and jealousies, was always particularly delightful to him. One snowy morning, he gave us sheets of *Anne of Geierstein*, extending to, I think, about a volume and a half; and we read them together in the library, while he worked in the adjoining room, and occasionally dropt in upon us to hear how we were pleased. All were highly gratified with those vivid and picturesque pages,—and both Morritt and Steuart, being familiar with the scenery of Switzerland, could not sufficiently express their astonishment at the felicity with which he had divined its peculiar character, and outdone, by the force of imagination, all the efforts of a thousand actual tourists. Such approbation was of course very acceptable. I had seldom seen him more gently and tranquilly happy.

When these friends left him, he went with me to my brother's in Clydesdale, and there enjoyed some days of relaxation. It was then that he first saw the self-educated sculptor, John Greenshields, who greatly interested him from a certain resemblance to Burns, and took the first

sitting for a very remarkable statue in freestone, now in Mr Cadell's possession—the last work which this worthy man was destined to complete.

Sir Walter's operations appear to have been interrupted ever and anon, during January and February 1829, in consequence of severe distress in the household of his printer; whose warm affections were not, as in his own case, subjected to the authority of a stoical will. On the 14th of February the Diary says:—"The letters I received were numerous, and craved answers; yet the 3d volume is getting on *hooly and fairly*. I am twenty leaves before the printer, but Ballantyne's wife is ill, and it is his nature to indulge apprehensions of the worst, which incapacitates him for labour. I cannot help regarding this amiable weakness of the mind with something too nearly allied to contempt." On the 17th, "I received the melancholy news that James Ballantyne had lost his wife. With his domestic habits the blow is irretrievable. What can he do, poor fellow, at the head of such a family of children? I should not be surprised if he were to give way to despair."—James was not able to appear at his wife's funeral; and this Scott viewed with something more than pity. Next morning, however, says the Diary—"Ballantyne came in, to my surprise, about twelve o'clock. He was very serious, and spoke as if he had some idea of sudden and speedy death. He has settled to go to the country, poor fellow!"—He retired accordingly to some sequestered place near Jedburgh, and there indulged his grief in solitude. Scott regarded this as weakness, and in part at least as wilful weakness, and addressed to him several letters of strong remonstrance and rebuke. In writing of the case to myself, he says—"I have a sore grievance in poor Ballantyne's increasing lowness of heart, and I fear he is sinking rapidly into the condition of a religious dreamer. His retirement from Edinburgh was the worst advised scheme in the world. I in vain reminded him, that when

our Saviour himself was to be led into temptation, the first thing the Devil thought of was to get him into the wilderness."—Ballantyne, after a few weeks, resumed his place in the printing-office ; but he addicted himself more and more to what his friend considered as erroneous and extravagant notions of religious doctrine ; and I regret to say that in this difference originated a certain alienation, not of affection, but of confidence, which was visible to every near observer of their subsequent intercourse. Towards the last, indeed, they saw but little of each other. I suppose, however, it is needless to add, that down to the very last, Scott watched over Ballantyne's interests with undiminished attention.

Many entries of his Diary during the Spring Session refer to the final carrying of the Roman Catholic Question. When the Duke of Wellington announced his intention of conceding those claims, there were meetings and petitions enough in Edinburgh as elsewhere ; and though Scott felt considerable repugnance to acting in any such matter with Whigs and Radicals, in opposition to a great section of the Tories, he ultimately resolved not to shrink from doing his part in support of the Duke's Government on that critical experiment.[1] He wrote, I believe, several articles in favour of the measure for the Weekly Journal ; he spoke, though shortly, at the principal meeting, and proposed one of its resolutions ; and when the consequent petition was read in the House of Commons, his name among the subscribers was received with such enthusiasm, that Sir Robert Peel thought fit to address to him a special and very cordial letter of thanks on that occasion.

His novel was finished before breakfast on the 29th of April ; and his Diary mentions that immediately after breakfast he began his compendium of Scottish history for Dr Lardner's Cyclopædia. When the proprietors of that work, in July 1828, offered him L.500 for an abstract of

[1] See *Ante*, pp. 170, 171.

Scottish History in one volume, he declined the proposal. They subsequently offered L.700, and this was accepted; but though he began the task under the impression that he should find it a heavy one, he soon warmed to the subject, and pursued it with cordial zeal and satisfaction. One volume, it by and by appeared, would never do,—in his own phrase, "he must have elbow-room"—and I believe it was finally settled that he should have L.1500 for the book in two volumes; of which the first was published before the end of this year.

Anne of Geierstein came out about the middle of May; and this, which may be almost called the last work of his imaginative genius, was received at least as well—(out of Scotland, that is)—as the Fair Maid of Perth had been, or indeed as any novel of his after the Crusaders. I partake very strongly, I am aware, in the feeling which most of my own countrymen have little shame in avowing, that no novel of his, where neither scenery nor character is Scottish, belongs to the same prëeminent class with those in which he paints and peoples his native landscape. I have confessed that I cannot rank even his best English romances with such creations as Waverley and Old Mortality; far less can I believe that posterity will attach similar value to this Maid of the Mist. Its pages, however, display in undiminished perfection all the skill and grace of the mere artist, with occasional outbreaks of the old poetic spirit, more than sufficient to remove the work to an immeasurable distance from any of its order produced in this country in our own age. Indeed, the various play of fancy in the combination of persons and events, and the airy liveliness of both imagery and diction, may well justify us in applying to the author what he beautifully says of his King René—

> "A mirthful man he was; the snows of age
> Fell, but they did not chill him. Gaiety,

Even in life's closing, touch'd his teeming brain
With such wild visions as the setting sun
Raises in front of some hoar glacier,
Painting the bleak ice with a thousand hues."

It is a common saying that there is nothing so distinctive of *genius* as the retention, in advanced years, of the capacity to depict the feelings of youth with all their original glow and purity. But I apprehend this blessed distinction belongs to, and is the just reward of, virtuous genius only. In the case of extraordinary force of imagination, combined with the habitual indulgence of a selfish mood—not combined, that is to say, with the genial temper of mind and thought which God and Nature design to be kept alive in man by those domestic charities out of which the other social virtues so easily spring, and with which they find such endless links of interdependence;—in this unhappy case, which none who has studied the biography of genius can pronounce to be a rare one, the very power which heaven bestowed seems to become, as old age darkens, the sternest avenger of its own misapplication. The retrospect of life is converted by its energy into one wide blackness of desolate regret; and whether this breaks out in the shape of a rueful contemptuousness, or a sarcastic mockery of tone, the least drop of the poison is enough to paralyze all attempts at awakening sympathy by fanciful delineations of love and friendship. Perhaps Scott has nowhere painted such feelings more deliciously than in those very scenes of Anne of Geierstein, which offer every now and then, in some incidental circumstance or reflection, the best evidence that they are drawn by a grey-headed man. The whole of his own life was too present to his wonderful memory to permit of his brooding with exclusive partiality, whether painfully or pleasurably, on any one portion or phasis of it; and besides, he was always living over again in his children, young at heart whenever he looked on them, and the world that was opening on them and their

friends. But above all, he had a firm belief in the future reunion of those whom death has parted.

He lost two more of his old intimates about this time ;—Mr Terry in June, and Mr Shortreed in the beginning of July. The Diary says :—" *July* 9. Heard of the death of poor Bob Shortreed, the companion of many a long ride among the hills in quest of old ballads. He was a merry companion, a good singer and mimic, and full of Scottish drollery. In his company, and under his guidance, I was able to see much of rural society in the mountains, which I could not otherwise have attained, and which I have made my use of. He was, in addition, a man of worth and character. I always burdened his hospitality while at Jedburgh on the circuit, and have been useful to some of his family. Poor fellow! So glide our friends from us. Many recollections die with him and with poor Terry."

His Diary has few more entries for this twelvemonth. Besides the volume of history for Lardner, he had ready by December the last of the *Scottish* Series of Tales of a Grandfather ; and had made great progress in the prefaces and notes for Cadell's *Opus Magnum*. He had also overcome various difficulties which for a time interrupted the twin scheme of an illustrated edition of his Poems: and one of these in a manner honourably characteristic of the late John Murray of Albemarle Street, who had till now retained a share in the copyright of Marmion. Scott having requested him to *sell* that share, he generously replied :—" So highly do I estimate the honour of being, even in so small a degree, the publisher of the author of the poem, that no pecuniary consideration whatever can induce me to part with it. But there is a consideration of another kind, which until now I was not aware of, which would make it painful to me if I were to retain it a moment longer. I mean the knowledge of its being required by the author, into whose hands it was spontaneously resigned in the same instant that I read his request."

The success of the collective novels was far beyond what either Sir Walter or Mr Cadell had ventured to anticipate. Before the close of 1829, eight volumes had been issued; and the monthly sale had reached as high as 35,000. Should this go on, there was, indeed, every reason to hope that, coming in aid of undiminished industry in the preparation of new works, it would wipe off all his load of debt in the course of a very few years. And during the autumn (which I spent near him) it was most agreeable to observe the effects of the prosperous intelligence, which every succeeding month brought, upon his spirits.

This was the more needed, that his eldest son, who had gone to the south of France on account of some unpleasant symptoms in his health, did not at first seem to profit rapidly by the change of climate. He feared that the young man was not so obedient to his physicians as he ought to have been; and in one of many letters on this subject, after mentioning some of Cadell's good news as to the great affair, he says—"I have wrought hard, and so far successfully. But I tell you plainly, my dear boy, that if you permit your health to decline from want of attention, I have not strength of mind enough to exert myself in these matters as I have hitherto been doing." Happily Major Scott was, ere long, restored to his usual state of health and activity.

Sir Walter himself, too, besides the usual allowance of rheumatism, and other lesser ailments, had an attack that season of a nature which gave his family great alarm, and which for several days he himself regarded with the darkest prognostications. After some weeks, during which he complained of headach and nervous irritation, certain hæmorrhages indicated the sort of relief required, and he obtained it from copious cupping. He says, in his Diary for June 3d—"The ugly symptom still continues. Either way I am firmly resolved. I wrote in the morning. The

Court kept me till near two. In the evening Dr Ross ordered me to be cupped, an operation which I only knew from its being practised by those eminent medical practitioners the barbers of Bagdad. It is not painful; and, I think, resembles a giant twisting about your flesh between his finger and thumb." After this he felt better, he said, than he had done for years before; but there can be little doubt that the natural evacuation was a very serious symptom. It was, in fact, the precursor of apoplexy. In telling the Major of his recovery, he says—"The sale of the Novels is pro—di—gi—ous. If it last but a few years, it will clear my feet of old incumbrances, nay, perhaps, enable me to talk a word to our friend Nicol Milne.

'But old ships must expect to get out of commission,
Nor again to weigh anchor with *yo heave ho!*'

However that may be, I should be happy to die a free man; and I am sure you will all be kind to poor Anne, who will miss me most. I don't intend to die a minute sooner than I can help for all this; but when a man takes to making blood instead of water, he is tempted to think on the possibility of his soon making earth."—Mr Milne, be it observed, was the proprietor of a considerable estate conterminous with Abbotsford to the westward.

Among a few other friends from a distance, Sir Walter received this summer a short visit from Mr Hallam, and made in his company several of the little excursions which had in former days been of constant recurrence. Mr Hallam had with him his son, Arthur, a young gentleman of extraordinary abilities, and as modest as able, who not long afterwards was cut off in the very bloom of opening life and genius. His beautiful verses *on Melrose seen in company with Scott*, have since been often printed.

The close of the autumn was embittered by a sudden and most unexpected deprivation. Apparently in the fullest enjoyment of health and vigour, Thomas Purdie

leaned his head one evening on the table, and dropped asleep. This was nothing uncommon in a hard-working man ; and his family went and came about him for several hours, without taking any notice. When supper was ready, they tried to awaken him, and found that life had been for some time extinct. Far different from other years, Sir Walter seemed impatient to get away from Abbotsford to Edinburgh. "I have lost," he writes (4th November) to Cadell, "my old and faithful servant—my factotum—and am so much shocked, that I really wish to be quit of the country and safe in town. I have this day laid him in the grave. This has prevented my answering your letters."

The grave, close to the Abbey at Melrose, is surmounted by a modest monument, having on two sides these inscriptions :—

In grateful remembrance of the faithful and attached services of twenty-two years, and in sorrow for the loss of a humble but sincere friend; this stone was erected by Sir Walter Scott, Bart., of Abbotsford.

Here lies the body of Thomas Purdie, wood-forester at Abbotsford, who died 29th October 1829, aged sixty-two years. — "*Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.*" — St Matthew, chap. xxv. ver. 21st.

CHAPTER VII.

Publication of the Ayrshire Tragedy, Letters on Demonology, Tales on the History of France, &c.—Apoplectic Seizure—Retirement from the Court of Session—Offers of a pension and of additional rank declined—Count Robert of Paris begun—Death of George IV.—Political Commotions—Fourth Epistle of Malagrowther—Speech on Reform at Jedburgh—1830–1831.

AT this time, Mr Pitcairn was editing for the Bannatyne Club that curious collection of Ancient Scotch Criminal Trials, which Scott reviewed in the Quarterly of 1831. On his arrival in Edinburgh, Mr Pitcairn sent him a new volume in proof, requesting his attention particularly to its details on the extraordinary case of Mure of Auchindraine, A.D. 1611. Scott was so much interested with these documents, that he resolved to found a dramatic sketch on their terrible story; and the result was a composition far superior to any of his previous attempts of that nature. Indeed, there are several passages in his *Ayrshire Tragedy*—especially that where the murdered corpse floats upright in the wake of the assassin's bark—(an incident suggested by a lamentable chapter in Lord Nelson's history)—which may bear comparison with anything but Shakspeare. Yet I doubt whether the prose narrative of the preface be not, on the whole, more dramatic than the versified scenes. It contains, by the way, some very striking allusions to the recent murder of Weare by Thurtell and others at Gill's Hill in Hertfordshire, and the atrocities of Burke and Hare in the West Port of Edinburgh. This piece was published in a thin octavo, early in 1830.

But he was now to pay the penalty of his unparalleled toils. On the 15th of February, about two o'clock in the afternoon, he returned from the Parliament House apparently in his usual state, and found an old acquaintance, Miss Young of Hawick, waiting to shew him some MS. memoirs of her father (a dissenting minister of great worth and talents), which he had undertaken to revise and correct for the press. The old lady sat by him for half an hour while he seemed to be occupied with her papers; at length he rose, as if to dismiss her, but sunk down again —a slight convulsion agitated his features. After a few minutes he got up and staggered to the drawing-room, where Anne Scott and my sister, Violet Lockhart, were sitting. They rushed to meet him, but he fell at all his length on the floor ere they could reach him. He remained speechless for about ten minutes, by which time a surgeon had arrived and bled him. He was cupped again in the evening, and gradually recovered possession of speech, and of all his faculties, in so far that, the occurrence being kept quiet, when he appeared abroad again after a short interval, people in general observed no serious change. He submitted to the utmost severity of regimen, tasting nothing but pulse and water for some weeks, and the alarm of his family and intimate friends subsided. By and by, he again mingled in society much as usual, and seems to have *almost* persuaded himself that the attack had proceeded merely from the stomach, though his letters continued ever and anon to drop hints that the symptoms resembled apoplexy or paralysis. When we recollect that both his father and his elder brother died of paralysis, and consider the violences of agitation and exertion to which Sir Walter had been subjected during the four preceding years, the only wonder is that this blow (which had, I suspect, several indistinct harbingers) was deferred so long; there can be none that it was soon followed by others of the same description.

He struggled manfully, however, against his malady, and during 1830 covered almost as many sheets with his MS. as in 1829. About March I find, from his correspondence with Ballantyne, that he was working regularly at his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* foı Murray's Family Library, and also on a Fourth Series of the Tales of a Grandfather, the subject being French History. Both of these books were published by the end of the year; and the former contains many passages worthy of his best day —little snatches of picturesque narrative and the like—in fact, transcripts of his own familiar fireside stories. The shrewdness with which evidence is sifted on legal cases attests, too, that the main reasoning faculty remained unshaken. But, on the whole, these works can hardly be submitted to a strict ordeal of criticism. There is in both a cloudiness both of words and arrangement. Nor can I speak differently of the second volume of his Scottish History for Lardner, which was published in May. His very pretty reviewal of Mr Southey's Life and Edition of Bunyan was done in August—about which time his recovery seems to have reached its *acmé*.

In the course of the Spring Session, circumstances rendered it highly probable that Sir Walter's resignation of his place as Clerk of Session might be acceptable to the Government; and it is not surprising that he should have, on the whole, been pleased to avail himself of this opportunity. He says, in his Diary—"*May* 27. I am agitating a proposed retirement from the Court. As they are only to have four instead of six Clerks of Session, it will be their interest to let me retire on a superannuation. Probably I shall make a bad bargain, and get only two-thirds of the salary, instead of three-fourths. This would be hard, but I could save between two or three hundred pounds by giving up town residence. At any rate, *jacta est alea*. I think the difference will be infinite in point of health and happiness. Yet I do not know. It

is perhaps a violent change in the end of life to quit the walk one has trod so long, and the cursed splenetic temper which besets all men makes you value opportunities and circumstances when one enjoys them no longer."

On the 26th of June, he heard of the death of King George IV. with the regret of a devoted and obliged subject. He had received almost immediately before, two marks of his Majesty's kind attention. Understanding that his retirement from the Court of Session was at hand, Sir William Knighton suggested that he might henceforth be more frequently in London, and that he might fitly be placed at the head of a new commission for examining and editing the MSS. collections of the exiled Princes of the House of Stuart, which had come into the King's hands on the death of the Cardinal of York. This Sir Walter gladly accepted, and contemplated with pleasure spending the ensuing winter in London. But another proposition, that of elevating him to the rank of Privy Counsellor, was unhesitatingly declined. He desired the Lord Chief-Commissioner, whom the King had desired to ascertain his feelings on the subject, to convey his grateful thanks, with his humble apology: and his reasons are thus stated in the Diary of the succeeding winter:—

"I had also a kind communication about interfering to have me named a P. Counsellor. But—besides that when one is old and poor, one should avoid taking rank—I would be much happier if I thought any act of kindness was done to help forward Charles; and having said so much, I made my bow, and declared my purpose of remaining satisfied with my knighthood. All this is rather pleasing. Yet much of it looks like winding up my bottom for the rest of my life."

In July came the formal intimation that he had ceased to be a Clerk of Session, and should thenceforth have, in lieu of his salary, &c. (L.1300) an allowance of L.800 per annum. This was accompanied by an intimation

from the Home Secretary, that the Ministers were quite ready to grant him a pension covering the reduction of his income. Considering himself as the bond-slave of his creditors, he made known to them this proposition, and stated that it would be extremely painful to him to accept of it; and with the delicacy and generosity which throughout characterized their conduct towards him, they without hesitation entreated him on no account to do injury to his own feelings in such a matter as this. Few things gave him more pleasure than this handsome communication.

Just after he had taken leave of Edinburgh, as he seems to have thought for ever, be received a communication of another sort, as inopportune as any that ever reached him. His Diary for the 13th July says briefly—"I have a letter from a certain young gentleman, announcing that his sister had so far mistaken the intentions of a lame baronet nigh sixty years old, as to suppose him only prevented by modesty from stating certain wishes and hopes, &c. The party is a woman of rank, so my vanity may be satisfied. But I excused myself, with little picking upon the terms."

During the rest of the summer and autumn his daughter and I were at Chiefswood, and saw him of course daily. Laidlaw, too, had been restored to the cottage at Kaeside; and though Tom Purdie made a dismal blank, old habits went on, and the course of life seemed little altered from what it had used to be. He looked jaded and worn before evening set in, yet very seldom departed from the strict regimen of his doctors, and often brightened up to all his former glee, though passing the bottle and sipping toast and water. His grandchildren especially saw no change. However languid, his spirits revived at the sight of them, and the greatest pleasure he had was in pacing Douce Davie through the green lanes among his woods, with them clustered about him on ponies and donkeys, while Laidlaw, the ladies, and myself, walked by, and obeyed his directions about pruning and marking trees. After the immediate

alarms of the spring, it might have been even agreeable to witness this placid twilight scene, but for our knowledge that nothing could keep him from toiling many hours daily at his desk, and alas! that he was no longer sustained by the daily commendations of his printer. It was obvious, as the season advanced, that the manner in which Ballantyne communicated with him was sinking into his spirits, and Laidlaw foresaw, as well as myself, that some trying crisis of discussion could not be much longer deferred. A nervous twitching about the muscles of the mouth was always more or less discernible from the date of the attack in February; but we could easily tell, by the aggravation of that symptom, when he had received a packet from the Canongate. It was distressing, indeed, to think that he might, one of these days, sustain a second seizure, and be left still more helpless, yet with the same undiminished appetite for literary labour. And then, if he felt his printer's complaints so keenly, what was to be expected in the case of a plain and undeniable manifestation of disappointment on the part of the public, and consequently of the bookseller?

All this was for the inner circle. Country neighbours went and came, without, I believe, observing almost anything of what grieved the family. Nay, this autumn he was far more troubled with the invasions of strangers, than he had ever been since his calamities of 1826. The astonishing success of the new editions was, as usual, doubled or trebled by rumour. The notion that he had already all but cleared off his incumbrances, seems to have been widely prevalent, and no doubt his refusal of a pension tended to confirm it. Abbotsford was, for some weeks at least, besieged much as it had used to be in the golden days of 1823 and 1824; and if sometimes his guests brought animation and pleasure with them, even then the result was a legacy of redoubled lassitude. The Diary, among a very few and far-separated entries, has this:—"*September* 5.—In spite

of Resolution, I have left my Diary for some weeks,—I cannot well tell why. We have had abundance of travelling Counts and Countesses, Yankees male and female, and a Yankee-Doodle-*Dandy* into the bargain—a smart young Virginia-man. But we have had friends of our own also—the Miss Ardens, young Mrs Morritt and Anne Morritt, most agreeable visitors.—Cadell came out here yesterday with his horn filled with good news. He calculates that in October the debt will be reduced to L.60,000. This makes me care less about the terms I retire upon. The efforts by which we have advanced thus far are new in literature, and what is gained is secure."

Mr Cadell's great hope, when he offered this visit, had been that the good news of the *Magnum* might induce Sir Walter to content himself with working at notes and prefaces for its coming volumes, without straining at more difficult tasks. He found his friend, however, by no means disposed to adopt such views; and suggested very kindly, and ingeniously too, by way of *mezzo-termine*, that before entering upon any new novel, he should draw up a sort of *catalogue raisonnée* of the most curious articles in his library and museum. Sir Walter grasped at this, and began next morning to dictate to Laidlaw what he designed to publish in the usual novel shape, under the title of "Reliquiæ Trottcosienses, or the Gabions of Jonathan Oldbuck." Nothing, as it seemed to all about him, could have suited the time better; but after a few days he said he found this was not sufficient—that he should proceed in it during *horæ subcesivæ*, but must bend himself to the composition of a romance, founded on a story which he had more than once told cursorily already, and for which he had been revolving the various titles of Robert of the Isle—Count Robert de L'Isle—and *Count Robert of Paris*. There was nothing to be said in reply to the decisive announcement of this purpose. The usual agreements were drawn out; and the Tale was begun.

In the ensuing month (Oct. 1830) the dethroned King of France, Charles X. was invited by the English Government to resume his old quarters at Holyrood; and among many other things that about this time mortified Scott, none gave him more pain than to hear that the popular feeling in Edinburgh had been so much exacerbated against the fallen monarch (especially by an ungenerous article in the great literary organ of the place), that his reception there was likely to be rough and insulting. Sir Walter thought that on such an occasion his voice might, perhaps, be listened to. He knew his countrymen well in their strength, as well as in their weakness, and put forth in Ballantyne's newspaper for the 20th of October, a manly appeal to their better feelings—closing in these words:—"The person who writes these few lines is leaving his native city, never to return as a permanent resident. He has some reason to be proud of distinctions received from his fellow-citizens; and he has not the slightest doubt that the taste and good feeling of those whom he will still term so, will dictate to them the quiet, civil, and respectful tone of feeling, which will do honour both to their heads and their hearts, which have seldom been appealed to in vain.—The Frenchman Melinet, in mentioning the refuge afforded by Edinburgh to Henry VI. in his distress, records it as the most hospitable town in Europe. It is a testimony to be proud of, and sincerely do I hope there is little danger of forfeiting it upon the present occasion."

The effect of this admonition was even more complete than the writer had anticipated. The royal exiles were received with perfect decorum, which their modest bearing to all classes, and unobtrusive, though magnificent benevolence to the poor, ere long converted into a feeling of deep and affectionate respectfulness. During their stay in Scotland, the King took more than one opportunity of conveying to Sir Walter his gratitude for this salutary interference on his hehalf. The ladies of

the royal family had a curiosity to see Abbotsford, but being aware of his reduced health and wealth, took care to visit the place when he was known to be from home. Several French noblemen of the train, however, paid him their respects personally. I remember with particular pleasure a couple of days that the Duke of Laval-Montmorency spent with him: he was also gratified with a visit from Marshal Bourmont, though unfortunately that came after his ailments had much advanced. The Marshal was accompanied by the Baron d'Haussez, one of the Polignac Ministry, whose published account of his residence in this country contains no specimen of vain imbecility more pitiable than the page he gives to Abbotsford. So far from comprehending anything of his host's character or conversation, the Baron had not even eyes to observe that he was in a sorely dilapidated condition of bodily health.

The reader has already seen that he had many misgivings in contemplating his final retirement from the situation he had occupied for six-and-twenty years in the Court of Session. Such a breach in old habits is always a serious experiment; but in his case it was very particularly so, because it involved his losing during the winter months, when men most need society, the intercourse of almost all that remained to him of dear familiar friends. He had besides a love for the very stones of Edinburgh, and the thought that he was never again to sleep under a roof of his own in his native city, cost him many a pang. But he never alludes either in his Diary or in his letters (nor do I remember that he ever did so in conversation) to the circumstance which, far more than all besides, occasioned care and regret in the bosom of his family. However he might cling to the notion that his recent ailments sprung merely from a disordered stomach, they had dismissed that dream, and the heaviest of their thoughts was, that he was fixing himself in the country just when his health, perhaps his life, might depend any given hour on the immediate pre-

sence of a surgical hand. They reflected that the only practitioner resident within several miles of him might, in case of another seizure, come too late, even although the messenger should find him at home; but that his practice extended over a wide range of thinly-peopled country, and that at the hour of need he might as probably be half a day's journey off as at Melrose. We would fain have persuaded him that his library-catalogues, and other papers, had fallen into such confusion, that he ought to have some clever young student in the house during the winter to arrange them; and had he taken the suggestion in good part, a medical student would of course have been selected. But, whether or not he suspected our real motive, he would listen to no such plan; and his friendly surgeon (Mr James Clarkson) then did the best he could for us, by instructing a confidential domestic, privately, in the use of the lancet. This was John Nicolson—a name never to be mentioned by any of Scott's family without respect and gratitude. He had been in the household from his boyhood, and was about this time (poor Dalgleish retiring from weak health) advanced to the chief place in it. Early and continued kindness had made a very deep impression on this fine handsome young man's warm heart; he possessed intelligence, good sense, and a calm temper; and the courage and dexterity which Sir Walter had delighted to see him display in sports and pastimes, proved henceforth of inestimable service to the master whom he regarded, I verily believe, with the love and reverence of a son. Since I have reached the period at which human beings owe so much to ministrations of this class, I may as well name by the side of Nicolson, Miss Scott's maid, Mrs Celia Street—a young person whose unwearied zeal, coupled with a modest tact that stamped her one of Nature's gentlewomen, contributed hardly less to the comfort of Sir Walter and his children during the brief remainder of his life.[1]

[1] On Sir Walter's death, Nicolson passed into the service of

Affliction, as it happened, lay heavy at this time on the kind house of Huntley Burn also. The eldest Miss Fergusson was on her deathbed; and thus, when my wife and I were obliged to move southwards at the beginning of winter, Sir Walter was left almost entirely dependent on his daughter Anne, William Laidlaw, and the worthy domestics whom I have been naming. Laidlaw attended him as amanuensis, and often dined as well as breakfasted with him. A more delicate task never devolved upon any man's friend, than he had about this time to encounter. He could not watch Scott from hour to hour—above all, he could not write to his dictation, without gradually, slowly, most reluctantly taking home to his bosom the conviction that the mighty mind, which he had worshipped through more than thirty years of intimacy, had lost something, and was daily losing something more of its energy. The faculties were there, and each of them was every now and then displaying itself in its full vigour; but the sagacious judgment, the brilliant fancy, the unrivalled memory, were all subject to occasional eclipse—

"Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made."

Ever and anon he paused and looked round him, like one half-waking from a dream, mocked with shadows. The sad bewilderment of his gaze shewed a momentary consciousness that, like Samson in the lap of the Philistine, "his strength was passing from him, and he was becoming weak like unto other men." Then came the strong effort of aroused will—the cloud dispersed as if before an irresistible current of purer air—all was bright and serene as of old—and then it closed again in yet deeper darkness.

During the early part of this winter the situation of

Mr Morritt at Rokeby. He died at Kelso in 1841. Mrs Street remained in my house till 1836, when she married Mr Griffiths, a respectable farmer at Ealing.

Cadell and Ballantyne was hardly less painful, and still more embarrassing. What doubly and trebly perplexed them was, that while the MS. sent for press seemed worse every budget, Sir Walter's letters continued as clear in thought, and almost so in expression, as formerly—full of the old shrewdness and firmness, and manly kindness, and even of the old good-humoured pleasantry. About them, except the staggering penmanship, and here and there one word put down obviously for another, there was scarcely anything to indicate decayed vigour. It is not surprising that poor Ballantyne, in particular, should have shrunk from the notion that anything was amiss,—except the choice of an unfortunate subject, and the indulgence of more than common carelessness and rapidity in composition. He seems to have done so as he would from some horrid suggestion of the Devil; and accordingly obeyed his natural sense of duty, by stating, in plain terms, that he considered the opening chapters of Count Robert as decidedly inferior to anything that had ever before come from that pen. James appears to have dwelt chiefly on the hopelessness of any Byzantine fable; and he might certainly have appealed to a long train of examples for the fatality which seems to hang over every attempt to awaken anything like a lively interest about the persons and manners of the generation in question; the childish forms and bigotries, the weak pomps and drivelling pretensions, the miserable plots and treacheries, the tame worn-out civilization of those European Chinese. The epoch on which Scott had fixed was, however, one that brought these doomed slaves of vanity and superstition into contact with the vigorous barbarism both of western Christendom and the advancing Ottoman. Sir Walter had, years before, been struck with its capabilities;[1] and who dares to say that, had he executed the work when he sketched the outline of its plan, he might not have achieved as signal a

[1] See his Essay on *Romance*, 1823.

triumph over all critical prejudices, as he had done when he rescued Scottish romance from the mawkish degradation in which Waverley found it?

In himself and his own affairs there was enough to alarm and perplex him and all who watched him; but the aspect of the political horizon also pressed more heavily upon his spirit than it had ever done before. All the evils which he had apprehended from the rupture among the Tory leaders in the beginning of 1827, were now, in his opinion, about to be consummated. The high Protestant party, blinded by their resentment of the abolition of the Test Act and the Roman Catholic disabilities, seemed willing to run any risk for the purpose of driving the Duke of Wellington from the helm. The general election, occasioned by the demise of the Crown, was held while the successful revolts in France and Belgium were uppermost in every mind, and furnished the Liberal candidates with captivating topics. The result had considerably strengthened the old opposition in the House of Commons; and a single vote, in which the ultra-Tories joined the Whigs, was considered by the Ministry as so ominous, that they immediately retired from office. The succeeding cabinet of Earl Grey included names identified, in Scott's view, with the wildest rage of innovation. Their first step was to announce a bill of Parliamentary Reform on a large scale, for which it was soon known they had secured the warm personal support of William IV. Great discontent prevailed, meanwhile, throughout the labouring classes of many districts, both commercial and rural. Every newspaper teemed with details of riot and incendiarism; and the selection of such an epoch of impatience and turbulence for a legislative experiment—more important than had ever before been agitated within the forms of the constitution—was perhaps regarded by most grave and retired men with feelings near akin to those of the anxious and melancholy invalid at Abbotsford. To annoy him addi-

tionally, he found many eminent persons, who had hitherto avowed politics of his own colour, renouncing all their old tenets, and joining the cry of Reform, which to him sounded Revolution, as keenly as the keenest of those who had been through life considered apostles of Republicanism. And I must also observe, that as, notwithstanding his own steady Toryism, he had never allowed political differences to affect his private feelings towards friends and companions, so it now happened that among the few with whom he had daily intercourse, there was hardly one he could look to for sympathy in his present reflections and anticipations. The affectionate Laidlaw had always been a stout Whig; he hailed the coming changes as the beginning of a political millenium. Ballantyne, influenced probably by his new ghostly counsellors, was by degrees leaning to a similar view of things. Cadell, his bookseller, and now the principal confidant and assistant from week to week in all his plans and speculations, had always, I presume, considered the Tory creed as a piece of weakness—to be pardoned, indeed, in a poet and an antiquary, but at best pitied in men of any other class.

Towards the end of November, Sir Walter had another slight touch of apoplexy. He recovered himself without assistance; but again consulted his physicians in Edinburgh, and by their advice adopted a still greater severity of regimen.

The reader will now understand what his frame and condition of health and spirits were, when he at length received from Ballantyne a decided protest against the novel on which he was struggling to fix the shattered energies of his memory and fancy. He replied thus:

"*Abbotsford*, 8*th Dec.* 1830.

"My Dear James,—If I were like other authors, as I flatter myself I am not, I should 'send you an order on my treasurer for a hundred ducats, wishing you all prosperity

and a little more taste;'[1] but having never supposed that any abilities I ever had were of a perpetual texture, I am glad when friends tell me what I might be long in finding out myself. Mr Cadell will shew you what I have written to him. My present idea is to go abroad for a few months, if I hold together as long. So ended the Fathers of the Novel—Fielding and Smollet—and it would be no unprofessional finish for yours—W. S."

This note to the printer, and a letter of the same date and strain to the publisher, "struck both," Mr Cadell says, "with dismay." They resolved to go out to Abbotsford, but not for a few days, because a general meeting of the creditors was at hand, and there was reason to hope that its results would enable them to appear as the bearers of sundry pieces of good news. Meantime, Sir Walter himself rallied considerably, and resolved, by way of testing his powers, while the novel hung suspended, to write a fourth epistle of Malachi Malagrowther on the public affairs of the period. The announcement of a political dissertation, at such a moment of universal excitement, and from a hand already trembling under the misgivings of a fatal malady, might well have filled Cadell and Ballantyne with new "dismay," even had they both been prepared to adopt, in the fullest extent, such views of the dangers of our state, and the remedies for them, as their friend was likely to dwell upon. They agreed that whatever they could safely do to avert this experiment must be done. Indeed they were both equally anxious to find, if it could be found, the means of withdrawing him from all literary labour, save only that of annotating his former novels. But they were not the only persons who had been, and then were, exerting all their art for that same purpose. His kind and skilful physicians, Doctors Abercrombie and Ross of Edinburgh, had over and over preached the same

[1] Archbishop of Grenada, in *Gil Blas*.

doctrine, and assured him, that if he persisted in working his brain, nothing could prevent his malady from recurring ere long in redoubled severity. He answered—"As for bidding me not work, Molly might as well put the kettle on the fire and say, *Now, don't boil.*" To myself, when I ventured to address him in a similar strain, he replied—"I understand you, and I thank you from my heart, but I must tell you at once how it is with me. I am not sure that I am quite myself in all things; but I am sure that in one point there is no change. I mean, that I foresee distinctly that if I were to be idle I should go mad. In comparison to this, death is no risk to shrink from."

The meeting of trustees and creditors took place on the 17th—Mr George Forbes (brother to the late Sir William) in the chair. There was then announced another dividend on the Ballantyne estate of three shillings in the pound—thus reducing the original amount of the debt to about L.54,000. It had been not unnaturally apprehended that the convulsed state of politics might have checked the sale of the *Magnum Opus*; but this does not seem to have been the case to any extent worth notice. The meeting was numerous—and, not contented with a renewed vote of thanks to their debtor, they passed unanimously a resolution, which was moved by Mr (now Sir James) Gibson-Craig, and seconded by Mr Thomas Allan—both, by the way, leading Whigs:—"That Sir Walter Scott be requested to accept of his furniture, plate, linens, paintings, library, and curiosities of every description, as the best means the creditors have of expressing their very high sense of his most honourable conduct, and in grateful acknowledgment for the unparalleled and most successful exertions he has made, and continues to make, for them."

On the 18th, Cadell and Ballantyne proceeded to Abbotsford, and found Sir Walter in a placid state—having evidently been much soothed and gratified with the tidings from Mr Forbes. His whole appearance was greatly bet-

ter than they had ventured to anticipate; and deferring literary questions till the morning, he made this gift from his creditors the chief subject of his conversation. He said it had taken a heavy load off his mind; he apprehended that, even if his future works should produce little money, the profits of the *Magnum*, during a limited number of years, with the sum which had been insured on his life, would be sufficient to obliterate the remaining part of the Ballantyne debt: he considered the library and museum now conveyed to him as worth at the least L.10,000, and this would enable him to make some provision for his younger children. He said that he designed to execute his last will without delay, and detailed to his friends all the particulars which the document ultimately embraced. He mentioned to them that he had recently received, through the Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam, a message from the new King, intimating his Majesty's disposition to keep in mind his late brother's kind intentions with regard to Charles Scott;—and altogether his talk, though grave, and on grave topics, was the reverse of melancholy.

Next morning, in Sir Walter's study, Ballantyne read aloud the political essay—which had (after the old fashion) grown to an extent far beyond what the author contemplated when he began his task. To print it in the Weekly Journal, as originally proposed, would now be hardly compatible with the limits of that paper: Sir Walter had resolved on a separate publication.

I believe no one ever saw this performance but the bookseller, the printer, and William Laidlaw; and I cannot pretend to have gathered any clear notion of its contents,—except that the *panacea* was the reimposition of the income-tax; and that after much reasoning in support of this measure, Sir Walter attacked the principle of Parliamentary Reform *in toto*. We need hardly suppose that he advanced any objections which would seem new to the students of the debates in both Houses during 1831 and

1832; his logic carried no conviction to the breast of his faithful amanuensis; but Mr Laidlaw assured me, nevertheless, that in his opinion no composition of Sir Walter's happiest day contained anything more admirable than the bursts of indignant and pathetic eloquence which here and there "set off a halting argument."

The critical arbiters, however, concurred in condemning the production. Cadell spoke out. He assured Sir Walter, that from not being in the habit of reading the newspapers and periodical works of the day, he had fallen behind the common rate of information on questions of practical policy; that the views he was enforcing had been already expounded by many Tories, and triumphantly answered by organs of the Liberal party; but that, be the intrinsic value and merit of these political doctrines what they might, he was quite certain that to put them forth at that season would be a measure of extreme danger for the author's personal interest; that it would throw a cloud over his general popularity, array a hundred active pens against any new work of another class that might soon follow, and perhaps even interrupt the hitherto splendid success of the Collection on which so much depended. On all these points Ballantyne, though with hesitation and diffidence, professed himself to be of Cadell's opinion. There ensued a scene of a very unpleasant sort; but by and by a kind of compromise was agreed to: the plan of a separate pamphlet, with the well-known *nom de guerre* of Malachi, was dropt; and Ballantyne was to stretch his columns so as to find room for the lucubration, adopting all possible means to mystify the public as to its parentage. This was the understanding when the conference broke up; but the unfortunate manuscript was soon afterwards committed to the flames. James Ballantyne accompanied the proof-sheet with many minute criticisms on the conduct as well as expression of the argument: the author's temper gave way; and the commentary shared the fate of the text.

Mr Cadell opens a very brief account of this affair with expressing his opinion, that "Sir Walter never recovered it;" and he ends with an altogether needless apology for his own part in it. He did only what was his duty by his venerated friend; and he did it, I doubt not, as kindly in manner as in spirit. Even if the fourth epistle of Malachi had been more like its precursors than I can well suppose it to have been, nothing could have been more unfortunate for Sir Walter than to come forward at that moment as a prominent antagonist of Reform. Such an appearance might very possibly have had the consequences to which the bookseller pointed in his remonstrance; but at all events it must have involved him in a maze of replies and rejoinders; and I think it too probable, that some of the fiery disputants of the periodical press, if not of St Stephen's Chapel, might have been ingenious enough to connect any real or fancied flaws in his argument with those circumstances in his personal condition which had for some time been darkening his own reflections with dim auguries of the fate of Swift and Marlborough. His reception of Ballantyne's affectionate candour may suggest what the effect of really hostile criticism would have been. The end was, that seeing how much he stood in need of some comfort, the printer and bookseller concurred in urging him not to despair of Count Robert. They assured him that he had attached too much importance to what had formerly been said about the defects of its opening chapters; and he agreed to resume the novel, which neither of them ever expected he would live to finish. "If we did wrong," says Cadell, "we did it for the best; we felt that to have spoken out as fairly on this as we had on the other subject, would have been to make ourselves the bearers of a death-warrant." I hope there are not many men who would have acted otherwise in their painful situation.

The next entry of the Diary has these sentences:— "Ever since my fall in February, it is very certain that I

have seemed to speak with an impediment. To add to this, I have the constant increase of my lameness—the thigh-joint, knee-joint, and ancle-joint. I move with great pain in the whole limb, and am at every minute, during an hour's walk, reminded of my mortality. I should not care for all this, if I were sure of dying handsomely; and Cadell's calculations might be sufficiently firm, though the author of Waverley had pulled on his last nightcap. Nay, they might be even more trustworthy, if remains, and memoirs, and such like, were to give a zest to the posthumous. But the fear is, lest the blow be not sufficient to destroy life, and that I should linger on, 'a driveller and a show.'"[1]

He says again—"*January* 18, 1831. Dictated to Laidlaw till about one o'clock, during which time it was rainy. Afterwards I walked, sliding about in the mud, and very uncomfortable. In fact, there is no mistaking the Three Sufficients,[2] and Fate is now straitening its circumvallations around me.—*January* 19.—Mr Laidlaw came down at ten, and we wrote till one. This is an important help to me, as it saves both my eyesight and nerves, which last are cruelly affected by finding those who look out of the windows grow gradually darker and darker. Rode out, or, more properly, was carried out into the woods to see the course of a new road, which may serve to carry off the thinnings of the trees, and for rides. It is very well lined, and will serve both for beauty and convenience. Mr Laidlaw engages to come back to dinner, and finish two or three more pages. Met my agreeable and lady-like neighbour, Mrs Brewster, on my pony, and I was actually ashamed to be seen by her.

'Sir Denis Brand! and on so poor a steed!'[3]

I believe detestable folly of this kind is the very last that leaves us. One would have thought I ought to have

[1] Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*.

[2] See Piozzi's Tale of *The Three Sufficient Warnings*.

[3] Crabbe's *Borough*, Letter xiii.

little vanity at this time o'day; but it is an abiding appur tenance of the old Adam, and I write for penance what, like a fool, I actually felt. I think the peep, real or imaginary, at the gates of death, should have given me firmness not to mind little afflictions."

On the 31st of January, Miss Scott being too unwell for a journey, Sir Walter went alone to Edinburgh for the purpose of executing his last will. He (for the first time in his native town), took up his quarters at a hotel; but the noise of the street disturbed him during the night (another evidence how much his nervous system had been shattered), and next day he was persuaded to remove to his bookseller's house in Athol Crescent. In the apartment allotted to him there, he found several little pieces of furniture which some kind person had purchased for him at the sale in Castle Street, and which he presented to Mrs Cadell. "Here," says his letter to Mrs Lockhart, "I saw various things that belonged to poor No. 39. I had many sad thoughts on seeing and handling them—but they are in kind keeping, and I was glad they had not gone to strangers."

There came on, next day, a storm of such severity that he had to remain under this friendly roof until the 9th of February. His host perceived that he was unfit for any company but the quietest, and had sometimes one old friend, Mr Thomson, Mr Clerk, or Mr Skene, to dinner—but no more. He seemed glad to see them—but they all observed him with pain. He never took the lead in conversation, and often remained altogether silent. In the mornings he wrote usually for several hours at Count Robert; and Mr Cadell remembers in particular, that on Ballantyne's reminding him that a motto was wanted for one of the chapters already finished, he looked out for a moment at the gloomy weather, and penned these lines—

"The storm increases—'tis no sunny shower,
Foster'd in the moist breast of March or April,

Or such as parched Summer cools his lips with.
Heaven's windows are flung wide; the inmost deeps
Call in hoarse greeting one upon another;
On comes the flood in all its foaming horrors,
And where's the dike shall stop it?

The Deluge: a Poem."

On the 4th February, the will was signed, and attested by Nicolson, to whom Sir Walter explained the nature of the document, adding, "I deposit it for safety in Mr Cadell's hands, and I still hope it may be long before he has occasion to produce it." Poor Nicolson was much agitated, but stammered out a deep *amen*.

Another object of this journey was to consult, on the advice of Dr Ebenezer Clarkson, a skilful mechanist, by name *Fortune*, about a contrivance for the support of the lame limb, which had of late given him much pain, as well as inconvenience. Mr Fortune produced a clever piece of handiwork, and Sir Walter felt at first great relief from the use of it: insomuch that his spirits rose to quite the old pitch, and his letter to me upon the occasion overflows with merry applications of sundry maxims and verses about *Fortune*: "*Fortes Fortuna adjuvat*," &c. &c.

Of this excursion the Diary says—"*Abbotsford, February* 9. The snow became impassable, and in Edinburgh I remained immoveably fixed for ten days, never getting out of doors, save once or twice to dinner, when I went and returned in a sedan-chair. Cadell made a point of my coming to his excellent house, where I had no less excellent an apartment, and the most kind treatment; that is, no making a show of me, for which I was in but bad tune. Abercrombie and Ross had me bled with cupping-glasses, reduced me confoundedly, and restricted me of all creature comforts. But they did me good, as I am sure they sincerely meant to do; I got rid of a giddy feeling which I had been plagued with, and have certainly returned much better. I did not neglect my testamentary affairs. I exe-

cuted my last will, leaving Walter burdened with L.1000 to Sophia, L.2000 to Anne, and the same to Charles. He is to advance them this money if they want it; if not, to pay them interest. All this is his own choice, otherwise I would have sold the books and rattletraps. I have made provisions for clearing my estate by my publications, should it be possible; and should that prove possible, from the time of such clearance being effected, to be a fund available to all my children who shall be alive or leave representatives. My bequests must, many of them, seem hypothetical."

At the beginning of March, he was anew roused about political affairs; and bestowed four days in drawing up an address against the Reform Bill, which he designed to be adopted by the Freeholders of the Forest. They, however, preferred a shorter one from the pen of a plain practical country gentleman (the late Mr Elliot Lockhart of Borthwickbrae), who had often represented them in Parliament: and Sir Walter, it is probable, felt this disappointment more acutely than he has chosen to indicate in his Journal.

"*March* 11.—This day we had our meeting at Selkirk. I found Borthwickbrae had sent the frame of an address. It was the reverse of mine in every respect. As I saw that it met the ideas of the meeting (six in number) better by far than mine, I instantly put that in my pocket. It gives me a right to decline future interference, and let the world wag—'Transeat cum cæteris erroribus.'—I will make my opinion public at every place where I shall be called upon or expected to appear; but I will not thrust myself forward again. May the Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this vow!"

He kept it in all parts. Though urged to take up his pen against the Reform Bill, by several persons of high consequence, who of course little knew his real condition of health, he resolutely refused to make any such experiment again. But he was equally resolved to be absent from no

meeting at which, as Sheriff or Deputy-Lieutenant, he might naturally be expected to appear in his place, and record his aversion to the Bill. The first of these meetings was one of the freeholders of Roxburgh, held at Jedburgh on the 21st of March, and there, to the distress and alarm of his daughter, he insisted on being present, and proposing one of the Tory resolutions,—which he did in a speech of some length, but delivered in a tone so low, and with such hesitation in utterance, that only a few detached passages were intelligible to the bulk of the audience.

"We are told" (said he) "on high authority, that France is the model for us,—that we and all the other nations ought to put ourselves to school there,—and endeavour *to take out our degrees at the University of Paris.*[1] The French are a very ingenious people; they have often tried to borrow from us, and now we should repay the obligation by borrowing a leaf from them. But I fear there is an incompatibility between the tastes and habits of France and Britain, and that we may succeed as ill in copying them, as they have hitherto done in copying us. We, in this district are proud, and with reason, that the first chain-bridge was the work of a Scotchman. It still hangs where he erected it, a pretty long time ago. The French heard of our invention, and determined to introduce it, but with great improvements and embellishments. A friend of my own saw the thing tried. It was on the Seine, at Marly. The French chain-bridge looked lighter and airier than the prototype. Every Englishman present was disposed to confess that we had been beaten at our own trade. But by and by the gates were opened, and the multitude were to pass over. It began to swing rather formidably beneath the pressure of the good company; and by the time the architect, who led the procession in great pomp and glory, reached the middle, the whole gave way, and he—worthy, patriotic artist—was the first that

[1] See *Edinburgh Review* for October 1830, p. 23.

got a ducking. They had forgot the great middle bolt—or rather, this ingenious person had conceived that to be a clumsy-looking feature, which might safely be dispensed with, while he put some invisible gimcrack of his own to supply its place."——Here Sir Walter was interrupted by violent hissing and hooting from the populace of the town, who had flocked in and occupied the greater part of the Court-House. He stood calmly till the storm subsided, and resumed; but the friend, whose notes are before me, could not catch what he said, until his voice rose with another illustration of the old style. "My friends," he said, "I am old and failing, and you think me full of very silly prejudices; but I have seen a good deal of public men, and thought a good deal of public affairs in my day, and I can't help suspecting that the manufacturers of this new constitution are like a parcel of schoolboys taking to pieces a watch which used to go tolerably well for all practical purposes, in the conceit that they can put it together again far better than the old watchmaker. I fear they will fail when they come to the reconstruction, and I should not, I confess, be much surprised if it were to turn out that their first step had been to break the main-spring."—Here he was again stopped by a Babel of contemptuous sounds, which seemed likely to render further attempts ineffectual, He, abruptly and unheard, proposed his Resolution, and then, turning to the riotous artisans, exclaimed—"I regard your gabble no more than the geese on the green." His countenance glowed with indignation, as he resumed his seat on the bench. But when, a few moments afterwards, the business being over, he rose to withdraw, every trace of passion was gone. He turned round at the door, and bowed to the assembly. Two or three, not more, renewed their hissing; he bowed again, and took leave in the words of the doomed gladiator, which I hope none who had joined in these insults understood—"MORITURUS VOS SALUTO."

CHAPTER VIII.

Apoplectic Paralysis—Miss Ferrier—Election Scenes at Jedburgh and Selkirk—Castle Dangerous begun—Excursion to Douglasdale—Visits of Captain Burns and Wordsworth—Departure from Abbotsford—London—Voyage in the Barham—Malta—Naples—Rome—Notes by Mrs Davy, Sir W. Gell, and Mr E. Cheney—Publication of the last Tales of my Landlord. 1831–1832.

After a pause of some days, the Diary has this entry for April 25, 1831:—"From Saturday 16th April, to Saturday 24th of the same month, unpleasantly occupied by ill health and its consequences. A distinct stroke of paralysis affecting both my nerves and speech, though beginning only on Monday with a very bad cold. Doctor Abercrombie was brought out by the friendly care of Cadell,—but young Clarkson had already done the needful, that is, had bled and blistered, and placed me on a very reduced diet. Whether precautions have been taken in time, I cannot tell. I think they have, though severe in themselves, beat the disease; but I am alike prepared."

The preceding paragraph has been deciphered with difficulty. The blow which it records was greatly more severe than any that had gone before it. Sir Walter's friend Lord Meadowbank had come to Abbotsford, as usual when on the Jedburgh circuit; and he would make an effort to receive the Judge in something of the old style of the place; he collected several of the neighbouring gentry to dinner, and tried to bear his wonted part in the conversation. Feeling his strength and spirits flagging, he was tempted to violate his physician's directions, and took two or three glasses of champagne, not having tasted wine for

several months before. On retiring to his dressing-room he had this severe shock of apoplectic paralysis, and kept his bed under the surgeon's hands for several days.

Shortly afterwards his eldest son and his daughter Sophia arrived at Abbotsford. It may be supposed that they both would have been near him instantly, had that been possible; but Major Scott's regiment was stationed in a very disturbed district, and his sister was in a disabled state from the relics of a fever. I followed her a week later, when we established ourselves at Chiefswood for the rest of the season. Charles Scott had some months before this time gone to Naples, as an attaché to the British embassy there. During the next six months the Major was at Abbotsford every now and then—as often as circumstances could permit him to be absent from his Hussars.

On my arrival (May 10th), I found Sir Walter to have rallied considerably; yet his appearance, as I first saw him, was the most painful sight I had ever then seen. Knowing at what time I might be expected, he had been lifted on his pony, and advanced about half a mile on the Selkirk road to meet me. He moved at a foot-pace, with Laidlaw at one stirrup, and his forester Swanston (a fine fellow, who did all he could to replace Tom Purdie) at the other. Abreast was old Peter Mathieson on horseback, with one of my children astride before him on a pillion. Sir Walter had had his head shaved, and wore a black silk night-cap under his blue bonnet. All his garments hung loose about him; his countenance was thin and haggard, and there was an obvious distortion in the muscles of one cheek. His look, however, was placid—his eye as bright as ever—perhaps brighter than it ever was in health; he smiled with the same affectionate gentleness, and though at first it was not easy to understand everything he said, he spoke cheerfully and manfully.

He had resumed, and was trying to recast, his novel.

All the medical men had urged him, by every argument, to abstain from any such attempts; but he smiled on them in silence, or answered with some jocular rhyme. One note has this postscript—a parody on a sweet lyric of Burns:—

> "Dour, dour, and eident was he,
> Dour and eident but-and-ben—
> Dour against their barley-water,
> And eident on the Bramah pen."

He told me, that in the winter he had more than once tried writing with his own hand, because he had no longer the same "pith and birr" that formerly rendered dictation easy to him; but that the experiment failed. He was now sensible he could do nothing without Laidlaw to hold the Bramah pen; adding, "Willie is a kind clerk—I see by his looks when I am pleasing him, and that pleases me." And however the cool critic may now estimate *Count Robert*, no one who then saw the author could wonder that Laidlaw's prevalent feeling in writing those pages should have been admiration. Under the full consciousness that he had sustained three or four strokes of apoplexy or palsy, or both combined, and tortured by various attendant ailments—cramp, rheumatism in half his joints, daily increasing lameness, and now of late gravel (which was, though last, not least)—he retained all the energy of his will, struggled manfully against this sea of troubles, and might well have said seriously, as he more than once both said and wrote playfully,

> "'Tis not in mortals to command success,
> But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it."[1]

To assist them in amusing him in the hours which he spent out of his study, and especially that he might be tempted to make those hours more frequent, his daughters had invited his friend the authoress of *Marriage* to come out to Abbotsford; and her coming was serviceable. For

[1] Addison's *Cato*.

she knew and loved him well, and she had seen enough of affliction akin to his, to be well skilled in dealing with it. She could not be an hour in his company without observing what filled his children with more sorrow than all the rest of the case. He would begin a story as gaily as ever, and go on, in spite of the hesitation in his speech, to tell it with picturesque effect;—but before he reached the point, it would seem as if some internal spring had given way—he paused and gazed round him with the blank anxiety of look that a blind man has when he has dropped his staff. Unthinking friends sometimes pained him sadly by giving him the catchword abruptly. I noticed the delicacy of Miss Ferrier on such occasions. Her sight was bad, and she took care not to use her glasses when he was speaking; and she affected to be also troubled with deafness, and would say—"Well, I am getting as dull as a post—I have not heard a word since you said so and so:"—being sure to mention a circumstance behind that at which he had really halted. He then took up the thread with his habitual smile of courtesy—as if forgetting his case entirely in the consideration of the lady's infirmity.—He had also a visit from the learned and pious Dr Macintosh Mackay, then minister of Laggan, but now at Dunoon—the chief author of the Gaelic Dictionary, then recently published under the auspices of the Highland Society; and this gentleman also accommodated himself, with the tact of genuine kindness, to the circumstances of the time.

In the family circle Sir Walter seldom spoke of his illness at all, and when he did, it was always in the hopeful strain. In private to Laidlaw and myself, his language corresponded exactly with the tone of the Diary—he expressed his belief that the chances of recovery were few—very few—but always added, that he considered it his duty to exert what faculties remained to him, for the sake of his creditors, to the very last. "I am very anxious," he

repeatedly said to me, "to be done, one way or other, with this Count Robert, and a little story about the Castle Dangerous, which also I had long had in my head—but after that I will attempt nothing more—at least not until I have finished all the notes for the novels, &c.; for, in case of my going off at the next slap, you would naturally have to take up that job,—and where could you get at all my old wives' stories?"

I felt the sincerest pity for Cadell and Ballantyne at this time; and advised him to lay Count Robert aside for a few weeks at all events, until the general election now going on should be over. He consented—but immediately began another series of Tales on French History—which he never completed.

On the 18th of May, I witnessed a scene which must dwell painfully on many memories besides mine. The rumours of brick-bat and bludgeon work at the hustings of this month were so prevalent, that Sir Walter's family, and not less zealously the Tory candidate (Henry Scott, heir of Harden, now Lord Polwarth), tried every means to dissuade him from attending the election for Roxburghshire. We thought overnight that we had succeeded, and indeed, as the result of the vote was not at all doubtful, there could be no good reason for his appearing on this occasion. About seven in the morning, however, when I came down stairs intending to ride over to Jedburgh, I found he had countermanded my horse, ordered his chariot to the door, and was already impatient to be off for the scene of action. We found the town in a most tempestuous state: in fact, it was almost wholly in the hands of a disciplined rabble, chiefly weavers from Hawick, who marched up and down with drums and banners, and then, after filling the Court-hall, lined the streets, grossly insulting every one who did not wear the reforming colours. Sir Walter's carriage, as it advanced towards the house of the Shortreed family, was pelted with stones; one or two fell into it, but none

touched him. He breakfasted with the widow and children of his old friend, and then walked to the Hall between me and one of the young Shortreeds. He was saluted with groans and blasphemies all the way—and I blush to add that a woman spat upon him from a window; but this last contumely I think he did not observe. The scene within was much what has been described under the date of March 21st, except that though he attempted to speak from the Bench, not a word was audible, such was the frenzy. Young Harden was returned by a great majority, 40 to 19, and we then with difficulty gained the inn where the carriage had been put up. But the aspect of the street was by that time such, that several of the gentlemen on the Whig side came and entreated us not to attempt starting from the front of our inn. One of them, Captain Russell Eliott of the Royal Navy, lived in the town, or rather in a villa adjoining it, to the rear of the Spread Eagle. Sir Walter was at last persuaded to accept this courteous adversary's invitation, and accompanied him through some winding lanes to his residence. Peter Mathieson by and by brought the carriage thither, in the same clandestine method, and we escaped from Jedburgh —with one shower more of stones at the Bridge. I believe there would have been a determined onset at that spot, but for the zeal of three or four sturdy Darnickers (Joseph Shillinglaw, carpenter, being their Coryphæus), who had, unobserved by us, clustered themselves beside the footman in the rumble. The Diary contains this brief notice:—"*May* 18.—Went to Jedburgh greatly against the wishes of my daughters. The mob were exceedingly vociferous and brutal, as they usually are nowadays. The population gathered in formidable numbers—a thousand from Hawick also—sad blackguards. The day passed with much clamour and no mischief. Henry Scott was rëelected —for the last time, I suppose. *Troja fuit.* I left the borough in the midst of abuse, and the gentle hint of

Burk Sir Walter. Much obliged to the brave lads of Jeddart."

Sir Walter fully anticipated a scene of similar violence at the Selkirk election, which occurred a few days afterwards; but though here also, by help of weavers from a distance, there was a sufficiently formidable display of Radical power, there occurred hardly anything of what had been apprehended. Here the Sheriff was at home—known intimately to everybody, himself probably knowing almost all of man's estate by head mark, and, in spite of political fanaticism, all but universally beloved as well as feared. The only person who ventured actually to hustle a Tory elector on his way to the poll, attracted Scott's observation at the moment when he was getting out of his carriage; he instantly seized the delinquent with his own hand—the man's spirit quailed, and no one coming to the rescue, he was safely committed to prison until the business of the day was over. Sir Walter had *ex officio* to preside at this election, and therefore his family would probably have made no attempt to dissuade him from attending it, even had he staid away from Jedburgh. Among the exaggerated rumours of the time, was one that Lord William Graham, the Tory candidate for Dumbartonshire, had been actually massacred by the rabble of his county town. He had been grievously maltreated, but escaped murder, though, I believe, narrowly. But I can never forget the high glow which suffused Sir Walter's countenance when he heard the overburdened story, and said calmly, in rather a clear voice, the trace of his calamitous affliction almost disappearing for the moment—"Well, Lord William died at his post—

'Non aliter cineres mando jacere meos.'"[1]

I am well pleased that the ancient capital of the *Forest* did not stain its fair name upon this miserable occasion; and I am sorry for Jedburgh and Hawick. This last town

[1] Martial, i. 89.

stands almost within sight of Branksome Hall, overhanging, also, *sweet Teviot's silver tide.* The civilized American or Australian will curse these places, of which he would never have heard but for Scott, as he passes through them in some distant century, when perhaps all that remains of our national glories may be the high literature adopted and extended in new lands planted from our blood.

No doubt these disturbances of the general election had an unfavourable influence on the invalid. When they were over, he grew calmer and more collected; his speech became, after a little time, much clearer, and such were the symptoms of energy still about him, that I began to think a restoration not hopeless. Some business called me to London about the middle of June, and when I returned at the end of three weeks, I had the satisfaction to find that he had been gradually amending.

But, alas! the first use he made of this partial renovation, had been to expose his brain once more to an imaginative task. He began his *Castle Dangerous*—the groundwork being again an old story which he had told in print, many years before, in a rapid manner.[1] And now, for the first time, he left Ballantyne out of his secret. He thus writes to Cadell on the 3d of July:—"I intend to tell this little matter to nobody but Lockhart. Perhaps not even to him; certainly not to J. B., who having turned his back on his old political friends, will no longer have a claim to be a secretary in such matters, though I shall always be glad to befriend him." James's criticisms on Count Robert had wounded him—the Diary, already quoted, shews how severely. The last visit this old ally ever paid at Abbotsford, occurred a week or two after. His newspaper had by this time espoused openly the cause of the Reform Bill—and some unpleasant conversation took place on that subject, which might well be a sore one for both parties—and not least, consider-

[1] See Essay on Chivalry—1814.

ing the whole of his personal history, for Mr Ballantyne. Next morning, being Sunday, he disappeared abruptly, without saying farewell; and when Scott understood that he had signified an opinion that the reading of the Church service, with a sermon from South or Barrow, would be a poor substitute for the mystical eloquence of some new idol down the vale, he expressed considerable disgust. They never met again in this world. In truth, Ballantyne's health also was already much broken; and if Scott had been entirely himself, he would not have failed to connect that circumstance in a charitable way with this never strong-minded man's recent abandonment of his own old *terra firma*, both religious and political. But this is a subject on which we have no title to dwell. Sir Walter's misgivings about himself, if I read him aright, now rendered him desirous of external support; but this his spirit would fain suppress and disguise even from itself. When I again saw him on the 13th of this month, he shewed me several sheets of the new romance, and told me how he had designed at first to have it printed by somebody else than Ballantyne, but that, on reflection, he had shrunk from hurting his feelings on so tender a point. I found, however, that he had neither invited nor received any opinion from James as to what he had written, but that he had taken an alarm lest he should fall into some blunder about the scenery fixed on (which he had never seen but once when a schoolboy), and had kept the sheets in proof until I should come back and accompany him in a short excursion to Lanarkshire. He was anxious in particular to see the tombs in the Church of St Bride, adjoining the site of his "Castle Dangerous," of which Mr Blore had shewn him drawings; and he hoped to pick up some of the minute traditions, in which he had always delighted, among the inhabitants of Douglasdale.

We set out early on the 18th, and ascended the Tweed, passing in succession Yair, Ashestiel, Innerleithen, Tra-

quair, and many more scenes dear to his early life, and celebrated in his writings. The morning was still, but gloomy, and at length we had some thunder. It seemed to excite him vividly,—and on coming soon afterwards within view of that remarkable edifice (Drochel Castle) on the moorland ridge between Tweed and Clyde, which was begun, but never finished, by the Regent Morton—a gigantic ruin typical of his ambition—Sir Walter could hardly be restrained from making some effort to reach it. Morton, too, was a Douglas, and that name was at present his charm of charms. We pushed on to Biggar, however, and reaching it towards sunset, were detained there for some time by want of horses. It was soon discovered who he was; the population of the little town turned out; and he was evidently gratified with their respectful curiosity. It was the first time I observed him otherwise than annoyed upon such an occasion. Jedburgh, no doubt, hung on his mind, and he might be pleased to find that political differences did not interfere everywhere with his reception among his countrymen. But I fancy the cause lay deeper.

Another symptom that distressed me during this journey was, that he seemed constantly to be setting tasks to his memory. It was not as of old, when, if any one quoted a verse, he, from the fulness of his heart, could not help repeating the context. He was obviously in fear that this prodigious engine was losing its tenacity, and taking every occasion to rub and stretch it. He sometimes failed, and gave it up with *miseria cogitandi* in his eye. At other times he succeeded to admiration, and smiled as he closed his recital. About a mile beyond Biggar, we overtook a parcel of carters, one of whom was maltreating his horse, and Sir Walter called to him from the carriage-window in great indignation. The man looked and spoke insolently; and as we drove on, he used some strong expressions about what he would have done had this happened within the bounds of his sheriffship. As he continued moved in an

uncommon degree, I said, jokingly, that I wondered his porridge diet had left his blood so warm, and quoted Prior's

> "Was ever Tartar fierce or cruel
> Upon a mess of water-gruel?"

He smiled graciously, and extemporised this variation of the next couplet—

> "Yet who shall stand the Sheriff's force,
> If *Selkirk* carter beats his horse?"[1]

This seemed to put him into the train of Prior, and he repeated several striking passages both of the Alma and the Solomon. He was still at this when we reached a longish hill, and he got out to walk a little. As we climbed the ascent, he leaning heavily on my shoulder, we were met by a couple of beggars, who were, or professed to be, old soldiers both of Egypt and the Peninsula. One of them wanted a leg, which circumstance alone would have opened Scott's purse-strings, though for *ex facie* a sad old blackguard; but the fellow had recognised his person, as it happened, and in asking an alms, bade God bless him fervently by his name. The mendicants went on their way, and we stood breathing on the knoll. Sir Walter followed them with his eye, and planting his stick firmly on the sod, repeated without break or hesitation Prior's verses to the historian Mezeray. That he applied them to himself, was touchingly obvious—

> "Whate'er thy countrymen have done,
> By law and wit, by sword and gun,
> In thee is faithfully recited;
> And all the living world that view
> Thy works, give thee the praises due—
> At once instructed and delighted.
>
> Yet for the fame of all these deeds,
> What beggar in the Invalides,

[1] "But who shall stand his rage and force,
If first he rides, then eats his horse?" *Alma.*

With lameness broke, with blindness smitten,
Wished ever decently to die,
To have been either Mezeray—
Or any monarch he has written?
The man in graver tragic known,
Though his best part long since was done,
Still on the stage desires to tarry;
And he who play'd the harlequin,
After the jest, still loads the scene,
Unwilling to retire, though weary."

We spent the night at the Inn of Douglas Mill, and at an early hour next morning proceeded to inspect, under the care of one of Lord Douglas's tenants, Mr Haddow, the Castle, the strange old *bourg*, the Church, long since deserted as a place of worship, and the very extraordinary monuments of the most heroic and powerful family in the annals of Scotland. That works of sculpture equal to any of the fourteenth century in Westminster Abbey (for such they certainly were, though much mutilated by Cromwell's soldiery) should be found in so remote an inland place, attests strikingly the boundless resources of those haughty lords, "whose coronet," as Scott says, "so often counterpoised the crown." The effigy of the best friend of Bruce is among the number, and represents him cross-legged, as having fallen in battle with the Saracen, when on his way to Jerusalem with the heart of his king. The whole people of the barony gathered round the doors, and two persons of extreme old age,—one so old that he well remembered *Duke Willie*—that is to say, the Conqueror of Culloden—were introduced to tell all their local legends, while Sir Walter examined by torchlight these silent witnesses of past greatness. It was a strange and melancholy scene, and its recollection prompted some passages in Castle Dangerous, which might almost have been written at the same time with Lammermoor. The appearance of the village, too, is most truly transferred to the novel; and I may say the same of the surrounding landscape. We

descended into a sort of crypt in which the Douglasses were buried until about a century ago, when there was room for no more; the leaden coffins around the wall being piled on each other, until the lower ones had been pressed flat as sheets of pasteboard, while the floor itself was entirely paved with others of comparatively modern date, on which coronets and inscriptions might be traced. Here the silver case that once held the noble heart of the Good Lord James himself, is still pointed out. It is in the form of a heart, which, in memory of his glorious mission and fate, occupies ever since the chief place in the blazon of his posterity:—

> "The bloody heart blazed in the van,
> Announcing Douglas' dreaded name."

This charnel-house, too, will be recognised easily. Of the redoubted Castle itself, there remains but a small detached fragment, covered with ivy, close to the present mansion; but he hung over it long, or rather sat beside it, drawing outlines on the turf, and arranging in his fancy the sweep of the old precincts. Before the subjacent and surrounding lake and morass were drained, the position must indeed have been the perfect model of solitary strength. The crowd had followed us, and were lingering about to see him once more as he got into his carriage. They attended him to the spot where it was waiting, in perfect silence. It was not like a mob, but a procession. He was again obviously gratified, and saluted them with an earnest yet placid air, as he took his leave.

It was again a darkish cloudy day, with some occasional mutterings of distant thunder, and perhaps the state of the atmosphere told upon Sir Walter's nerves; but I had never before seen him so sensitive as he was all the morning after this inspection of Douglas. As we drove over the high table-land of Lesmahago, he repeated I know not how many verses from Winton, Barbour, and Blind Harry, with, I believe, almost every stanza of Dunbar's elegy on the

deaths of the Makers (poets.) It was now that I saw him, such as he paints himself in one or two passages of his Diary, but such as his companions in the meridian vigour of his life never saw him—"the rushing of a brook, or the sighing of the summer breeze, bringing the tears into his eyes not unpleasantly." Bodily weakness laid the delicacy of the organization bare, over which he had prided himself in wearing a sort of half-stoical mask. High and exalted feelings, indeed, he had never been able to keep concealed, but he had shrunk from exhibiting to human eye the softer and gentler emotions which now trembled to the surface. He strove against it even now, and presently came back from the Lament of the Makers, to his Douglasses, and chanted, rather than repeated, in a sort of deep and glowing, though not distinct recitative, his first favourite among all the ballads,—

> "It was about the Lammas tide,
> When husbandmen do win their day,
> That the Doughty Douglas bownde him to ride
> To England to drive a prey,"—

—down to the closing stanzas, which again left him in tears,—

> "My wound is deep—I fain would sleep—
> Take thou the vanguard of the three,
> And hide me beneath the bracken-bush,
> That grows on yonder lily lee."

We reached my brother's house on the Clyde some time before the dinner-hour, and Sir Walter appeared among the friends who received him there with much of his old graceful composure of courtesy. He walked about a little—was pleased with the progress made in some building operations, and especially commended my brother for having given his bridge "ribs like Bothwell." Greenshields was at hand, and he talked to him cheerfully, while the sculptor devoured his features, as under a solemn sense that they were before his eyes for the last time. My bro-

ther had taken care to have no company at dinner except two or three near neighbours, with whom Sir Walter had been familiar through life, and whose entreaties it had been impossible to resist. One of these was the late Mr Elliott Lockhart of Cleghorn and Borthwickbrae—long Member of Parliament for Selkirkshire—the same whose anti-reform address had been preferred to the Sheriff's by the freeholders of that county in the preceding March. But, alas! very soon after that address was accepted, Borthwickbrae had a shock of paralysis as severe as any his old friend had as yet sustained. He, too, had rallied beyond expectation, and his family were more hopeful, perhaps, than the other's dared to be. Sir Walter and he had not met for a few years—not since they rode side by side, as I well remember, on a merry day's sport at Bowhill; and I need not tell any one who knew Borthwickbrae, that a finer or more gallant specimen of the Border gentleman than he was in his prime, never cheered a hunting-field. When they now met (*heu quantum mutati!*) each saw his own case glassed in the other, and neither of their manly hearts could well contain itself as they embraced. Each exerted himself to the utmost—indeed far too much, and they were both tempted to transgress the laws of their physicians.

At night Scott promised to visit Cleghorn on his way home, but next morning, at breakfast, came a messenger to inform us that the laird, on returning to his own house, fell down in another fit, and was now despaired of. Immediately, although he had intended to remain two days, Sir Walter drew my brother aside, and besought him to lend him horses as far as Lanark, for that he must set off with the least possible delay. He would listen to no persuasions.—"No, William," he said, "this is a sad warning. I must home to work while it is called day; for the night cometh when no man can work. I put that text, many a year ago, on my dial-stone; but it often preached in vain."[1]

[1] This dial-stone, which used to stand in front of the old cottage,

We started accordingly, and making rather a forced march, reached Abbotsford the same night. During the journey, he was more silent than I ever before found him; he seemed to be wrapt in thought, and was but seldom roused to take notice of any object we passed. The little he said was mostly about Castle Dangerous, which he now seemed to feel sure he could finish in a fortnight, though his observation of the locality must needs cost the re-writing of several passages in the chapters already put into type.

For two or three weeks he bent himself sedulously to his task—and concluded both Castle Dangerous and the long-suspended Count Robert. By this time he had submitted to the recommendation of all his medical friends, and agreed to spend the coming winter away from Abbotsford, among new scenes, in a more genial climate, and above all (so he promised), in complete abstinence from all literary labour. When Captain Basil Hall understood that he had resolved on wintering at Naples (where, as has been mentioned, his son Charles was attached to the British Legation), it occurred to the zealous sailor that on such an occasion as this all thoughts of political difference ought to be dismissed,—and he, unknown to Scott, addressed a letter to Sir James Graham, then First Lord of the Admiralty, stating the condition of his friend's health, and his proposed plan, and suggesting that it would be a fit and graceful thing for the King's Government to place a frigate at his disposal. Sir James replied that it afforded his Royal Master, as well as himself, the sincerest satisfaction to comply with this hint; and that whenever Sir Walter found it convenient to come southwards, a vessel should be prepared for his reception. Nothing could be handsomer than the way in which all this matter was arranged, and Scott, deeply gratified, exclaimed that things were yet in the hands of gentlemen;

and is now in the centre of the garden, is inscribed, ΝΥΞ ΓΑΡ ΕΡΧΕΤΑΙ. The same Greek words made the legend on Dr Johnson's watch: and he had probably taken the hint from Boswell.

but that he feared they had been undermining the state of society which required such persons as themselves to be at the head.

He had no wish, however, to leave Abbotsford until the approach of winter ; and having dismissed his Tales, seemed to say to himself that he would enjoy his dear valley for the intervening weeks, draw friends about him, revisit all the familiar scenes in his neighbourhood once more ; and if he were never to come back, store himself with the most agreeable recollections in his power, and so conduct himself as to bequeath to us who surrounded him a last stock of gentle impressions. He continued to work a little at his notes and prefaces, the *Reliquiæ* of Oldbuck, and a private tome entitled *Sylva Abbotsfordiensis*, but did not fatigue himself; and when once all plans were settled, and all cares in so far as possible set aside, his health and spirits certainly rallied most wonderfully. He had settled that my wife and I should dine at Abbotsford, and he and Anne at Chiefswood, day about ; and this rule was seldom departed from. Both at home and in the cottage he was willing to have a few guests, so they were not strangers. Mr James (the accomplished and popular novelist) and his lady, who this season lived at Maxpoffle, and Mr Archdeacon Williams,[1] who was spending his vacation at Melrose, were welcome additions, and frequently so, to his accustomed circle of the Scotts of Harden, the Pringles of Whytbank and Clifton, the Russels of Ashestiel, the Brewsters, and the Fergussons. Sir Walter observed the prescribed diet, on the whole, pretty accurately; and seemed, when in the midst of his family and friends, always tranquil—sometimes cheerful. On one or two occasions he was even gay; particularly, I think, when the weather was so fine as to tempt us to dine in the marble hall at Abbotsford, or at an early hour under the trees at Chiefswood.

[1] The Archdeacon, Charles Scott's early tutor, was at this time Rector of the New Edinburgh Academy.

He had the gratification of a visit from Mr Adolphus, and accompanied him one day as far as Oakwood and the Linns of Ettrick. He also received and made several little excursions with the great artist, Turner, whose errand to Scotland was connected with the collective edition of his Poems. One morning, in particular, he carried Mr Turner, with Mr Skene and myself, to Smailholm Crags; and it was in lounging about them, while the painter did his sketch, that he told his "kind Samaritan" how the habit of lying on the turf there among the sheep and lambs, when a lame infant, had given his mind a peculiar tenderness for those animals, which it had ever since retained. He seemed to enjoy the scene of his childhood—yet there was many a touch of sadness both in his eye and his voice. He then carried us to Dryburgh, but excused himself from attending Mr Turner into the inclosure. Skene and I perceived that it would be better for us to leave him alone, and we both accompanied Turner. Lastly, the painter must not omit Bemerside. The good laird and lady were of course flattered, and after walking about a little while among the huge old trees that surround their tower, we ascended to, I think, the third tier of its vaulted apartments, and had luncheon in a stately hall, arched also in stone, but with well-sized windows (as being out of harm's way) duly blazoned with shields and crests, and the time-honoured motto, BETIDE, BETIDE—being the first words of a prophetic couplet ascribed to Thomas the Rhymer:—

"Betide, betide, whate'er betide,
There shall be Haigs in Bemerside."

Mr Turner's sketch of this picturesque Peel, and its "brotherhood of venerable trees," is probably familiar to most of my readers.

Mr Cadell brought the artist to Abbotsford, and was also of this Bemerside party. I must not omit to record how gratefully all Sir Walter's family felt the delicate and watchful tenderness of Mr Cadell's conduct on this

occasion. He so managed that the Novels just finished should remain in types, but not thrown off until the author should have departed; so as to give opportunity for revising and abridging them. He might well be the bearer of cheering news as to their greater concerns, for the sale of the *Magnum* had, in spite of political turbulences and distractions, gone on successfully. But he probably strained a point to make things appear still better than they really were. He certainly spoke so as to satisfy his friend that he need give himself no sort of uneasiness about the pecuniary results of idleness and travel. It was about this time that we observed Sir Walter beginning to entertain the notion that his debts were paid off. By degrees, dwelling on this fancy, he believed in it fully and implicitly. It was a gross delusion—but neither Cadell nor any one else had the heart to disturb it by any formal statement of figures. It contributed greatly more than any circumstance besides to soothe Sir Walter's feelings, when it became at last necessary that he should tear himself from his land and his house, and the trees which he had nursed. And with all that was done and forborne, the hour when it came was a most heavy one.

Very near the end there came some unexpected things to cast a sunset brilliancy over Abbotsford. His son, the Major, arrived with tidings that he had obtained leave of absence from his regiment, and should be in readiness to sail with his father. This was a mighty relief to us all, on Miss Scott's account as well as his, for my occupations did not permit me to think of going with him, and there was no other near connexion at hand. But Sir Walter was delighted—indeed, dearly as he loved all his children, he had a pride in the Major that stood quite by itself, and the hearty approbation which looked through his eyes whenever turned on him, sparkled brighter than ever as his own physical strength decayed. Young Walter had on this oc-

casion sent down a horse or two to winter at Abbotsford. One was a remarkably tall and handsome animal, jet black all over, and when the Major appeared on it one morning, equipped for a little sport with the greyhounds, Sir Walter insisted on being put upon Douce Davy, and conducted as far as the Cauldshield's Loch to see the day's work begun. He halted on the high bank to the north of the lake, and I remained to hold his bridle, in case of any frisk on the part of the Covenanter at the " tumult great of dogs and men." We witnessed a very pretty chase or two on the opposite side of the water—but his eye followed always the tall black steed and his rider. The father might well assure Lady Davy, that " a handsomer fellow never put foot into stirrup." But when he took a very high wall of loose stones, at which everybody else *craned*, as easily and elegantly as if it had been a puddle in his stride, the old man's rapture was extreme. " Look at him !" said he—" only look at him ! Now, isn't he a fine fellow ?"—This was the last time, I believe, that Sir Walter mounted on horseback.

On the 17th of September the old splendour of Abbotsford was, after a long interval, and for the last time, revived. Captain James Glencairn Burns, son of the poet, had come home from India, and Sir Walter invited him (with his wife, and their cicerones Mr and Mrs M'Diarmid of Dumfries) to spend a day under his roof. The neighbouring gentry were assembled, and having his son to help him, Sir Walter did most gracefully the honours of the table.

On the 20th Mrs Lockhart set out for London to prepare for her father's reception there ; and on the following day Mr Wordsworth and his daughter arrived from Westmoreland to take farewell of him. This was a very fortunate circumstance : nothing could have gratified Sir Walter more, or sustained him better, if he needed any support from without. On the 22d—all his arrangements being

completed, and Laidlaw having received a paper of instructions, the last article of which repeats the caution to be "very careful of the dogs"—these two great poets, who had through life loved each other well, and, in spite of very different theories as to art, appreciated each other's genius more justly than inferior spirits ever did either of them, spent the morning together in a visit to Newark. Hence *Yarrow Revisited*—the last of the three poems by which Wordsworth has connected his name to all time with the most romantic of Scottish streams.

Sitting that evening in the library, Sir Walter said a good deal about the singularity that Fielding and Smollett had both been driven abroad by declining health, and never returned;—which circumstance, though his language was rather cheerful at this time, he had often before alluded to in a darker fashion; and Mr Wordsworth expressed his regret that neither of those great masters of romance appeared to have been surrounded with any due marks of respect in the close of life. I happened to observe that Cervantes, on his last journey to Madrid, met with an incident which seemed to have given him no common satisfaction. Sir Walter did not remember the passage, and desired me to find it out in the life by Pellicer which was at hand, and translate it. I did so, and he listened with lively though pensive interest. Our friend Allan, the historical painter, had also come out that day from Edinburgh, and he since told me that he remembers nothing he ever saw with so much sad pleasure as the attitudes and aspect of Scott and Wordsworth as the story went on. Mr Wordsworth was at that time, I should notice—though indeed his noble stanzas tell it—in but a feeble state of general health. He was, moreover, suffering so much from some malady in his eyes, that he wore a deep green shade over them. Thus he sat between Sir Walter and his daughter: *absit omen*—but it was no wonder that Allan thought as much of Milton as of Cervantes. The anecdote of the

young student's raptures on discovering that he had been riding all day with the author of Don Quixote, is introduced in the Preface to Count Robert and Castle Dangerous, which—(for I may not return to the subject)—came out at the close of November in four volumes, as the Fourth Series of Tales of My Landlord.

The following Sonnet was, no doubt, composed by Mr Wordsworth that same evening:—

"A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of power assembled there complain
For kindred power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye mourners! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptred King or laurelled Conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of Ocean, and the Midland Sea,
Wafting your charge to soft Parthenope."

Early on the 23d of September 1831, Sir Walter left Abbotsford, attended by his daughter Anne and myself, and we reached London by easy stages on the 28th, having spent one day at Rokeby. I have nothing to mention of this journey except that notwithstanding all his infirmities, he would not pass any object to which he had ever attached special interest, without getting out of the carriage to revisit it. His anxiety (for example) about the gigantic British or Danish effigy in the churchyard at Penrith, which we had all seen dozens of times before, seemed as great as if not a year had fled since 1797. It may be supposed that his parting with Mr Morritt was a grave one. Finding that he had left the ring he then usually wore, behind him at one of the inns on the road, he wrote to Morritt to make enquiries after it, as it had been dug out of the ruins of

Hermitage Castle, and probably belonged of yore to one of the "Dark Knights of Liddesdale;" and if recovered, to keep it until he should come back to reclaim it, but, in the meantime, to wear it for his sake. The ring, which is a broad belt of silver with an angel holding the heart of Douglas, was found, and having been worn to the end of life by Mr Morritt, was by him bequeathed to his friend's grandson.

Sir Walter arrived in London in the midst of the Lords' debates on the second Reform Bill, and the ferocious demonstrations of the populace on its rejection were in part witnessed by him. He saw the houses of several of the chief Tories, and above all, that of the Duke of Wellington, shattered and almost sacked. He heard of violence offered to the persons of some of his own noble friends; and having been invited to attend the christening of the infant heir of Buccleuch, whose godfather the King had proposed to be, he had the pain to understand that the ceremony must be adjourned, because it was not considered safe for his Majesty to visit, for such a purpose, the palace of one of his most amiable as well as illustrious peers.

During his stay, which was till the 23d of October, Sir Walter called on many of his old friends; but he accepted of no hospitalities except breakfasting once with Sir Robert Inglis on Clapham Common, and twice with Lady Gifford at Roehampton. Usually he worked a little in the morning at notes for the *Magnum.*

Dr Robert Fergusson (now one of her Majesty's physicians), one of the family with which Sir Walter had lived all his days in such brother-like affection, saw him constantly while he remained in the Regent's Park; and though neither the invalid nor his children could fancy any other medical advice necessary, it was only due to Fergusson that some of his seniors should be called in occasionally with him. Sir Henry Halford (whom Scott reverenced as the friend of Baillie) and Dr Henry Holland (an

esteemed friend of his own) came accordingly; and all the three concurred in recognising evidence that there was incipient disease in the brain. There were still, however, such symptoms of remaining vigour, that they flattered themselves, if their patient would submit to a total intermission of all literary labour during some considerable space of time, the malady might yet be arrested. When they left him after the first inspection, they withdrew into an adjoining room, and on soon rejoining him found that in the interim he had wheeled his chair into a dark corner, so that he might see their faces without their being able to read his. When he was informed of the comparatively favourable views they entertained, he expressed great thankfulness; promised to obey all their directions as to diet and repose most scrupulously; and he did not conceal from them, that "he had feared insanity and feared *them*."

The following are extracts from his Diary:—"*London, October* 2, 1831.—I have been very ill, and if not quite unable to write, I have been unfit to do it. I have wrought, however, at two Waverley things, but not well. A total prostration of bodily strength is my chief complaint. I cannot walk half a mile. There is, besides, some mental confusion, with the extent of which I am not, perhaps, fully acquainted. I am perhaps setting. I am myself inclined to think so, and like a day that has been admired as a fine one, the light of it sets down amid mists and storms. I neither regret nor fear the approach of death, if it is coming. I would compound for a little pain instead of this heartless muddiness of mind. The expense of this journey, &c. will be considerable; yet these heavy burdens could be easily borne if I were to be the Walter Scott I once was—but the change is great. And the ruin which I fear involves that of my country. I fancy the instances of Euthanasia are not in very serious cases very common. Instances there certainly are among the learned and the unlearned—Dr Black, Tom Purdie. I should like, if it

pleased God, to slip off in such a quiet way ; but we must take what fate sends. I have not warm hopes of being myself again."

Sir Walter seemed to enjoy having one or two friends to meet him at dinner—and a few more in the evenings. Among others he thus saw, more than once, Lord Montagu and his family, the Marchioness of Stafford, (afterwards Duchess of Sutherland) the Macleods of Macleod, Lady Davy, Mr Rogers, Lord Mahon, Mr Murray, Lord Dudley, Lord Melville, the Bishop of Exeter, Lord Ashley, Sir David Wilkie, Mr Thomas Moore, Mr Milman, Mr Washington Irving, and his three medical friends. At this time the Reform Bill for Scotland was in discussion in the House of Commons. Mr Croker made a very brilliant speech in opposition to it, and was not sorry to have it said, that he had owed his inspiration, in no small degree, to having risen from the table at which Scott sat by his side. But the most regular of the evening visitors was, I think, Sir James Mackintosh. That master of every social charm and grace was himself in very feeble health; and whatever might have been the auguries of others, it struck me that there was uppermost with him at every parting the anticipation that they might never meet again. Sir James's kind assiduity was the more welcome, that his appearance banished the politics of the hour, on which his old friend's thoughts were too apt to brood. Their conversation, wherever it might begin, was sure to fasten ere long on Lochaber.

Before quitting home Scott had directed a humble monument to be prepared for the grave of Helen Walker, the original of Jeanie Deans, in the churchyard of Irongray. On the 18th he penned the epitaph now inscribed there—and also the pathetic farewell in the last page of the preface to *Count Robert of Paris*.

On the 19th, the Hon. Henry Duncan, R.N., store-

keeper of the Ordnance, who had taken a great deal of trouble in arranging matters for the voyage, called on Sir Walter to introduce to him Captain, now Sir Hugh Pigot, the commanding-officer of the Barham—who expected to sail on the 24th.

"*Oct.* 23.—Misty morning—looks like a yellow fog, which is the curse of London. I would hardly take my share of it for a share of its wealth and its curiosity—a vile double distilled fog, of the most intolerable kind. Children scarce stirring yet, but Baby and Macaw beginning their Macaw notes."—Dr Fergusson, calling early, found Sir Walter with this page of his Diary before him. "As he was still working at his MS." says the Doctor, "I offered to retire, but was not permitted. On my saying I had come to take leave of him before he quitted England, he exclaimed, with much excitement—'England is no longer a place for an honest man. I shall not live to find it so: you may.' He then broke out into the details of a very favourite superstition of his, that the middle of every century had always been marked by some great convulsion or calamity in this island. The alterations which had taken place in his mind and person since I had seen him, three years before, were very apparent. The expression of the countenance and the play of features were changed by slight palsy of one cheek. His utterance was so thick and indistinct as to make it very difficult for any but those accustomed to hear it, to gather his meaning. His gait was less firm and assured than ever; but his power of self-command, his social tact, and his benevolent courtesy, the habits of a life, remained untouched by a malady which had obscured the higher powers of his intellect."

After breakfast, Sir Walter, accompanied by his son and both his daughters, set off for Portsmouth; and Captain Basil Hall had the kindness to precede them by an early coach, and prepare everything for their reception at the hotel. In changing horses at Guilford, Sir Walter got out

of his carriage, and very narrowly escaped being run over by a stage-coach. Of all "the habits of a life," none clung longer to him than his extreme repugnance to being helped in anything. It was late before he came to lean, as a matter of course, when walking, upon any one but Tom Purdie; and, in the sequel, this proud feeling, coupled with increasing tendency to abstraction of mind, often exposed him to imminent hazard.

The Barham could not sail for a week. During this interval, Sir Walter scarcely stirred from his hotel, being unwilling to display his infirmities to the crowd of gazers who besieged him whenever he appeared. He received, however, deputations of the literary and scientific societies of the town, and all other visitors, with his usual ease and courtesy: and he might well be gratified with the extraordinary marks of deference paid him by the official persons who could in any way contribute to his comfort. The first Lord of the Admiralty, Sir James Graham, and the Secretary, Sir John Barrow, both appeared in person, to ascertain that nothing had been neglected for his accommodation on board the frigate. The Admiral, Sir Thomas Foley, placed his barge at his disposal; the Governor, Sir Colin Campbell, and all the chief officers, naval and military, seemed to strive with each other in attention to him and his companions. In Hall's Third Series of Fragments of Voyages, some interesting details have long since been made public:—it may be sufficient to say here that had Captain Pigot and his gallant shipmates been appointed to convey a Prince of the Blood, more anxious and delicate exertions could not have been made, either in altering the interior of the vessel, so as to meet the wants of the passengers, or afterwards, throughout the voyage, in rendering it easy, comfortable, and as far as might be, interesting and amusing.

On the 29th, the wind changed, and the Barham got under weigh. After a few days, when they had passed the

Bay of Biscay, Sir Walter ceased to be annoyed with sea-sickness, and sat most of his time on deck, enjoying apparently the air, the scenery, and above all the ship itself, the beautiful discipline practised in all things, and the martial exercises of the men. In Sir Hugh Pigot, Lieutenant (now Admiral Sir Baldwin) Walker, the physician, Dr Liddell, and I believe in many others of the officers, he had highly intelligent as well as polished companions. The course was often altered, for the express purpose of giving him a glimpse of some famous place; and it was only the temptation of a singularly propitious breeze that prevented a halt at Algiers.

On the 20th November, they came upon that remarkable phenomenon, the sudden creation of a submarine volcano, which bore, during its very brief date, the name of Graham's Island. Four months had elapsed since it "arose from out the azure main"—and in a few days more it disappeared. "Already," as Dr Davy says, "its crumbling masses were falling to pieces from the pressure of the hand or foot." Yet nothing could prevent Sir Walter from landing on it—and in a letter of the following week he thus describes his adventure to Mr Skene:—"Not being able to borrow your fingers, those of the Captain's clerk have been put in requisition for the inclosed sketch, and the notes adjoined are as accurate as can be expected from a hurried visit. You have a view of the island, very much as it shews at present; but nothing is more certain than that it is on the eve of a very important change, though in what respect is doubtful. I saw a portion of about five or six feet in height give way under the feet of one of our companions on the very ridge of the southern corner, and become completely annihilated, giving us some anxiety for the fate of our friend, till the dust and confusion of the dispersed pinnacle had subsided. You know my old talents for horsemanship. Finding the earth, or what seemed a substitute for it, sink at every step up to the knee, so as to

make walking for an infirm and heavy man nearly impossible, I mounted the shoulders of an able and willing seaman, and by dint of his exertions, rode nearly to the top of the island. I would have given a great deal for you, my friend, the frequent and willing supplier of my defects; but on this journey, though undertaken late in life, I have found, from the benevolence of my companions, that when one man's strength was insufficient to supply my deficiencies, I had the willing aid of twenty if it could be useful. I have sent you one of the largest blocks of lava which I could find on the islet."

At Malta, which he reached on the 22d, Sir Walter found several friends of former days. The Right Honourable John Hookham Frere had been resident there for several years, the captive of the enchanting climate and the romantic monuments of the old chivalry.[1] Sir John Stoddart, the Chief Judge, had known the Poet ever since the days of Lasswade; and the Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel Seymour Bathurst, had often met him under the roof of his father, the late Earl Bathurst. Captain Dawson, husband to Lord Kinnedder's eldest daughter, was of the garrison, and Sir Walter felt as if he were about to meet a daughter of his own in the Euphemia Erskine who had so often sat upon his knee. She immediately joined him, and insisted on being allowed to partake his quarantine. Lastly, Dr John Davy, the brother of his illustrious friend, was at the head of the medical staff; and this gentleman's presence was welcome indeed to the Major and Miss Scott, as well as to their father, for he had already begun to be more negligent as to his diet, and they dreaded his removal from the skilful watch of Dr Liddell.

Nor less so was the society of Mrs Davy—the daughter of an old acquaintance and brother advocate, and indeed almost a next-door neighbour in Edinburgh (Mr Fletcher). This lady's private journal, Sir Walter's own diary (though

[1] Mr Frere died there in 1846.

hardly legible), and several letters to Laidlaw and myself, tell of extraordinary honours lavished on him throughout his stay. The Lieutenant-Governor had arranged that he should not be driven to the ordinary lazaretto, but to Fort Manuel, where apartments were ready for him and his party; and Mrs Davy, accompanying Colonel and Mrs Bathurst on their first visit there, says, the number of boats and the bustle about the sombre landing-place of the Marsa Muscat "gave token even then"—that is, in the midst of the terror for the cholera—"of an illustrious arrival." The quarantine lasted nine days, but Sir Walter, she says, "held a daily levee" to receive the numerous visitors that flocked to converse with him across the barrier—which Mr Frere, notorious for absence of mind, more than once all but transgressed. On being set at liberty, Sir Walter removed to a hotel close to Dr Davy's residence in the Strada Ponente. He, chiefly under Mrs Davy's escort, visited the knightly antiquities of La Valetta, the Church of St John and its rich monuments, the deserted palaces and libraries of the heroic brotherhood,—with especial interest the spot where the famous pirate Dragut met his death, and the Via Stretta, where the young knights of Malta used to fight their duels. "This town," he said to Mrs Davy, "is quite like a dream—it will go hard but I make something of this:"—and in his letters he speaks repeatedly of his purpose to frame a new work connected with the Order. But the hospitalities of Malta were too much for him. The garrison-officers got up a ball in his honour, and the dignitaries gave dinner after dinner. He, like most persons afflicted with paralytic disease, had begun to lose command over himself at table, and a very slight neglect of his physician's orders was now sure to infer a penalty. He seems to have escaped another fit of apoplexy only by the promptitude of Dr Davy's lancet: and his children were well pleased when he consented to rëembark in the Barham for Naples on the 14th December. Mrs Davy speaks much

as Dr Fergusson had done in London, of the change in his appearance—and she gives some sad instances of his failing memory, especially that, when extolling certain novels, he could not bring out their writer's name, but only, after a painful pause, "that Irish lady." But Mrs Davy, too, speaks, like Fergusson, of the unaltered courtesy of his demeanour on all occasions, and the warmth of affection that was evident in every allusion to old friends and ties. She told him, at their last meeting, that her husband was writing Sir Humphrey's Life,—"I am glad of it," said Sir Walter; "I hope his mother lived to see his greatness."

On the 17th the Barham reached Naples, and Sir Walter found his son Charles ready to receive him. The quarantine was cut short by the courtesy of the King, and the travellers established themselves in an apartment of the Palazzo Caramanico. Here, again, the British Minister, Mr Hill (now Lord Berwick), and the English nobility and gentry then residing in Naples, did whatever kindness and respect could suggest; nor were the natives less attentive. The Marquis of Hertford, the Hon. Keppel Craven, the Hon. William Ashley and his lady, Sir George Talbot, the venerable Matthias (author of The Pursuits of Literature), Mr Auldjo (celebrated for his ascent of Mont Blanc), and Dr Hogg, who has since published an account of his travels in the East—appear to have, in their various ways, contributed whatever they could to his comfort and amusement. But the person of whom he saw most was the late Sir William Gell, who had long been condemned to live in Italy by ailments and infirmities not dissimilar to his own.

Though he remained here until the middle of April, the reader will pardon me for giving but few of the details to which I have had access. He was immediately elected into the chief literary societies of the place; and the king gave him unusual facilities in the use of all its libraries and museums. An ancient MS. of the Romance of Sir Bevis of Hampton

being pointed out to him, he asked and obtained permission to have a transcript; and one was executed in his own apartments. He also expressed great curiosity as to the local ballads and popular tracts, chiefly occupied with the exploits of bandits, and collected enough of them to form about a dozen volumes, which he took a fancy to have bound in vellum. Sir William Gell was his cicerone to most of the celebrated spots in the city and its vicinity—but soon discovered that he felt comparatively little interest in anything that he saw, unless he could connect it somehow with traditions or legends of mediæval history or romance, or trace some resemblance to the scenery of familiar associations at home. Thus, amidst the chestnut forest near Pæstum, he was heard repeating *Jock of Hazeldean*—and again, in looking down on the Lucrine Lake, Baiæ, Misenum, and Averno, he suddenly pronounced, "in a grave tone and with great emphasis," some fragment of a Jacobite ditty—

> "'Tis up the rocky mountain and down the mossy glen,
> We darena gang a milking for Charlie and his men."

At Pompeii alone did his thoughts seem to be wholly commanded by the realities before him. There he had himself carried from house and house, and examined everything leisurely; but said little, except ever and anon in an audible whisper, "The city of the dead—the city of the dead!"

Meantime he more and more lost sight of the necessary restrictions—resumed too much of the usual habits in participating of splendid hospitalities, and, worst of all, resumed his pen. No persuasion could arrest him. He wrote several small tales, the subjects taken from the Newgate history of the Neapolitan banditti; and covered many quires with chapter after chapter of a romance connected with the Knights of St John.

The MS. of these painful days is hardly to be deciphered by any effort; but he often spoke as well pleased with

what he was doing, and confident that, on reaching Scotland again, he should have produced welcome materials for the press—though on many other occasions his conversation intimated apprehensions of a far different order, and he not only prognosticated that his end was near, but expressed alarm that he might not live to finish the journey homewards.

He continued, however, to be haunted with a mere delusion—on the origin of which I can offer no guess.—"In our morning drives" (writes Gell) "Sir Walter always noticed a favourite dog of mine, which was usually in the carriage, and generally patted the animal's head for some time, saying—'poor boy—poor boy.' 'I have got at home,' said he, 'two very fine favourite dogs,—so large, that I am almost afraid they look too handsome and too feudal for my diminished income. I am very fond of them, but they are so large it was impossible to take them with me.'—He came one morning rather early to my house, to tell me he was sure I should be pleased at some good luck which had befallen him, and of which he had just received notice. This was, as he said, an account from his friends in England, that his last works, Robert of Paris and Castle Dangerous, had gone on to a second edition. He told me in the carriage that he felt quite relieved by his letters; 'for,' said he, 'I could have never slept straight in my coffin till I had satisfied every claim against me.' 'And now,' added he to the dog, 'my poor boy, I shall have my house, and my estate round it, free, and I may keep my dogs as big and as many as I choose, without fear of reproach.'—He told me, that, being relieved from debt, and no longer forced to write for money, he longed to turn to poetry again. I encouraged him, and asked him why he had ever relinquished poetry?—'Because Byron *bet* me,' said he, pronouncing the word, *beat*, short. I rejoined, that I thought I could remember by heart as many passages of his poetry as of Byron's. He replied—'That may be, but he *bet* me

out of the field in the description of the strong passions, and in deep-seated knowledge of the human heart; so I gave up poetry for the time.' He became extremely curious about Rhodes, and having chosen for his poetical subject the chivalrous story of the slaying of the dragon by De Gozon, and the stratagems and valour with which he conceived and executed his purpose, he was quite delighted to hear that I had seen the skeleton of this real or reported dragon, which yet remains secured by large iron staples to the vaulted roof of one of the gates of the city."

From this time, whoever was near him often heard, that when he reached Scotland, it would be to rëenter on the unfettered use and administration of his estate. He even wrote to Mrs Scott of Harden bespeaking her presence at a little festival which he designed to hold within a few months at Abbotsford, in celebration of his release from all difficulties. All this while he sent letters frequently to his daughter Sophia, Mr Cadell, Mr Laidlaw, and myself. Some were of a very melancholy cast—for the dream about his debts was occasionally broken: in general, however, these his last letters tell the same story of delusive hopes both as to health and wealth, of satisfaction in the resumption of his pen, of eagerness to be once more at Abbotsford, and of affectionate anxiety about the friends he was there to rejoin. Every one of those to Laidlaw has something about the poor people and the dogs. One to myself conveyed his desire that he might be set down for "something as handsome as I liked" in a subscription then thought of for the Ettrick Shepherd; who that spring visited London, and was in no respect improved by his visit. Another to my wife bade her purchase a grand pianoforte which he wished to present to Miss Cadell, his bookseller's daughter. The same generous spirit was shewn in many other communications.

It had been his intention not to leave the Mediterranean without seeing Rhodes himself—but he suddenly dropt

this scheme, on learning that his friend Sir Frederick Adam, Governor of the Ionian Islands, who had invited him to Corfu, was ordered to India. From that hour his whole thoughts were fixed on home—and his companions soon ceased from opposing his inclinations. Miss Scott was no doubt the more willing to yield, as having received intelligence of the death of her nephew, the "Hugh Littlejohn" of the Grandfather's Tales—which made her anxious about her sister. But indeed, since her father would again work, what good end could it serve to keep him from working at his own desk? And since all her entreaties, and the warnings of foreign doctors, proved alike unavailing as to the regulation of his diet, what remaining chance could there be on that score, unless from replacing him under the eye of the friendly physicians whose authority had formerly seemed to have due influence on his mind? He had wished to return by the route of the Tyrol and Germany, partly for the sake of the remarkable chapel and monuments of the old Austrian princes at Inspruck, and the feudal ruins upon the Rhine, but chiefly that he might have an interview with Goethe at Weimar. That poet died on the 22d of March, and the news seemed to act upon Scott exactly as the illness of Borthwickbrae had done in the August before. His impatience redoubled: all his fine dreams of recovery seemed to vanish at once—"Alas for Goethe!" he exclaimed: "but he at least died at home—Let us to Abbotsford." And he quotes more than once in his letters the first hemistic of the line from Politian with which he had closed his early memoir of Leyden—"*Grata quies patriæ.*"

When the season was sufficiently advanced, then, the party set out, Mr Charles Scott having obtained leave to accompany his father; which was quite necessary, as his elder brother had already been obliged to rejoin his regiment. They quitted Naples on the 16th of April, in an open barouche, which could at pleasure be converted into a

bed. Sir Walter was somewhat interested by a few of the objects presented to him in the earlier stages of his route. The certainty that he was on his way home, for a time soothed and composed him; and amidst the agreeable society which again surrounded him on his arrival in Rome, he seemed perhaps as much of himself as he had ever been in Malta or in Naples. For a moment even his literary hope and ardour appear to have revived. But still his daughter entertained no doubt, that his consenting to pause for even a few days in Rome, was dictated mainly by consideration of her natural curiosity. Gell went to Rome about the same time; and Sir Walter was introduced there to another accomplished countryman, who exerted himself no less than did Sir William, to render his stay agreeable to him. This was Mr Edward Cheney—whose family had long been on terms of very strict intimacy with the Maclean Clephanes of Torloisk, so that Sir Walter was ready to regard him at first sight as a friend. Nor was it a small circumstance that the Cheney family had then in their occupancy the Villa Muti at Frascati, for many of his later years the favourite abode of the Cardinal York.

At Rome, Sir Walter partook of the hospitalities of the native nobility, many of whom had travelled into Scotland under the influence of his writings, and on one or two occasions was well enough to sustain their best impressions of him by his conversation. But, on the whole, his feebleness, and incapacity to be roused by objects which, in other days, would have appealed most powerfully to his imagination, were too painfully obvious: and, indeed, the only, or almost the only very lively curiosity he appeared to feel regarded the family pictures and other Stuart relics then preserved at the Villa Muti—but especially the monument to Charles Edward and his father in St Peter's, the work of Canova, executed at the cost of George IV. Excepting his visits at Frascati, the only excursion he made into the neighbouring country was one to the grand old castle of

Bracciano: where he spent a night in the feudal halls of the Orsini, now included among the numberless possessions of the Banker Prince Torlonia.

"Walking on the battlements of this castle next morning" (10th May)—says Mr Cheney—"he spoke of Goethe with regret; he had been in correspondence with him before his death, and had purposed visiting him at Weimar. I told him I had been to see Goethe the year before, and that I had found him well, and though very old, in the perfect possession of all his faculties.—'Of all his faculties!' he replied;—'it is much better to die than to survive them, and better still to die than live in the apprehension of it; but the worst of all,' he added, thoughtfully, 'would have been to have survived their partial loss, and yet to be conscious of his state.'—He did not seem to be, however, a great admirer of some of Goethe's works. Much of his popularity, he observed, was owing to pieces which, in his latter moments, he might have wished recalled. He spoke with much feeling. I answered, that *he* must derive great consolation in the reflection that his own popularity was owing to no such cause. He remained silent for a moment, with his eyes fixed on the ground; when he raised them, as he shook me by the hand, I perceived the light-blue eye sparkled with unusual moisture. He added—'I am drawing near to the close of my career; I am fast shuffling off the stage. I have been perhaps the most voluminous author of the day; and it *is* a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principle.'"

Next day, Friday, May 11, Sir Walter left Rome.—"During his stay there" (adds Mr Cheney) "he had received every mark of attention and respect from the Italians, who, in not crowding to visit him, were deterred only by their delicacy and their dread of intruding on an invalid. The enthusiasm was by no means confined to the higher orders. His fame, and even his works, are familiar to all

classes—the stalls are filled with translations of his novels in the cheapest forms; and some of the most popular plays and operas have been founded upon them. Some time after he left Italy, when I was travelling in the mountains of Tuscany, it has more than once occurred to me to be stopped in little villages, hardly accessible to carriages, by an eager admirer of Sir Walter, to inquire after the health of my illustrious countryman."

CHAPTER IX.

Return to England—Seizure at Nimeguen—Jermyn Street, London—Edinburgh—Abbotsford—Death and funeral of Scott in September 1832—His Character—Monuments to his Memory—Pictures, Busts, and Statues.

THE last jotting of Sir Walter Scott's Diary—perhaps the last specimen of his handwriting—records his starting from Naples on the 16th of April. After the 11th of May the story can hardly be told too briefly.

The irritation of impatience, which had for a moment been suspended by the aspect and society of Rome, returned the moment he found himself again on the road, and seemed to increase hourly. His companions could with difficulty prevail on him to see even the falls of Terni, or the church of Santa Croce at Florence. On the 17th, a cold and dreary day, they passed the Apennines, and dined on the top of the mountains. The snow and the pines recalled Scotland, and he expressed pleasure at the sight of them. That night they reached Bologna, but he would see none of the interesting objects there;—and next day, hurrying in like manner through Ferrara, he proceeded as far as Monselice. On the 19th he arrived at Venice; and he remained there till the 23d; but shewed no curiosity about anything except the Bridge of Sighs and the adjoining dungeons—down into which he would scramble, though the exertion was exceedingly painful to him. On the other historical features of that place—one so sure in other days to have inexhaustible attractions for him—he would not even look; and it was the same with all that he came within reach of—even with the fondly anticipated

chapel at Inspruck—as they proceeded through the Tyrol, and so onwards, by Munich, Ulm, and Heidelberg, to Frankfort. Here (June 5) he entered a bookseller's shop; and the people seeing an English party, brought out among the first things, a lithographed print of Abbotsford. He said—"I know that already, sir," and hastened back to the inn without being recognised. Though in some parts of the journey they had very severe weather, he repeatedly wished to travel all the night as well as all the day; and the symptoms of an approaching fit were so obvious, that he was more than once bled, ere they reached Mayence, by the hand of his affectionate domestic.

At this town they embarked, on the 8th June, in the Rhine steam-boat; and while they descended the famous river through its most picturesque region, he seemed to enjoy, though he said nothing, the perhaps unrivalled scenery it presented to him. His eye was fixed on the successive crags and castles, and ruined monasteries, each of which had been celebrated in some German ballad familiar to his ear, and all of them blended in the immortal panorama of Childe Harold. But so soon as they had passed Cologne, and nothing but flat shores, and here and there a grove of poplars and a village spire were offered to the vision, the weight of misery sunk down again upon him. It was near Nimeguen, on the evening of the 9th, that he sustained another serious attack of apoplexy, combined with paralysis. Nicolson's lancet restored, after the lapse of some minutes, the signs of animation; but this was the crowning blow. Next day he insisted on resuming his journey, and on the 11th was lifted into an English steamboat at Rotterdam.

He reached London about six o'clock on the evening of Wednesday the 13th of June. Owing to the unexpected rapidity of the journey, his eldest daughter had had no notice when to expect him; and fearful of finding her either out of town, or unprepared to receive him and his

attendants under her roof, Charles Scott drove to the St James's hotel in Jermyn Street, and established his quarters there before he set out in quest of his sister and myself. When we reached the hotel, he recognised us with many marks of tenderness, but signified that he was totally exhausted; so no attempt was made to remove him further, and he was put to bed immediately. Dr Fergusson saw him the same night, and next day Sir Henry Halford and Dr Holland saw him also; and during the next three weeks the two latter visited him daily, while Fergusson was scarcely absent from his pillow. The Major was soon on the spot. To his children, all assembled once more about him, he repeatedly gave his blessing in a very solemn manner, as if expecting immediate death; but he was never in a condition for conversation, and sunk either into sleep or delirious stupor upon the slightest effort.

Mrs Thomas Scott came to town as soon as she heard of his arrival, and remained to help us. She was more than once recognised and thanked. Mr Cadell, too, arrived from Edinburgh, to render any assistance in his power. I think Sir Walter saw no other of his friends except Mr John Richardson, and him only once. As usual, he woke up at the sound of a familiar voice, and made an attempt to put forth his hand, but it dropped powerless, and he said, with a smile—"Excuse my hand." Richardson made a struggle to suppress his emotion, and, after a moment, got out something about Abbotsford and the woods, which he had happened to see shortly before. The eye brightened, and he said—"How does Kirklands get on?" Mr Richardson had lately purchased the estate so called in Teviotdale, and Sir Walter had left him busied with plans of building. His friend told him that his new house was begun, and that the Marquis of Lothian had very kindly lent him one of his own, meantime, in its vicinity. "Ay, Lord Lothian is a good man," said Sir Walter; "he is a man from whom one may receive a favour, and that's saying a

good deal for any man in these days." The stupor then sank back upon him, and Richardson never heard his voice again. This state of things continued till the beginning of July.

During these melancholy weeks, great interest and sympathy were manifested. Allan Cunningham mentions that, walking home late one night, he found several working-men standing together at the corner of Jermyn Street, and one of them asked him—as if there was but one deathbed in London—"Do you know, sir, if this is the street where he is lying?" The inquiries both at the hotel and at my house were incessant; and I think there was hardly a member of the royal family who did not send every day. The newspapers teemed with paragraphs about Sir Walter; and one of these, it appears, threw out a suggestion that his travels had exhausted his pecuniary resources, and that if he were capable of reflection at all, cares of that sort might probably harass his pillow. This paragraph came from a very ill-informed, but, I dare say, a well-meaning quarter. It caught the attention of some members of the Government; and, in consequence, I received a private communication, to the effect that, if the case were as stated, Sir Walter's family had only to say what sum would relieve him from embarrassment, and it would be immediately advanced by the Treasury. The then Paymaster of the Forces, Lord John Russell, had the delicacy to convey this message through a lady with whose friendship he knew us to be honoured—the Honourable Catherine Arden. We expressed our grateful sense of his politeness, and of the liberality of the Government, and I now beg leave to do so once more;—but his Lordship was of course informed that Sir Walter Scott was not situated as the journalist had represented.

Dr Fergusson's Memorandum on Jermyn Street will be acceptable to the reader. He says—"When I saw Sir Walter, he was lying in the second floor back-room of the

St James's Hotel, in a state of stupor, from which, however, he could be roused for a moment by being addressed, and then he recognised those about him, but immediately relapsed. I think I never saw anything more magnificent than the symmetry of his colossal bust, as he lay on the pillow with his chest and neck exposed. During the time he was in Jermyn Street he was calm but never collected, and in general either in absolute stupor or in a waking dream. He never seemed to know where he was, but imagined himself to be still in the steam-boat. The rattling of carriages, and the noises of the street, sometimes disturbed this illusion—and then he fancied himself at the polling-booth of Jedburgh, where he had been insulted and stoned. During the whole of this period of apparent helplessness, the great features of his character could not be mistaken. He always exhibited great self-possession, and acted his part with wonderful power whenever visited, though he relapsed the next moment into the stupor from which strange voices had roused him. A gentleman [Mr Richardson] stumbled over a chair in his dark room;—he immediately started up, and though unconscious that it was a friend, expressed as much concern and feeling as if he had never been labouring under the irritability of disease. It was impossible even for those who most constantly saw and waited on him in his then deplorable condition, to relax from the habitual deference which he had always inspired. He expressed his will as determinedly as ever, and enforced it with the same apt and good-natured irony as he was wont to use.

"At length his constant yearning to return to Abbotsford induced his physicians to consent to his removal; and the moment this was notified to him, it seemed to infuse new vigour into his frame. It was on a calm, clear afternoon of the 7th July, that every preparation was made for his embarkation on board the steam-boat. He was placed on a chair by his faithful servant Nicolson, half-dressed, and loosely wrapped in a quilted dressing-gown. He requested

Lockhart and myself to wheel him towards the light of the open window, and we both remarked the vigorous lustre of his eye. He sat there silently gazing on space for more than half an hour, apparently wholly occupied with his own thoughts, and having no distinct perception of where he was, or how he came there. He suffered himself to be lifted into his carriage, which was surrounded by a crowd, among whom were many gentlemen on horseback, who had loitered about to gaze on the scene. His children were deeply affected, and Mrs Lockhart trembled from head to foot, and wept bitterly. Thus surrounded by those nearest to him, he alone was unconscious of the cause or the depth of their grief, and while yet alive seemed to be carried to his grave."

On this his last journey, Sir Walter was attended by his two daughters, Mr Cadell, and myself—and also by Dr Thomas Watson, who (it being impossible for Dr Fergusson to leave town at that moment) kindly undertook to see him safe at Abbotsford. We embarked in the James Watt steam-boat, the master of which (Captain John Jamieson), as well as the agents of the proprietors, made every arrangement in their power for the convenience of the invalid. The Captain gave up for Sir Walter's use his own private cabin, which was a separate erection—a sort of cottage on the deck; and he seemed unconscious, after laid in bed there, that any new removal had occurred. On arriving at Newhaven, late on the 9th, we found careful preparations made for his landing by the manager of the Shipping Company (Mr Hamilton)—and Sir Walter, prostrate in his carriage, was slung on shore, and conveyed from thence to Douglas's hotel, in St Andrew's Square, in the same complete apparent unconsciousness. Mrs Douglas had in former days been the Duke of Buccleuch's housekeeper at Bowhill, and she and her husband had also made the most suitable provision.

At a very early hour on the morning of Wednesday

the 11th, we again placed him in his carriage, and he lay in the same torpid state during the first two stages on the road to Tweedside. But as we descended the vale of the Gala he began to gaze about him, and by degrees it was obvious that he was recognizing the features of that familiar landscape. Presently he murmured a name or two—"Gala Water, surely—Buckholm—Torwoodlee." As we rounded the hill at Ladhope, and the outline of the Eildons burst on him, he became greatly excited; and, when turning himself on the couch, his eye caught at length his own towers at the distance of a mile, he sprang up with a cry of delight. The river being in flood, we had to go round a few miles by Melrose bridge; and during the time this occupied, his woods and house being within prospect, it required occasionally both Dr Watson's strength and mine, in addition to Nicolson's, to keep him in the carriage. After passing the bridge, the road for a couple of miles loses sight of Abbotsford, and he relapsed into his stupor; but on gaining the bank immediately above it, his excitement became again ungovernable.

Mr Laidlaw was waiting at the porch, and assisted us in lifting him into the dining-room, where his bed had been prepared. He sat bewildered for a few moments, and then resting his eye on Laidlaw, said—"Ha! Willie Laidlaw! O man, how often have I thought of you!" By this time his dogs had assembled about his chair—they began to fawn upon him and lick his hands, and he alternately sobbed and smiled over them, until sleep oppressed him.

Dr Watson having consulted on all things with Mr Clarkson of Melrose and his father, the good old "Country Surgeon" of Selkirk, resigned the patient to them, and returned to London. None of them could have any hope, but that of soothing irritation. Recovery was no longer to be thought of: but there might be *Euthanasia*.

And yet something like a ray of hope did break in upon

us next morning. Sir Walter awoke perfectly conscious where he was, and expressed an ardent wish to be carried out into his garden. We procured a Bath chair from Huntley Burn, and Laidlaw and I wheeled him out before his door, and up and down for some time on the turf, and among the rose-beds then in full bloom. The grandchildren admired the new vehicle, and would be helping in their way to push it about. He sat in silence, smiling placidly on them and the dogs their companions, and now and then admiring the house, the screen of the garden, and the flowers and trees. By and by he conversed a little, very composedly, with us—said he was happy to be at home—that he felt better than he had ever done since he left it, and would perhaps disappoint the doctors after all. He then desired to be wheeled through his rooms, and we moved him leisurely for an hour or more up and down the hall and the great library:—"I have seen much," he kept saying, "but nothing like my ain house—give me one turn more!" He was gentle as an infant, and allowed himself to be put to bed again, the moment we told him that we thought he had had enough for one day.

Next morning he was still better. After again enjoying the Bath chair for perhaps a couple of hours out of doors, he desired to be drawn into the library, and placed by the central window, that he might look down upon the Tweed. Here he expressed a wish that I should read to him, and when I asked from what book, he said—"Need you ask? There is but one." I chose the 14th chapter of St John's Gospel; he listened with mild devotion, and said when I had done—"Well, this is a great comfort—I have followed you distinctly, and I feel as if I were yet to be myself again." In this placid frame he was again put to bed, and had many hours of soft slumber.

On the third day Mr Laidlaw and I again wheeled him about the small piece of lawn and shrubbery in front of the house for some time; and the weather being delightful,

and all the richness of summer around him, he seemed to taste fully the balmy influences of nature. The sun getting very strong, we halted the chair in a shady corner, just within the verge of his verdant arcade around the court-wall; and breathing the coolness of the spot, he said, "Read me some amusing thing—read me a bit of Crabbe." I brought out the first volume of his old favourite that I could lay hand on, and turned to what I remembered as one of his most favourite passages in it—the description of the arrival of the Players in the Borough. He listened with great interest, and also, as I soon perceived, with great curiosity. Every now and then he exclaimed, "Capital—excellent—very good—Crabbe has lost nothing"—and we were too well satisfied that he considered himself as hearing a new production, when, chuckling over one couplet, he said "Better and better—but how will poor Terry endure these cuts?" I went on with the poet's terrible sarcasms upon the theatrical life, and he listened eagerly, muttering, "Honest Dan!"—"Dan won't like this." At length I reached those lines—

> "Sad happy race! soon raised and soon depressed,
> Your days all passed in jeopardy and jest:
> Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain,
> Not warned by misery, nor enriched by gain."

"Shut the book," said Sir Walter—"I can't stand more of this—it will touch Terry to the very quick."

On the morning of Sunday the 15th, he was again taken out into the little *pleasaunce*, and got as far as his favourite terrace-walk between the garden and the river, from which he seemed to survey the valley and the hills with much satisfaction. On re-entering the house, he desired me to read to him from the New Testament, and after that he again called for a little of Crabbe; but whatever I selected from that poet seemed to be listened to as if it made part of some new volume published while he was in Italy. He attended with this sense of novelty even to the tale of

Phœbe Dawson, which not many months before he could have repeated every line of, and which I chose for one of these readings, because, as is known to every one, it had formed the last solace of Mr Fox's death-bed. On the contrary, his recollection of whatever I read from the Bible appeared to be lively; and in the afternoon, when we made his grandson, a child of six years, repeat some of Dr Watts' hymns by his chair, he seemed also to remember them perfectly. That evening he heard the Church service, and when I was about to close the book, said—"Why do you omit the visitation for the sick?"—which I added accordingly.

On Monday he remained in bed, and seemed extremely feeble; but after breakfast on Tuesday the 17th he appeared revived somewhat, and was again wheeled about on the turf. Presently he fell asleep in his chair, and after dozing for perhaps half an hour, started awake, and shaking the plaids we had put about him from off his shoulders, said—"This is sad idleness. I shall forget what I have been thinking of, if I don't set it down now. Take me into my own room, and fetch the keys of my desk." He repeated this so earnestly, that we could not refuse; his daughters went into his study, opened his writing-desk, and laid paper and pens in the usual order, and I then moved him through the hall and into the spot where he had always been accustomed to work. When the chair was placed at the desk, and he found himself in the old position, he smiled and thanked us, and said—"Now give me my pen, and leave me for a little to myself." Sophia put the pen into his hand, and he endeavoured to close his fingers upon it, but they refused their office—it dropped on the paper. He sank back among his pillows, silent tears rolling down his cheeks; but composing himself by and by, motioned to me to wheel him out of doors again. Laidlaw met us at the porch, and took his turn of the chair. Sir Walter, after a little while, again dropt into slumber. When he

was awaking, Laidlaw said to me—"Sir Walter has had a little repose."—"No, Willie," said he—"no repose for Sir Walter but in the grave." The tears again rushed from his eyes. "Friends," said he, "don't let me expose myself—get me to bed—that's the only place."

With this scene ended our glimpse of daylight. Sir Walter never, I think, left his room afterwards, and hardly his bed, except for an hour or two in the middle of the day; and after another week he was unable even for this. During a few days he was in a state of painful irritation—and I saw realized all that he had himself prefigured in his description of the meeting between Chrystal Croftangry and his paralytic friend. Dr Ross came out from Edinburgh, bringing with him his wife, one of the dearest *nieces* of the Clerks' table. Sir Walter with some difficulty recognized the Doctor; but on hearing Mrs Ross's voice, exclaimed at once—"Isn't that Kate Hume?" These kind friends remained for two or three days with us. Clarkson's lancet was pronounced necessary, and the relief it afforded was, I am happy to say, very effectual.

After this he declined daily, but still there was great strength to be wasted, and the process was long. He seemed, however, to suffer no bodily pain; and his mind, though hopelessly obscured, appeared, when there was any symptom of consciousness, to be dwelling, with rare exceptions, on serious and solemn things; the accent of the voice grave, sometimes awful, but never querulous, and very seldom indicative of any angry or resentful thoughts. Now and then he imagined himself to be administering justice as Sheriff; and once or twice he seemed to be ordering Tom Purdie about trees. A few times also, I am sorry to say, we could perceive that his fancy was at Jedburgh—and *Burk Sir Walter* escaped him in a melancholy tone. But commonly whatever we could follow him in was a fragment of the Bible (especially the Prophecies of Isaiah and the Book of Job), or some petition in the litany, or a verse of

some psalm (in the old Scotch metrical version), or of some of the magnificent hymns of the Romish ritual, in which he had always delighted, but which probably hung on his memory now in connexion with the Church services he had attended while in Italy. We very often heard distinctly the cadence of the *Dies Iræ;* and I think the very last *stanza* that we could make out, was the first of a still greater favourite:—

"Stabat Mater dolorosa,
Juxta crucem lachrymosa,
Dum pendebât Filius."

All this time he continued to recognise his daughters, Laidlaw, and myself, whenever we spoke to him—and received every attention with a most touching thankfulness. Mr Clarkson, too, was always saluted with the old courtesy, though the cloud opened but a moment for him to do so. Most truly might it be said that the gentleman survived the genius.

After two or three weeks had passed in this way, I was obliged to leave Sir Walter for a single day, and go into Edinburgh to transact business, on his account, with Mr Henry Cockburn (now Lord Cockburn), then Solicitor-General for Scotland. The Scotch Reform Bill threw a great burden of new duties and responsibilities upon the Sheriffs; and Scott's Sheriff-substitute, the Laird of Raeburn, not having been regularly educated for the law, found himself unable to encounter these novelties, especially as regarded the registration of voters, and other details connected with the recent enlargement of the electoral franchise. Under such circumstances, as no one but the Sheriff could appoint another Substitute, it became necessary for Sir Walter's family to communicate the state he was in in a formal manner to the Law Officers of the Crown; and the Lord Advocate (Mr Jeffrey), in consequence, introduced and carried through Parliament a short bill (2 and 3 William IV. cap. 101), authorizing the Government to appoint a new

Sheriff of Selkirkshire, "during the incapacity or non-resignation of Sir Walter Scott." It was on this bill that the Solicitor-General had expressed a wish to converse with me: but there was little to be said, as the temporary nature of the new appointment gave no occasion for any pecuniary question; and, if that had been otherwise, the circumstances of the case would have rendered Sir Walter's family entirely indifferent upon such a subject. There can be no doubt, that if he had recovered in so far as to be capable of executing a resignation, the Government would have considered it just to reward thirty-two years' faithful services by a retired allowance equivalent to his salary—and as little, that the Government would have had sincere satisfaction in settling that matter in the shape most acceptable to himself. And perhaps (though I feel that it is scarcely worth while) I may as well here express my regret that a statement highly unjust and injurious should have found its way into the pages of some of Sir Walter's biographers. These writers have thought fit to insinuate that there was a want of courtesy and respect on the part of the Lord Advocate, and the other official persons connected with this arrangement. On the contrary, nothing could be more handsome and delicate than the whole of their conduct in it; Mr Cockburn could not have entered into the case with greater feeling and tenderness, had it concerned a brother of his own; and when Mr Jeffrey introduced his bill in the House of Commons, he used language so graceful and touching, that both Sir Robert Peel and Mr Croker went across the House to thank him cordially for it.

Perceiving, towards the close of August, that the end was near, and thinking it very likely that Abbotsford might soon undergo many changes, and myself, at all events, never see it again, I felt a desire to have some image preserved of the interior apartments as occupied by their founder, and invited from Edinburgh for that purpose Sir Walter's dear friend, Sir William Allan—whose presence, I

well knew, would even under the circumstances of that time be nowise troublesome to any of the family, but the contrary in all respects. Sir William willingly complied, and executed a series of beautiful drawings. He also shared our watchings, and witnessed all but the last moments. Sir Walter's cousins, the ladies of Ashestiel, came down frequently, for a day or two at a time, and did whatever sisterly affection could prompt, both for the sufferer and his daughters. Miss Mary Scott (daughter of his uncle Thomas), and Mrs Scott of Harden, did the like.

As I was dressing on the morning of Monday the 17th of September, Nicolson came into my room, and told me that his master had awoke in a state of composure and consciousness, and wished to see me immediately. I found him entirely himself, though in the last extreme of feebleness. His eye was clear and calm—every trace of the wild fire of delirium extinguished. "Lockhart," he said, "I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here."—He paused, and I said—"Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?"—"No," said he, "don't disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night—God bless you all."—With this he sunk into a very tranquil sleep, and, indeed, he scarcely afterwards gave any sign of consciousness, except for an instant on the arrival of his sons.

They, on learning that the scene was about to close, obtained anew leave of absence from their posts, and both reached Abbotsford on the 19th. About half-past one P.M. on the 21st of September, Sir Walter breathed his last, in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day—so warm, that every window was wide open—and so perfectly still, that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed,

and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes. No sculptor ever modelled a more majestic image of repose.

Almost every newspaper that announced this event in Scotland, and many in England, had the signs of mourning usual on the demise of a king. With hardly an exception, the voice was that of universal, unmixed grief and veneration.

It was considered due to Sir Walter's physicians, and to the public, that the nature of his malady should be distinctly ascertained. The result was, that there appeared the traces of a very slight mollification in one part of the substance of the brain.

His funeral was conducted in an unostentatious manner, but the attendance was very great. Few of his old friends then in Scotland were absent,—and many, both friends and strangers, came from a great distance. His domestics and foresters made it their petition that no hireling hand might assist in carrying his remains. They themselves bore the coffin to the hearse, and from the hearse to the grave. The pall-bearers were his sons, his son-in-law, and his little grandson; his cousins, Charles Scott of Nesbitt, James Scott of Jedburgh (sons to his uncle Thomas), William Scott of Raeburn, Robert Rutherford, Clerk to the Signet, Colonel (now Lieut.-General Sir James) Russell of Ashestiel, William Keith (brother to Sir Alexander Keith of Ravelstone); and the chief of his family, Hugh Scott of Harden, afterwards Lord Polwarth.

When the company were assembled, according to the usual Scotch fashion, prayers were offered up by the Very Reverend Dr Baird, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and by the Reverend Dr David Dickson, Minister of St Cuthbert's, who both expatiated in a very striking manner on the virtuous example of the deceased.

The court-yard and all the precincts of Abbotsford were crowded with uncovered spectators as the procession was arranged; and as it advanced through Darnick and Mel-

rose, and the adjacent villages, the whole population appeared at their doors in like manner—almost all in black. The train of carriages extended, I understand, over more than a mile; the yeomanry followed in great numbers on horseback; and it was late in the day ere we reached Dryburgh. Some accident, it was observed, had caused the hearse to halt for several minutes on the summit of the hill at Bemerside—exactly where a prospect of remarkable richness opens, and where Sir Walter had always been accustomed to rein up his horse. The day was dark and lowering, and the wind high.

The wide enclosure at the Abbey of Dryburgh was thronged with old and young; and when the coffin was taken from the hearse, and again laid on the shoulders of the afflicted serving-men, one deep sob burst from a thousand lips. Mr Archdeacon Williams read the Burial Service of the Church of England; and thus, about half-past five o'clock in the evening of Wednesday the 26th September 1832, the remains of SIR WALTER SCOTT were laid by the side of his wife in the sepulchre of his ancestors —"*in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.*"

We read in Solomon—"The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy;"—and a wise poet of our own time thus beautifully expands the saying:—

> "Why should we faint and fear to live alone,
> Since all alone, so Heaven has willed, we die;
> Nor even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
> Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh?"[1]

Such considerations have always induced me to regard with

[1] Keble's *Christian Year*, p. 261.

small respect any attempt to delineate fully and exactly any human being's character. I distrust, even in very humble cases, our capacity for judging our neighbour fairly; and I cannot but pity the presumption that must swell in the heart and brain of any ordinary brother of the race, when he dares to pronounce *ex cathedrâ* on the whole structure and complexion of a great mind, from the comparatively narrow and scanty materials which can by possibility have been placed before him. Nor is the difficulty to my view lessened,—perhaps it is rather increased, when the great man is a great artist. It is true, that many of the feelings common to our nature can only be expressed adequately, and that some of the finest of them can only be expressed at all, in the language of art; and more especially in the language of poetry. But it is equally true, that high and sane art never attempts to express that for which the artist does not claim and expect general sympathy; and however much of what we had thought to be our own secrets he ventures to give shape to, it becomes us, I can never help believing, to rest convinced that there remained a world of deeper mysteries to which the dignity of genius would refuse any utterance. I have therefore endeavoured to lay before the reader those parts of Sir Walter's character to which we have access, as they were indicated in his sayings and doings through the long series of his years;—but refrained from obtruding almost anything of comment. It was my wish to let the character develope itself: and now I am not going to "peep and botanize" upon his grave. But a few general observations will be forgiven—perhaps expected.

I believe that if the history of any one family in upper or middle life could be faithfully written, it might be as generally interesting, and as permanently useful, as that of any nation, however great and renowned. But literature has never produced any worthy book of this class, and probably it never will. The only lineages in which we

can pretend to read personal character far back, with any distinctness, are those of kings and princes, and a few noble houses of the first eminence; and it hardly needed Swift's biting satire to satisfy the student of the past, that the very highest pedigrees are as uncertain as the very lowest. We flatter the reigning monarch, or his haughtier satellite, by tracing in their lineaments the conqueror or legislator of a former century. But call up the dead, according to the Dean's incantation, and we might have the real ancestor in some chamberlain, confessor, or musician. Scott himself delighted, perhaps above all other books, in such as approximate to the character of good family histories,—as for example, Godscroft's House of Douglas and Angus, and the Memorie of the Somervilles,—which last is, as far as I know, the best of its class in any language; and his reprint of the trivial "Memorials" of the Haliburtons, to whose dust he is now gathered, was but one of a thousand indications of his anxiety to realize his own ancestory to his imagination. No testamentary deed, instrument of contract, or entry in a parish register, seemed valueless to him, if it bore in any manner, however obscure or distant, on the personal history of any of his ascertainable predecessors. The chronicles of the race furnished the fire-side talk to which he listened in infancy at Smailholm, and his first rhymes where those of Satchels. His physical infirmity was reconciled to him, even dignified perhaps, by tracing it back to forefathers who acquired famousness in their own way, in spite of such disadvantages. These studies led by easy and inevitable links to those of the history of his province generally, and then of his native kingdom. The lamp of his zeal burnt on brighter and brighter amidst the dust of parchments; his love and pride vivified whatever he hung over in these dim records, and patient antiquarianism, long brooding and meditating, became gloriously transmuted into the winged spirit of national poetry.

Whatever he had in himself, he would fain have made out a hereditary claim for. He often spoke both seriously and sportively on the subject. He had assembled about him in his "own great parlour," as he called it—the room in which he died—all the pictures of his ancestors that he could come by; and in his most genial evening mood he seemed never to weary of perusing them. The Cavalier of Killiecrankie—brave, faithful, learned, and romantic old "Beardie," a determined but melancholy countenance—was often surveyed with a repetition of the solitary Latin rhyme of his Vow. He had, of course, no portraits of the elder heroes of Harden to lecture upon; but a skilful hand had supplied the same wall with a fanciful delineation of the rough wooing of "Meikle-mouthed Meg;" and the only historical picture, properly so called, that he ever bespoke, was to be taken (for it was never executed) from the Raid o' the Redswire, when

> "The Rutherfords with great renown,
> Convoyed the town o' Jedbrugh out."

The ardent but sagacious "goodman of Sandyknowe," hangs by the side of his father, Bearded Wat; and when moralizing in his latter day over the doubtful condition of his ultimate fortunes, Sir Walter would point to "Honest Robin," and say, "Blood will out:—my building and planting was but his buying the hunter before he stocked his sheep-walk over again." "And yet," I once heard him say, glancing to the likeness of his own staid calculating father, "it was a wonder, too—for I have a thread of the attorney in me." And so no doubt he had; for the "elements" were mingled in him curiously as well as "gently."

An imagination such as his, concentrating its day-dreams on things of this order, soon shaped out a world of its own—to which it would fain accommodate the real one. The love of his country became indeed a passion; no knight ever tilted for his mistress more willingly than he

would have bled and died to preserve even the airiest surviving nothing of her antique pretensions for Scotland. But the Scotland of his affections had the clan Scott for her kernal. Next, and almost equal to the throne, was Buccleuch. Fancy rebuilt and prodigally embellished the whole system of the social existence of the old time in which the clansman (wherever there were clans) acknowledged practically no sovereign but his chief. The author of "the Lay" would rather have seen his heir carry the Banner of Bellenden gallantly at a foot-ball match on Carterhaugh, than he would have heard that the boy had attained the highest honours of the first university in Europe. His original pride was to be an acknowledged member of one of the "honourable families" whose progenitors had been celebrated by Satchels for following this banner in blind obedience to the patriarchal leader; his first and last worldly ambition was to be himself the founder of a distinct branch; he desired to plant a lasting root, and dreamt not of personal fame, but of long distant generations rejoicing in the name of "Scott of Abbotsford." By this idea all his reveries—all his aspirations—all his plans and efforts, were overshadowed and controlled. The great object and end only rose into clearer day-light, and swelled into more substantial dimensions, as public applause strengthened his confidence in his own powers and faculties; and when he had reached the summit of universal and unrivalled honour, he clung to his first love with the faith of a Paladin. It is easy enough to smile at all this; many will not understand it, and some who do may pity it. But it was at least a different thing from the modern vulgar ambition of amassing a fortune and investing it in land. The lordliest vision of acres would have had little charm for him, unless they were situated on Ettrick or Yarrow, or in

—— "Pleasant Tiviedale,
Fast by the river Tweed" ——

—somewhere within the primeval territory of "the Rough Clan."

His worldly ambition was thus grafted on that ardent feeling for blood and kindred which was the great redeeming element in the social life of what we call the middle ages; and—though no man estimated the solid advantages of modern existence more justly than he did, when, restraining his fancy, he exercised his graver faculties on the comparison—it was the natural effect of the studies he devoted himself to and rose by, to indispose him for dwelling on the sober results of judgment and reason in all such matters. What a striking passage that is in one of his letters, where he declines to write a biography of Queen Mary, "because his opinion was contrary to his feeling!" But he confesses the same of his Jacobitism; and yet how eagerly does he seem to have grasped at the shadow, however false and futile, under which he chose to see the means of reconciling his Jacobitism with loyalty to the reigning monarch who befriended him? We find him, over and over again, alluding to George IV. as acquiring a title *de jure* on the death of the poor Cardinal of York! Yet who could have known better that whatever rights the exiled males of the Stuart line ever possessed, must have remained entire with their female descendants?

The same resolution to give imagination her scope, and always in favour of antiquity, is the ruling principle and charm of all his best writings. So also with all the details of his building at Abbotsford, and of his hospitable existence, when he had fairly completed his "romance in stone and lime;"—every outline copied from some old baronial edifice in Scotland—every roof and window blazoned with clan bearings, or the lion rampant gules, or the heads of the ancient Stuart kings. He wished to revive the interior life of the castles he had emulated—their wide open joyous reception of all comers, but especially of kinsmen and neighbours—ballads and pi-

brochs to enliven flowing bowls and *quaighs*—jolly hunting fields in which yeoman and gentleman might ride side by side—and mirthful dances, where no Sir Piercy Shafton need blush to lead out the miller's daughter. In the brightest meridian of his genius and fame, this was his *beau ideal.* There was much kindness surely in such ambition: —in spite of the apparent contradiction in terms, was there not really much humility about it?

To this ambition we owe the gigantic monuments of Scott's genius; and to the kindly feelings out of which his ambition grew, grew also his connexion with merchandise. I need not recur to that sad and complicated chapter. Nor, perhaps, need I offer any more speculations, by way of explaining, and reconciling to his previous and subsequent history and demeanour, either the mystery in which he had chosen to wrap his commercial connexions from his most intimate friends, or the carelessness with which he abandoned these matters to the direction of inefficient colleagues. And yet I ought, I rather think, to have suggested to certain classes of my readers, at a much earlier stage, that no man could in former times be called either to the English or the Scottish Bar, who was known to have any direct interest in any commercial undertaking of any sort; and that the body of feelings or prejudices in which this regulation originated—(for though there might be sound reason for it besides, such undoubtedly was the main source)—prevailed in Scotland in Sir Walter's youth, to an extent of which the present generation may not easily form an adequate notion. In the minds of the "northern *noblesse de la robe*," as they are styled in Redgauntlet, such feelings had wide and potent authority; insomuch that I can understand perfectly how Scott, even after he ceased to practise at the Bar, being still a Sheriff, and a member of the Faculty of Advocates, should have shrunk sensitively from the idea of having his alliance with a trading firm revealed among his comrades of the gown. And,

moreover, the practice of mystery is, perhaps, of all practices, the one most likely to grow into a habit: secret breeds secret; and I ascribe, after all, the long silence about Waverley to the matured influence of this habit, as much as to any of the motives which the author has thought fit to assign in his late confessions.

But was there not, in fact, something that lay far deeper than a mere professional prejudice? Among the many things in Scott's Diaries which cast strong light upon the previous part of his history, I must number the reluctance which he confesses himself to have felt towards the resumption of the day's proper appointed task—however willing, nay eager to labour sedulously on something else. We know how gallantly he combated it in the general—but these precious Diaries themselves are not the least pregnant proofs of the extent to which it very often prevailed —for an hour or two at least, if not for the day. I think this, if we were to go no farther, might help us somewhat in understanding the neglect about superintending ledgers and bill books; and, consequently, the rashness about buying land, building, and the like. But to what are we to ascribe the origin of this reluctance for accurate and minute investigation and transaction of business, so important to himself, in a man possessing such extraordinary sagacity, and exercising it every day with admirable regularity and precision, in the various capacities of the head of a family —the friend—the magistrate—the most distinguished citizen of Edinburgh—beyond all comparison the most distinguished member of society that figured in his time in his native kingdom?

The whole system of conceptions and aspirations, of which his early active life was the exponent, resolves itself into a romantic idealization of Scottish aristocracy. He desired to secure for his descendants (for himself he had very soon acquired something infinitely more flattering to self-love and vanity) a decent and honourable middle sta-

tion—in a scheme of life so constituted originally, and which his fancy pictured as capable of being so revived, as to admit of the kindliest personal contact between (almost) the peasant at the plough, and the magnate with revenues rivalling the monarch's. It was the patriarchal—the clan system, that he thought of; one that never prevailed even in Scotland, within the historical period that is to say, except in the Highlands, and in his own dear Border-land. This system knew nothing of commerce—as little certainly of literature beyond the raid-ballad of the wandering harper,—

"High placed in hall—a welcome guest."

His filial reverence of imagination shrunk from marring the antique, if barbarous, simplicity. I suspect that at the highest elevation of his literary renown—when princes bowed to his name, and nations thrilled at it—he would have considered losing all that at a change of the wind, as nothing, compared to parting with his place as the Cadet of Harden and Clansman of Buccleuch, who had, no matter by what means, reached such a position, that when a notion arose of embodying "a Buccleuch legion," not a Scott in the Forest would have thought it otherwise than natural for *Abbotsford* to be one of the field-officers. I can, therefore, understand that he may have, from the very first, exerted the dispensing power of imagination very liberally, in virtually absolving himself from dwelling on the wood of which his ladder was to be constructed. Enough was said in a preceding chapter of the obvious fact, that the author of such a series of romances as his, must have, to all intents and purposes, lived more than half his life in worlds purely fantastic. In one of the last obscure and faltering pages of his Diary he says, that if any one asked him how much of his thought was occupied by the novel then in hand, the answer would have been, that in one sense it never occupied him except when the amanuensis sat before him, but that in another it was never five minutes out of

his head. Such, I have no doubt, the case had always been. But I must be excused from doubting whether, when the substantive fiction actually in process of manufacture was absent from his mind, the space was often or voluntarily occupied (no positive external duty interposing) upon the real practical worldly position and business of the Clerk of Session—of the Sheriff,—least of all of the printer or the bookseller. The sum is, if I read him aright, that he was always willing, in his ruminative moods, to veil, if possible, from his own optics the kind of machinery by which alone he had found the means of attaining his darling objects. Having acquired a perhaps unparalleled power over the direction of scarcely paralleled faculties, he chose to exert his power in this manner. On no other supposition can I find his history intelligible;—I mean, of course, the great obvious and marking facts of his history; for I hope I have sufficiently disclaimed all pretension to a thorough-going analysis. He appears to have studiously escaped from whatever could have interfered with his own enjoyment—to have revelled in the fair results, and waved the wand of obliterating magic over all besides; and persisted so long, that (like the sorcerer he celebrates) he became the dupe of his own delusions. It is thus that (not forgetting the subsidiary influence of professional Edinburgh prejudices) I am inclined, on the whole, to account for his initiation in the practice of mystery—a thing, at first sight, so alien from the frank, open, generous nature of a man, than whom none ever had or deserved to have more real friends.

The indulgence cost him very dear. It ruined his fortunes—but I can have no doubt that it did worse than that. I cannot suppose that a nature like his was fettered and shut up in this way without suffering very severely from the "cold obstruction." There must have been a continual "insurrection" in his "state of man;" and, above all, I doubt not that what gave him the bitterest pain in

the hour of his calamities, was the feeling of compunction with which he then found himself obliged to stand before those with whom he had, through life, cultivated brotherly friendship, convicted of having kept his heart closed to them on what they could not but suppose to have been the chief subjects of his thought and anxiety, in times when they withheld nothing from him. These, perhaps, were the "written troubles" that had been cut deepest into his brain. I think they were, and believe it the more, because it was never acknowledged.

If he had erred in the primary indulgence out of which this sprang, he at least made noble atonement. During the most energetic years of manhood he laboured with one prize in view; and he had just grasped it, as he fancied, securely, when all at once the vision was dissipated: he found himself naked and desolate as Job. How he nerved himself against the storm—how he felt and how he resisted it—how soberly, steadily, and resolvedly he contemplated the possibility of yet, by redoubled exertions, in so far retrieving his fortunes, as that no man should lose by having trusted those for whom he had been pledged—how well he kept his vow, and what price it cost him to do so—all this the reader, I doubt not, appreciates fully. It seems to me that strength of character was never put to a severer test than when, for labours of love, such as his had hitherto almost always been—the pleasant exertion of genius for the attainment of ends that owed all their dignity and beauty to a poetical fancy—there came to be substituted the iron pertinacity of daily and nightly toil, in the discharge of a duty which there was nothing but the sense of chivalrous honour to make stringent. It is the fond indulgence of gay fancy in all the previous story that gives its true value and dignity to the voluntary agony of the sequel, when, indeed, he appears

—— "Sapiens, sibique imperiosus;
Quem neque pauperies, neque mors, neque vincula terrent;

Responsare cupidinibus, contemnere honores,
Fortis; et in seipso totus, teres atque rotundus,
Externi ne quid valeat per læve morari;
In quem manca ruit semper Fortuna."

The attentive reader will not deny that every syllable of this proud *ideal* has been justified to the letter. But though he boasted of stoicism, his heroism was something far better than the stoic's; for it was not founded on a haughty trampling down of all delicate and tender thoughts and feelings. He lays his heart bare in his Diary; and we there read, in characters that will never die, how the sternest resolution of a philosopher may be at once quickened and adorned by the gentlest impulses of that spirit of love, which alone makes poetry the angel of life. This is the moment in which posterity will desire to fix his portraiture. But the noble exhibition was not a fleeting one; it was not that a robust mind elevated itself by a fierce effort for the crisis of an hour. The martyrdom lasted with his days; and if it shortened them, let us remember his own immortal words,—

"Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife,
To all the sensual world proclaim—
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name."

For the rest, I presume, it will be allowed that no human character, which we have the opportunity of studying with equal minuteness, had fewer faults mixed up in its texture. The grand virtue of fortitude, the basis of all others, was never displayed in higher perfection than in him; and it was, as perhaps true courage always is, combined with an equally admirable spirit of kindness and humanity. His pride, if we must call it so, undebased by the least tincture of mere vanity, was intertwined with a most exquisite charity, and was not inconsistent with true humility. If ever the principle of kindliness was incarnated in a mere man, it was in him; and real kindliness can ne-

ver be but modest. In the social relations of life, where men are most effectually tried, no spot can be detected in him. He was a patient, dutiful, reverent son; a generous, compassionate, tender husband; an honest, careful, and most affectionate father. Never was a more virtuous or a happer fireside than his. The influence of his mighty genius shadowed it imperceptibly; his calm good sense, and his angelic sweetness of heart and temper, regulated and softened a strict but paternal discipline. His children, as they grew up, understood by degrees the high privilege of their birth; but the profoundest sense of his greatness never disturbed their confidence in his goodness. The buoyant play of his spirits made him sit young among the young; parent and son seemed to live in brotherhood together; and the chivalry of his imagination threw a certain air of courteous gallantry into his relations with his daughters, which gave a very peculiar grace to the fondness of their intercourse. Though there could not be a gentler mother than Lady Scott, on those delicate occasions most interesting to young ladies, they always made their father the first confidant.

Perhaps the most touching evidence of the lasting tenderness of his early domestic feelings was exhibited to his executors, when they opened his repositories in search of his testament, the evening after his burial. On lifting up his desk, we found arranged in careful order a series of little objects, which had obviously been so placed there that his eye might rest on them every morning before he began his tasks. These were the old-fashioned boxes that had garnished his mother's toilet, when he, a sickly child, slept in her dressing-room—the silver taper-stand which the young advocate had bought for her with his first five-guinea fee—a row of small packets inscribed with her hand, and containing the hair of those of her offspring that had died before her—his father's snuff-box and etui-case—and more things of the like sort, recalling the "old familiar faces."

The same feeling was apparent in all the arrangement of his private apartment. Pictures of his father and mother were the only ones in his dressing-room. The clumsy antique cabinets that stood there, things of a very different class from the beautiful and costly productions in the public rooms below, had all belonged to the furniture of George's Square. Even his father's rickety washing-stand, with all its cramped appurtenances, though exceedingly unlike what a man of his very scrupulous habits would have selected in these days, kept its ground. The whole place seemed fitted up like a little chapel of the lares.

Such a son and parent could hardly fail in any of the other social relations. No man was a firmer or more indefatigable friend. I knew not that he ever lost one; and a few, with whom, during the energetic middle stage of life, from political differences or other accidental circumstances, he lived less familiarly, had all gathered round him, and renewed the full warmth of early affection in his later days. There was enough to dignify the connexion in their eyes; but nothing to chill it on either side. The imagination that so completely mastered him when he chose to give her the rein, was kept under most determined control when any of the positive obligations of active life came into question. A high and pure sense of duty presided over whatever he had to do as a citizen and a magistrate; and as a landlord, he considered his estate as an extension of his hearth.

Of his political creed, the many who hold a different one will of course say that it was the natural fruit of his poetical devotion to the mere prejudice of antiquity; and I am quite willing to allow that this must have had a great share in the matter—and that he himself would have been as little ashamed of the word *prejudice* as of the word *antiquity*. Whenever Scotland could be considered as standing separate on any question from the rest of the empire, he was not only apt, but eager to embrace the opportunity of

again rehoisting, as it were, the old signal of national independence; and I really doubt if any circumstance in his literary career gave him more personal satisfaction than the success of Malachi Malagrowther's Epistles. He confesses, however, in his Diary, that he was aware how much it became him to summon calm reason to battle imaginative prepossessions on this score; and I am not aware that they ever led him into any serious practical error. He delighted in letting his fancy run wild about ghosts and witches and horoscopes—but I venture to say, had he sat on the judicial bench a hundred years before he was born, no man would have been more certain to give juries sound direction in estimating the pretended evidence of supernatural occurrences of any sort; and I believe, in like manner, that had any Anti-English faction, civil or religious, sprung up in his own time in Scotland, he would have done more than any other living man could have hoped to do, for putting it down. He was on all practical points a steady, conscientious Tory of the school of William Pitt; who, though an anti-revolutionist, was certainly anything but an anti-reformer. He rejected the innovations, in the midst of which he died, as a revival, under alarmingly authoritative auspices, of the doctrines which had endangered Britain in his youth, and desolated Europe throughout his prime of manhood. May the gloomy anticipations which hung over his closing years be unfulfilled! But should they be so, let posterity remember that the warnings, and the resistance of his and other powerful intellects, were probably in that event the appointed means for averting a catastrophe in which, had England fallen, the whole civilized world must have been involved.

Sir Walter received a strictly religious education under the eye of parents, whose virtuous conduct was in unison with the principles they desired to instil into their children. From the great doctrines thus recommended he appears never to have swerved; but he must be numbered among

the many who have incurred considerable risk of doing so, in consequence of the rigidity with which Presbyterian heads of families were used to enforce compliance with various relics of the puritanical observance. He took up, early in life, a repugnance to the mode in which public worship is conducted in the Scottish Establishment; and adhered to the sister Church, whose system of government and discipline he believed to be the fairest copy of the primitive polity, and whose litanies and collects he reverenced as having been transmitted to us from the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles. The few passages in his Diaries in which he alludes to his own religious feelings and practices, shew clearly the sober, serene, and elevated frame of mind in which he habitually contemplated man's relations with his Maker; the modesty with which he shrunk from indulging either the presumption of reason, or the extravagance of imagination, in the province of Faith; his humble reliance on the wisdom and mercy of God; and his firm belief that we are placed in this state of existence, not to speculate about another, but to prepare ourselves for it by active exertion of our intellectual faculties, and the constant cultivation of kindness and benevolence towards our fellow men.

But his moral, political, and religious character has sufficiently impressed itself upon the great body of his writings. He is indeed one of the few great authors of modern Europe who stand acquitted of having written a line that ought to have embittered the bed of death. His works teach the practical lessons of morality and Christianity in the most captivating form—unobtrusively and unaffectedly. And I think it is not refining too far to say, that in these works, as well as his whole demeanour as a man of letters, we may trace the happy effects—(enough has already been said as to some less fortunate and agreeable ones)—of his having written throughout with a view to something beyond the acquisition of personal fame.

Perhaps no great poet ever made his literature so completely ancillary to the objects and purposes of practical life. However his imagination might expatiate, it was sure to rest over his home. The sanctities of domestic love and social duty were never forgotten; and the same circumstance that most ennobles all his triumphs, affords also the best apology for his errors.

From the first, his possession of a strong and brilliant genius was acknowledged; and the extent of it seems to have been guessed by others, before he was able to persuade himself that he had claim to a place among the masters of literature. The ease with which he did everything, deceived him; and he probably would never have done himself any measure of justice, even as compared with those of his own time, but for the fact, which no modesty could long veil, that whatever he did became immediately "*the fashion*,"—the object of all but universal imitation. Even as to this, he was often ready to surmise that the priority of his own movement might have been matter of accident; and certainly nothing can mark the humility of his mind more strikingly than the style in which he discusses, in his Diary, the pretensions of the pigmies that swarmed and fretted in the deep wake of his mighty vessel. To the really original writers among his contemporaries he did full justice; no differences of theory or taste had the least power to disturb his candour. In some cases he rejoiced in feeling and expressing a cordial admiration, where he was met by, at best, a cold and grudging reciprocity: and in others, his generosity was proof against not only the private belief but the public exposure of envious malignity. Lord Byron might well say that Scott could be jealous of no one; but the immeasurable distance did not prevent many from being jealous of him.

His propensity to think too well of other men's works sprung, of course, mainly, from his modesty and good-

nature; but the brilliancy of his imagination greatly sustained the delusion. It unconsciously gave precision to the trembling outline, and life and warmth to the vapid colours before him. This was especially the case as to romances and novels; the scenes and characters in them were invested with so much of the "light within," that he would close with regret volumes which, perhaps, no other person, except the diseased glutton of the circulating library, ever could get half through. Where colder critics saw only a schoolboy's hollowed turnip with its inch of tallow, he looked through the dazzling spray of his own fancy, and sometimes the clumsy toy seems to have swelled almost into "the majesty of buried Denmark."

These servile imitators are already forgotten, or will soon be so; but it is to be hoped that the spirit which breathes through his works may continue to act on our literature, and consequently on the character and manners of men. The race that grew up under the influence of that intellect can hardly be expected to appreciate fully their own obligations to it: and yet if we consider what were the tendencies of the minds and works that, but for his, must have been unrivalled in the power and opportunity to mould young ideas, we may picture to ourselves in some measure the magnitude of the debt we owe to a perpetual succession, through thirty years, of publications unapproached in charm, and all instilling a high and healthy code; a bracing, invigorating spirit; a contempt of mean passions, whether vindictive or voluptuous; humane charity, as distinct from moral laxity as from unsympathizing austerity; sagacity too deep for cynicism, and tenderness never degenerating into sentimentality: animated throughout in thought, opinion, feeling and style, by one and the same pure energetic principle—a pith and savour of manhood; appealing to whatever is good and loyal in our natures, and rebuking whatever is low and selfish.

Had Sir Walter never taken a direct part in politics as

a writer, the visible bias of his mind on such subjects must have had a great influence; nay, the mere fact that such a man belonged to a particular side would have been a very important weight in the balance. His services, direct and indirect, towards repressing the revolutionary propensities of his age, were vast—far beyond the comprehension of vulgar politicians.

On the whole, I have no doubt that, the more the details of his personal history are revealed and studied, the more powerfully will that be found to inculcate the same great lessons with his works. Where else shall we be taught better how prosperity may be extended by beneficence, and adversity confronted by exertion? Where can we see the "follies of the wise" more strikingly rebuked, and a character more beautifully purified and exalted in the passage through affliction to death? I have lingered so long over the details, that I have, perhaps, become, even from that circumstance alone, less qualified than more rapid surveyors may be to seize the effect in the mass. But who does not feel that there is something very invigorating as well as elevating in the contemplation? His character seems to belong to some elder and stronger period than ours; and, indeed, I cannot help likening it to the architectural fabrics of other ages, which he most delighted in, where there is such a congregation of imagery and tracery, such endless indulgence of whim and fancy, the sublime blending here with the beautiful, and there contrasted with the grotesque—half, perhaps, seen in the clear daylight, and half by rays tinged with the blazoned forms of the past—that one may be apt to get bewildered among the variety of particular impressions, and not feel either the unity of the grand design, or the height and solidness of the structure, until the door has been closed upon the labyrinth of aisles and shrines, and you survey it from a distance, but still within its shadow.

And yet as, with whatever admiration his friends could

not but regard him constantly when among them, the prevailing feeling was still love and affection, so is it now, and so must ever it be, as to his memory. It is not the privilege of every reader to have partaken in the friendship of A GREAT AND GOOD MAN; but those who have not, may be assured that the sentiment, which the near homely contemplation of such a being inspires, is a thing entirely by itself.

And now to conclude.—In the year 1832, France and Germany, as well as Britain, had to mourn over their brightest intellects. Goethe shortly preceded Scott, and Cuvier followed him: and with these mighty lights were extinguished many others of no common order—among the rest, Crabbe and Mackintosh.

Of the persons closely connected with Sir Walter Scott, and often named accordingly in these pages, few remain. James Ballantyne was on his deathbed when he heard of his great friend and patron's death. The Ettrick Shepherd died in 1835; George Thomson, the happy "Dominie Thompson," of the happy days of Abbotsford, in 1838; William Laidlaw, after 1832, had the care first of the Seaforth, and then of the Balnagowan estates, in Ross-shire, as factor: but being struck with paralysis in August 1844, retired to the farm-house of his excellent brother James at Contin, and died there in May 1845. Mr Morritt, to whom the larger Memoirs of his friend were inscribed, died at Rokeby on the 12th of July 1843: loved, venerated, never to be forgotten. William Clerk of Eldin, admired through life for talents and learning, of which he has left no monument, died at Edinburgh in January 1847.

But why extend this catalogue? Sixteen years have passed—the generation to which Scott belonged have been gathered to their fathers. Of his own children none now survive. Miss Anne Scott received at Christmas 1832 a grant of L.200 per annum from the privy purse of King William IV. But her name did not long burden the pen-

sion list. Her constitution had been miserably shattered in the course of her long and painful attendance, first on her mother's illness, and then on her father's; and perhaps reverse of fortune, and disappointments of various sorts connected with that, had also heavy effect. From the day of Sir Walter's death, the strong stimulus of duty being lost, she too often looked and spoke like one

"Taking the measure of an unmade grave."

After a brief interval of disordered health, she contracted a brain fever, which carried her off abruptly. She died in my house in the Regent's Park on the 25th June 1833, and her remains are placed in the New Cemetery in the Harrow Road.

The adjoining grave holds those of her nephew John Hugh Lockhart, who died 15th Dec. 1831; and also those of my wife Sophia, who expired after a long illness, which she bore with all possible meekness and fortitude, on the 17th of May 1837. Of all the race she most resembled her father in countenance, in temper, and in manners.

Charles Scott, whose spotless worth had tenderly endeared him to the few who knew him intimately, and whose industry and accuracy were warmly acknowledged by his professional superiors, on Lord Berwick's recall from the Neapolitan Embassy resumed his duties as a clerk in the Foreign Office, and continued in that situation until the summer of 1841. Sir John M'Neill, G.C.B., being then entrusted with a special mission to the Court of Persia, carried Charles with him as attaché and private secretary; but the journey on horseback through Asia Minor was trying for his never robust frame; and he contracted an inflammatory disorder, which cut him off at Teheran, almost immediately on his arrival there—October 28, 1841. He had reached his 36th year. His last hours had every help that kindness and skill could yield: for the Ambassador had for him the affection of an elder

brother, and the physician, Dr George Joseph Bell (now also gone), had been his schoolfellow, and through life his friend. His funeral in that remote place was so attended as to mark the world-wide reputation of his father. By Sir John M'Neill's care, a small monument with a suitable inscription was erected over his untimely grave.

Walter, who succeeded to the baronetcy, proceeded to Madras in 1839, as Lieutenant-Colonel of the 15th Hussars, and subsequently commanded that regiment. He was beloved and esteemed in it by officers and men as much, I believe, as any gentleman ever was in any corps of the British army; and there was no officer of his rank who stood higher in the opinion of the heads of his profession. He had begun life with many advantages—a very handsome person, and great muscular strength—a sweet and even temper, and talents which in the son of any father but his would have been considered brilliant. His answers, when examined as a witness before a celebrated Court-Martial in Ireland in 1834, were indeed universally admired:—whoever had known his father, recognized the head and the heart: and in his letters from India, especially his descriptions of scenery and sport, there occur many passages which, for picturesque effect and easy playful humour, would have done no discredit even to his father's pen. Though neglectful of extra-professional studies in his earlier days, he had in after-life read extensively, and made himself, in every sense of the term, an accomplished man. The library for the soldiers of his corps was founded by him: the care of it was a principal occupation of his later years. His only legacy out of his family was one of L.100 to this library; and his widow, well understanding what he felt towards it, directed that a similar sum should be added in her own name. Sir Walter having unwisely exposed himself in a tiger-hunt in August 1846, was on his return to his quarters at Bangalore, smitten with fever, which ended in liver disease.

He was ordered to proceed to England, and died near the Cape of Good Hope, on board the ship Wellesley, February the 8th, 1847. Lady Scott conveyed his remains to this country, and they were interred in the paternal aisle at Dryburgh on the 4th of May following, in the presence of the few survivors of his father's friends and many of his own. Three officers who had served under him, and were accidentally in Britain, arrived from great distances to pay him the last homage of their respect. He had never had any child; and with him the baronetcy expired.

The children of illustrious men begin the world with great advantages, if they know how to use them: but this is hard and rare. There is risk that in the flush of youth, favourable to all illusions, the filial pride may be twisted to personal vanity. When experience checks this misgrowth, it is apt to do so with a severity that shall reach the best sources of moral and intellectual development. The great sons of great fathers have been few. It is usual to see their progeny smiled at through life for stilted pretension, or despised, at best pitied, for an inactive inglorious humility. The shadow of the oak is broad, but noble plants seldom rise within that circle. It was fortunate for the sons of Scott that his day darkened in the morning of theirs. The sudden calamity anticipated the natural effect of observation and the collisions of society and business. All weak unmanly folly was nipt in the bud, and soon withered to the root. They were both remarkably modest men, but in neither had the better stimulus of the blood been arrested. In aspect and manners they were unlike each other: the elder tall and athletic, the model of a cavalier, with a generous frankness: the other slender and delicate of frame, in bearing, of a womanly gentleness and reserve; but in heart and mind none more akin. The affection of all the family, but especially perhaps of the brothers, for each other, kept to the end all the warmth of undivided childhood. When Charles died, and Walter knew that

he was left alone of all his father's house, he evidently began to droop in spirit. It appeared to me from his letters that he thenceforth dreaded rather than desired a return to Scotland and Abbotsford. His only anxiety was that his regiment might be marched towards the Punjaub.

The only descendants of the Poet now alive are my son Walter Scott Lockhart, (a lieutenant in the army,) who, as his uncle's heir of entail, has lately received permission to assume the additional surname of Scott;—and his sister, Charlotte Harriet Jane, married in August 1847 to James Robert Hope, Barrister, second son of the late General the Honourable Sir Alexander Hope, G.C.B.

In the winter succeeding the Poet's death, his sons and myself, as his executors, endeavoured to make such arrangements as were within our power for completing the great object of his own wishes and fatal exertions. We found the remaining principal sum of commercial debt to be nearly L.54,000. L.22,000 had been insured upon his life; there were some monies in the hands of the Trustees, and Mr Cadell very handsomely offered to advance to us the balance, about L.30,000, that we might without further delay settle with the body of creditors. This was effected accordingly on the 2d of February 1833; Mr Cadell accepting as his only security, the right to the profits accruing from Sir Walter's copyright property and literary remains, until such time as this new and consolidated obligation should be discharged. Besides his commercial debt, Sir Walter left also one of L.10,000, contracted by himself as an individual, when struggling to support Constable in December 1825, and secured by mortgage on the lands of Abbotsford. And, lastly, the library and museum, presented to him in free gift by his creditors in December 1830, were bequeathed to his eldest son with a burden to the extent of L.5000, which sum he designed to be divided between his younger children, as already explained in an extract from his Diary. His will provided that the produce

of his literary property, in case of its proving sufficient to wipe out the remaining debt of the firm, should then be applied to the extinction of these mortgages; and thereafter, should this also be accomplished, divided equally among his surviving family.

Various meetings were held soon after his death with a view to the erection of Monuments to his memory; and the records of these meetings, and their results, are adorned by many of the noblest and most distinguished names both of England and of Scotland. In London, the Lord Bishop of Exeter, Sir Robert Peel, and Sir John Malcolm, took a prominent part as speakers: and the result was a subscription amounting to about L.10,000; but a part of this was embezzled by a young person rashly appointed to the post of secretary, who carried it with him to America, where he soon afterwards died. The noblemen and gentlemen who subscribed to this fund adopted a suggestion—(which originated, I believe, with Lord Francis Egerton, now Earl of Ellesmere, and the Honourable John Stuart Wortley, now Lord Wharncliffe)—that, in place of erecting a cenotaph in Westminster Abbey, or a statue or pillar elsewhere, the most suitable and respectful tribute that could be paid to Sir Walter's memory would be to discharge all the encumbrances upon Abbotsford, and entail the House, with its library and other articles of curiosity collected by him, together with the lands which he had planted and embellished, upon the heirs of his name for ever. The sum produced by the subscription, however, proved inadequate to the realization of such a scheme; and after much consultation, it was at length settled that the money in the hands of the committee (between L.7000 and L.8000,) should be employed to liquidate the debt upon the library and museum, and whatever might be over, towards the mortgage on the lands. This arrangement enabled the late Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Walter Scott to secure, in the shape originally desired, the permanent pre-

servation at least of the house and its immediate appurtenances, as a memorial of the tastes and habits of the founder.

Such was the state of matters when the Lieutenant-Colonel embarked for India: and in his absence no further steps could well be taken. Upon his death, it was found that, notwithstanding the very extensive demand for his father's writings, there still remained a considerable debt to Mr Cadell, and also the greater part of the old debt secured on the lands. Mr Cadell then offered to relieve the guardians of the young inheritor of that great name from much anxiety and embarrassment by accepting, in full payment of the sum due to himself, and also in recompense for his taking on himself the final obliteration of the heritable bond, a transference to him of the remaining claims of the family over Sir Walter's writings, together with the result of some literary exertions of the only surviving executor. This arrangement was completed in May 1847; and the estate, as well as the house and its appendages, became at last unfettered. The rental is small: but I hope and trust that as long as any of the blood remains, reverent care will attend over the guardianship of a possession associated with so many high and noble recollections. On that subject the gallant Soldier who executed the entail, expressed also in his testament feelings of the devoutest anxiety: and it was, I am well assured, in order that no extraneous obstacle might thwart the fulfilment of his pious wishes, that Mr Cadell crowned a long series of kind services to the cause and the memory of Sir Walter Scott, by the very handsome proposition of 1847.

Abbotsford, after his own immortal works, is the best monument of its founder. But at Edinburgh also, soon after his death, a meeting was held with a view to the erection of some visible memorial in his native city; the prominent speakers were the late Marquess of Lothian, the late Earl of Dalhousie, the Earl of Rosebery, Lord Jeffrey,

and Professor Wilson: and the subscription then begun realized a sum of L.8000, which by subsequent exertions reached no less than L.15,000. The result may now be seen in a truly magnificent monument, conspicuous to every visitor of Scott's "own romantic town"—a lofty Gothic cross, enclosing and surmounting a marble statue of the Poet, which, as well as many happy relievos on the exterior, does great honour to the chisel of Mr Steele.

In Glasgow, also, there was a meeting in 1832: the subscriptions there reached L.1200: and in the chief square of that city, already graced with statues of two illustrious natives, James Watt and Sir John Moore, there is now a lofty pillar surmounted with a statue of Sir Walter Scott.

Finally, in the market-place of Selkirk there has been set up, at the cost of local friends and neighbours, a statue in freestone, by Mr Alexander Ritchie of Musselburgh, with this inscription:—

"ERECTED IN AUGUST 1839,
IN PROUD AND AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE
OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BARONET,
SHERIFF OF THIS COUNTY
FROM 1800 TO 1832.

By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek."

In what manner to cover the grave itself at Dryburgh required some consideration, in consequence of the state of the surrounding and overhanging ruins. Sir F. Chantrey recommended a block of Aberdeen granite, so solid as to resist even the fall of the ivied roof of the aisle, and kindly sketched the shape; in which he followed the stone coffin of the monastic ages—especially the "marble stone" on which

Deloraine awaits the opening of the wizard's vault in the Lay. This drawing had just been given to Allan Cunningham, when our great sculptor was smitten with a fatal apoplexy. As soon as pressing business allowed, "honest Allan" took up the instructions of his dying friend; the model was executed under his eye: and the letter in which he reported its completion was, I am informed, the very last that he penned. He also had within a few hours a paralytic seizure, from which he never rose. The inscriptions on this simple but graceful tomb are merely of name and date.

The authentic likenesses of Sir Walter Scott, as far as I have been enabled to trace them, are as follows:—

1. A very good miniature, done at Bath, when he was in the fifth or sixth year of his age, was given by him to his daughter Sophia, and is now in my possession—the artist's name unknown. The child appears with long flowing hair, the colour a light chesnut; a deep open collar, and scarlet dress. It is nearly a profile; the outline wonderfully like what it was to the last; the expression of the eyes and mouth very striking—grave and pensive.

2. A miniature sent by Scott to Miss Carpenter, shortly before their marriage in 1797—at Abbotsford. It is not a good work of art, and I know not who executed it. The hair is slightly powdered.

3. The first oil painting, done for Lady Scott in 1805, by Saxon, was, in consequence of repeated applications for the purpose of being engraved, transferred by her to Messrs Longman & Co., and is now in their house in Paternoster Row. This is a very fine picture, representing, I have no doubt, most faithfully, the author of the Lay of the Last Minstrel. Length, three-quarters—dress black—hair nut-brown—the favourite bull-terrier Camp leaning his head on the knee of his master.

4. The first picture by Raeburn was done in 1808 for

Constable, and passed, at the sale of his effects, into the hands of the Duke of Buccleuch. Scott is represented at full length, sitting by a ruined wall, with Camp at his feet —Hermitage Castle and the mountains of Liddesdale in the back ground. This noble portrait has been repeatedly engraved. Dress black—Hessian boots.—5. The second full-length by Raeburn (done a year later) is nearly a repetition; but the painter had some new sittings. Two greyhounds (Douglas and Percy) appear in addition to Camp, and the background gives the valley of the Yarrow, marking the period of Ashestiel and Marmion. This piece is at Abbotsford.

6. A head in oil by Thomas Phillips, R. A., done in 1818 for Mr Murray, and now in Albemarle Street. The costume was, I think, unfortunately selected—a tartan plaid and open collar. This gives a theatrical air to what would otherwise have been a very graceful representation of Scott in the 47th year of his age. Mr Phillips (for whom Scott had a warm regard, and who often visited him at Abbotsford) has caught a true expression not hit upon by any of his brethren—a smile of gentle enthusiasm. The head has a vivid resemblance to Sir Walter's eldest daughter, and also to his grandson John Hugh Lockhart. A duplicate was added by the late Earl Whitworth to the collection at Knowle.

7. A head sketched in oil by Geddes—being one of his studies for a picture of the finding of the Scottish Regalia in 1818—is in the possession of Sir James Steuart of Allanbank, Baronet. It is nearly a profile—boldly drawn.

8. The unrivalled portrait (three quarters) by Sir Thomas Lawrence, painted for King George IV. in 1820, and now in the Corridor at Windsor Castle. The engraving by Robinson is masterly.

9. A head by Sir Henry Raeburn—the last work of his hand—was done in 1822 for Lord Montagu, and is at Ditton Park: a massive strong likeness, heavy at first

sight, but which grows into favour upon better acquaintance—the eyes very deep and fine. This picture has been well engraved in mezzotinto.

10. A small three-quarters, in oil, done at Chiefswood, in August 1824, by Gilbert Stewart Newton, R. A., and presented by him to Mrs Lockhart. This pleasing picture gives Sir Walter in his usual country dress—a green jacket and black neckcloth, with a leathern belt for carrying the forester's axe round the shoulders. It is the best domestic portrait ever done. A duplicate, in Mr Murray's possession, was engraved for Finden's "Illustrations of Byron."

11. A half-length, painted by C. R. Leslie, R. A., in 1824, for Mr Ticknor of Boston, New England, is now in that gentleman's possession. I never saw this picture in its finished state, but the beginning promised well, and I am assured it is worthy of the artist's high reputation. It has not been engraved—in this country I mean—but a reduced copy of it furnished an indifferent print for one of the Annuals.

12. A small head was painted in 1826 by Mr Knight, a young artist, patronised by Terry. This juvenile production, ill-drawn and feeble in expression, was engraved for Mr Lodge's great work!

13. A half-length by Mr Colvin Smith of Edinburgh, done in January 1828, for the artist's uncle, Lord Gillies. I never admired this picture; but it pleased many, perhaps better judges. Mr Smith executed no less than fifteen copies for friends of Sir Walter;—among others, the Bishop of Llandaff (Copleston), the Chief-Commissioner Adam, and John Hope, now Lord Justice-Clerk of Scotland.

14. A half-length done by Mr Graham Gilbert in 1829, for the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

15. An excellent half-length portrait, by John Watson Gordon, R.A., done in March 1830, for Mr Cadell Scott is represented sitting, with both hands resting on his staff—the stag-hound Bran on his left.

16. A cabinet picture done at Abbotsford in 1831 by Francis Grant, R.A.,—who had the advantage of a familiar knowledge of the subject, being an attached friend of the family. This interesting piece, which has armour and stag-hounds, was done for Lady Ruthven.

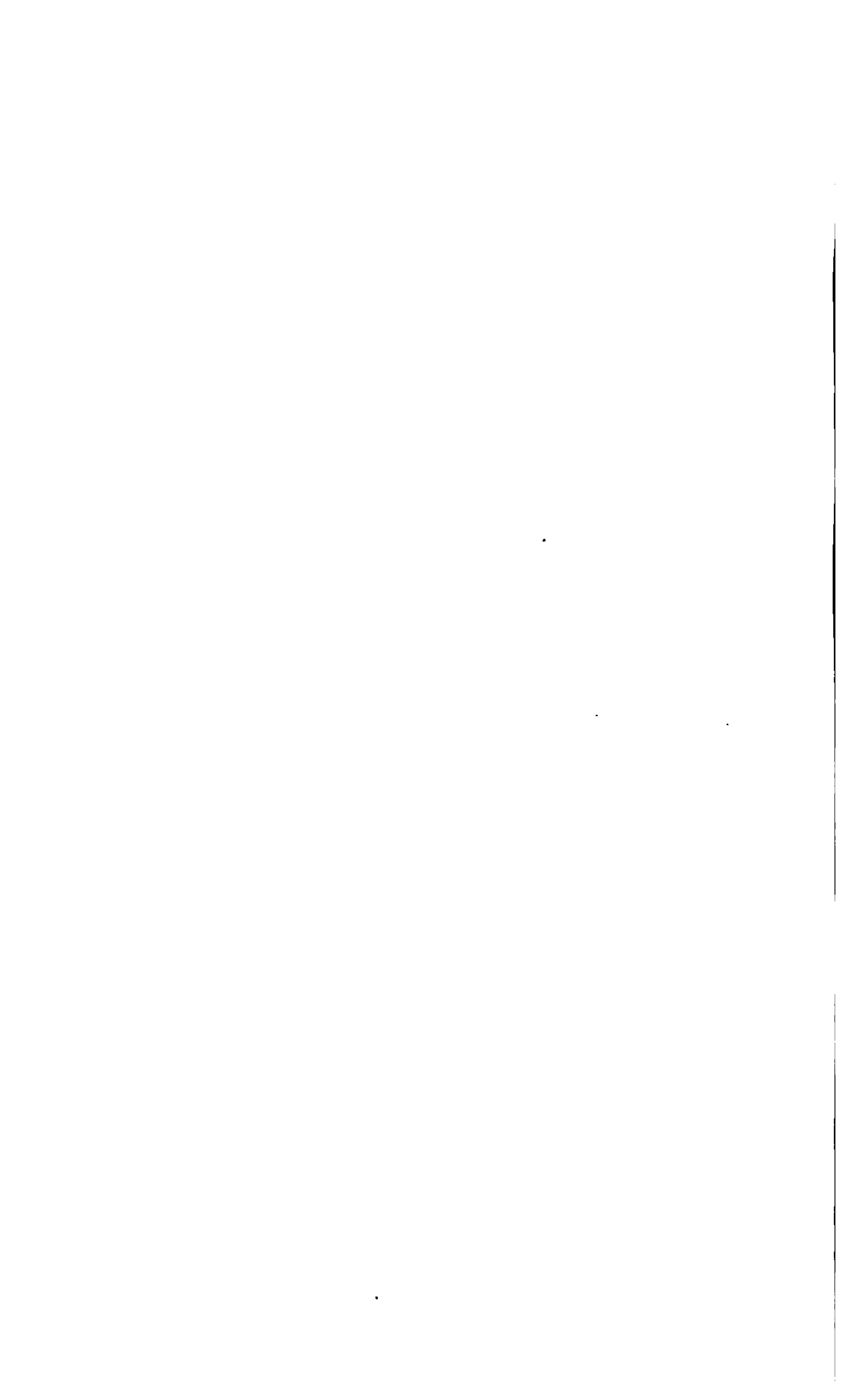
17. I am sorry to say that I cannot express much approbation of the representation of Sir Walter introduced by Sir David Wilkie in his "Abbotsford Family;" nor indeed are any of the likenesses in this graceful composition (1817) at all satisfactory to me, except only that of Sir Adam Fergusson, which is perfect. This is in Sir A.'s possession.—18, 19, 20. Nor can I speak more favourably either of the head of Scott in Wilkie's "Arrival of George IV. at Holyrood" (1822), or of that in Sir William Allan's picture of the "Ettrick Shepherd's Househeating" (1819.) Allan has succeeded better in his picture of "The Author of Waverley in his Study;" this was done shortly before Sir Walter's death.

21. Mr Edwin Landseer, R.A., has painted a full-length portrait, with the scenery of the Rhymer's Glen; and his familiarity with Scott renders this almost as valuable as if he had sat for it. This beautiful picture is in the gallery of Mr Wells at Redleaf, Kent.

I have given better evidence than my own as to the inimitable Bust done by Sir Francis Chantrey in 1820, and now in the library at Abbotsford. Previous to Sir Walter's death, the niche which this now occupies held a cast of the monumental effigy of Shakspeare, presented to him by George Bullock, with an elegant stand, having the letters W. S. in large relievo on its front. Anxiety to place the precious marble in the safest station induced the poet's son to make the existing arrangement on the day after his father's funeral. The propriety of the position is obvious; but in case of misrepresentation hereafter, it is proper to mention that it was not chosen by Sir Walter for an image

of himself. As already stated, Chantrey sculptured, in 1828, for Sir Robert Peel, a bust possessing the character of a second original. Sir Walter's good nature induced him to sit, at various periods of his life, to other sculptors of inferior standing and reputation. I am not aware, however, that any of their performances but two ever reached the dignity of marble. One of these, a very tolerable work, was done by Mr Joseph about 1822, and is in the gallery of Mr Burn Callender, at Prestonhall, near Edinburgh. The other was modelled by Mr Lawrence Macdonald, in the unhappy winter of 1830. The period of the artist's observation would alone have been sufficient to render his efforts fruitless.

The only statue executed during Sir Walter's lifetime, is that by John Greenshields in freestone. On first seeing this, an early companion of the Poet, Mr Thomas Thomson, D.C.S., exclaimed, "A petrifaction of Scott!" It is certainly a most meritorious work; and I am well pleased that it has its station in Mr Cadell's premises in St Andrew Square, Edinburgh. The proprietor has adopted the inscription for Bacon's effigy at St Alban's, and carved on the pedestal "SIC SEDEBAT."—Mr Steele's noble marble statue for the Edinburgh Monument was erected in 1847.



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