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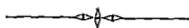
"There is life still," he said on one occasion, after reading a sermon of the present Bishop of Manchester's, on the Bennett judgment, "when you Anglicans can show such men as Moorhouse, Lightfoot, and one or two others in your fighting ranks."

Upon the whole, this interesting volume produces upon the mind of an attentive reader a feeling of intense sadness. Ward and his friends demanded an ideal Church, which never had any real existence, as the panacea for all existing evils.

A writer in the *Times* has well said "that if W. G. Ward had studied history, or theology, or Christian antiquities, nay—we mean no offence—the Bible itself, he would not have written this book (the 'Ideal of a Christian Church'); not, at least, as it stands." We may carry this further and safely declare, that a true study of some of our own great divines, Hooker and Jeremy Taylor, might have wrought considerable changes in Ward's phases of faith. The lesson to be derived from such a book as this is by no means an unimportant one, and the students of theology will have no reason to regret time spent upon the consideration of the perplexities and puzzles of a mind like Ward's.

In a very beautiful passage in one of his later University sermons Dr. Pusey has spoken of the intense hold given to the mind by a personal devotion and loyalty to Christ. We do not wish to say a single harsh word, but in the bulky volume which created such a sensation there is an evidence of inability on Ward's part to appreciate the intensity of that feeling which kept many in those days of anxiety content with strife, and yet masters of an inward peace.

G. D. BOYLE.



ART. V.—SIR WALTER SCOTT.¹

SIR WALTER SCOTT holds that place among novelists which Shakespeare holds among poets. That is, he is supreme among writers of fiction. In the description of scenery; in the power of what is known as word-painting; in spirit-stirring adventure; in vividness of fancy and breadth of humour; above all, in portrayal and development of character, he has not been surpassed by any other writer in the language since Shakespeare gave to the world his immortal dramas.

¹ "Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott," by Lockhart; "English Men of Letters—Scott," by R. H. Hutton; "Great Writers—Life of Sir Walter Scott," by Charles Duke Yonge.

Such was Scott as an author, and of this we shall give proofs by-and-by; and what he was as a man—how true in all the relationships of life, how faithful, how generous, how free from jealousy towards his brother authors, how noble in prosperity, how courageous in adversity—will be shown before this paper reaches its close.

We are told by Lockhart, in that best of biographies, where we find the man himself, in his habit as he lived, that the lines most characteristic of himself that Scott ever wrote were these, which form a motto to one of the chapters of "Old Mortality."

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.

Sir Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh on the 15th of August, 1771, his father being descended from the younger branch of the great Border family of Buccleuch, and his mother, who was Miss Rutherford, the daughter of a physician, being a granddaughter of Sir John Swinton, who was the representative of a Scottish family famed for its knightly deeds and prowess on the battle-field. Sir Walter's great pride was to be an acknowledged member of one of the honourable families whose ancestors had fought under the banner of some noble leader; and his great ambition was to be the founder of a house from which should spring far-distant generations rejoicing in the name of "Scott of Abbotsford."

We have some interesting reminiscences from Sir Walter's own pen of the men whose blood ran in his veins. One, as he mentions in a letter to Miss Seward, was known as Auld Wat of Harden, whose son William, captured by Sir Gideon Murray, of Elibank, during a raid of the Scots on Sir Gideon's lands, was given his choice between what may have been considered two evils. He might choose between being hanged on Sir Gideon's private gallows, and marrying the ugliest of Sir Gideon's three ugly daughters, "Meikle-mouthed Meg," who was said to bear away the palm for ugliness from the women of four counties. Sir William was a handsome man. He took three days to make up his mind; but after due consideration, he chose life and the large-mouthed lady, and found her, according to his illustrious descendant, not only an excellent wife, but a lady well skilled in pickling the beef which her husband carried off from the herds of his foes. For in those days it was customary, even with members of noble houses, to illustrate what Wordsworth has called

The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.]

It is said that Meg's descendants inherited her large mouth, and the poet was no exception to the rule.

Nor was Sir William the only distinguished ancestor of the poet and novelist, for his great-grandfather was that Walter Scott known in Teviotdale by the surname of "Beardie," because he would never cut his beard after the banishment of the Stuarts, and who not only lost, by his intrigues on their behalf, almost all that he had, but ran the greatest risk of being hanged as a traitor. In the introduction to the last canto of "Marmion," Sir Walter thus alludes to the faithful cavalier :

And thus my Christmas still I hold,
 Where my great grandsire came of old,
 With amber beard and flaxen hair,
 And reverend, apostolic air,
 The feast and holy tide to share,
 And mix sobriety with wine,
 And honest mirth with thoughts divine.
 Small thought was his in after-time
 E'er to be hitch'd into a rhyme ;
 The simple sire could only boast
 That he was loyal to his cost ;
 The banished race of kings revered,
 And lost his land—but kept his beard.

The second son of this "Beardie" was Sir Walter's grandfather, and from him he derived that sanguine and speculative disposition which had so much influence over his fortunes. Robert Scott, wishing to breed sheep, and having no capital, borrowed £30 from a shepherd, and the two made a journey into Northumberland together to purchase a flock near Wooler. The shepherd, more experienced in the matter, was to buy the sheep ; but when, after having met with what he considered to be a good investment, he returned to his master, he found him on the back of a fine hunter, on which he had spent all the money in hand. The speculation, however, proved to be a profitable one, for the horse displayed such excellent qualities when following the hounds of John Scott of Harden that it was sold for double the money paid down for its purchase. This incident in his family history was not forgotten in long after-days by Sir Walter. Lockhart tells us how 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 weary of praising them. The Cavalier of Killikrankie, brave, faithful, and romantic old "Beardie," a determined but melancholy countenance, was never surveyed without a repetition of the solitary Latin rhyme of his bow. 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

wooding 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 Redwire," when

The Laird's Wat, that worthy man,
Brought in that surname weel began,

and,

The Rutherfords, with great renown,
Conveyed the town o' Jedburgh out.

The ardent but sagacious goodman of Sandy Knowe hangs by the side of his father "Bearded Wat;" and often, when moralizing in his latter days 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 sheepwalk 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," adds his son-in-law, "for the elements were mingled in him curiously as well as gently."

In his study of Sir Walter in "English Men of Letters," Mr. Hutton says that this "thread of the attorney was not the least of his inheritances, for from his father he certainly derived that disposition towards conscientious plodding, industry, legalism of mind, methodical habits of work, and a generous, equitable interpretation of the scope of all his observation to others, which, prized and cultivated by him as they were, turned a good genius which, especially considering the hare-brained element in him, might easily have been frittered away, or devoted to worthless ends, to such fruitful account, and stamped it with so grand an impress of personal magnanimity and fortitude."

Sir Walter's mother was a woman with great tenderness of heart, a well-stored mind, and a vivid memory; and he, the ninth of twelve children, six of whom died in early childhood, returned warmly her affection for himself. In Lockhart's "Life of Scott" we read how the evening after the poet's burial his executors in lifting up his desk 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 toilette 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 who had died before her; his father's snuff-box and etui-case, and more things of the like sort, recalling "the old familiar faces." He had but one sister, who was somewhat of a querulous invalid, and whom he seems

to have pitied almost more than he loved. In an autobiographical sketch of his early years we learn that he was an uncommonly healthy child for the first eighteen months of his life, and that then he had a teething fever which settled in his right leg, and, permanently contracting the limb, left a lameness which, though not severe, proved incurable. The child, because of his illness, was sent to reside with his grandfather, who lived at Sandy Knowe, near the ruined tower of Smailholme, celebrated in his ballad of "The Eve of St. John," in the neighbourhood of some fine crags. A housemaid was sent from Edinburgh to look after him, and up to these crags she used to carry him with a design, as she confessed to the housekeeper—due to incipient insanity—of murdering the child there and burying him in the snow. After the maid was dismissed the boy was sent out, when the weather was fine, under the charge of the shepherd, who would often lay him beside the sheep. In after-days Scott told Mr. Skene, when making an excursion with Turner, who was drawing his illustration of Smailholme Tower for one of Scott's works, that "the habit of lying on the turf there among the sheep and the lambs had given his mind a peculiar tenderness for these animals, which it had ever since retained." Being forgotten one day upon the knolls when a thunderstorm came on, his aunt ran out to bring him in, and found him shouting "Bonnie, bonnie!" at every flash of lightning. His mother, a woman of good natural taste and feeling, had from his earliest years inspired him with a fondness for poetry, and he used to read alone to her Pope's Homer, and old ballads of Border warfare, and legends of striking events in the romantic annals of his country. At six years of age he is described by Mrs. Cockburn as the most astounding genius of a boy she ever saw. "He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on. It was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. 'There's the mast gone!' says he; 'crash it goes; they will all perish!' After his agitation he turns to me: 'That is too melancholy,' says he; 'I had better read you something more amusing.'" When Mrs. Cockburn had left the room he told his aunt how much he liked her, for, said he, she was a *virtuoso* like himself. "Dear Walter," replied Aunt Jenny, "what is a *virtuoso*?" "Don't ye know? Why, it's one who wishes and will know everything."

At nine years of age he was sent to the High School in his native city, where his reputation as a classical scholar was not great, and where he glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other, gaining more praise for his interpretation of the spirit of his authors than for his knowledge of their language. He was a boy of a fascinating sweetness of temper,

but underneath which lay a proud and masculine character, combined with strong common-sense. His sagacity in estimating the character of others appears from a story which he, towards the close of his life, told to Samuel Rogers. He had long desired to get above a school-fellow in his class, who defied all his efforts till Scott noticed that whenever a question was asked of his rival the lad's fingers grasped a particular button of his waistcoat, while his mind went in search of the answer. Scott at once felt that if he could remove this button the boy would be thrown out, and so it proved. The button was cut off, and the next time a question was put to the lad, his fingers being unable to find the button, and his eyes going in perplexed search after his fingers, he stood confounded, and Scott mastered by artifice the place which he could not gain by industry. "Often in after-life," was Scott's own comment to Rogers on this piece of strategy, "has the sight of him smote me as I passed by him, and often have I resolved to make him some reparation, but it ended in good resolutions. Though I never renewed my acquaintance with him, I often saw him, for he filled some inferior office in one of the Courts of Law at Edinburgh. Poor fellow! I believe he is dead; he took early to drinking." With all the sweetness of his character Scott had a good deal of wilfulness, which was shown in his studies. Though he mastered Latin fairly, he steadily declined to learn Greek.

As might be supposed, Scott was a Tory in politics, had a great reverence for the past, and was largely influenced by all that appealed to the imagination. He says in the autobiographical sketch before alluded to, "I, with my head on fire for chivalry, was a Cavalier; my friend was a Roundhead. . . I was a Tory, and he was a Whig; I hated Presbyterians, and admired Montrose with his victorious Highlanders; he liked the Presbyterian Ulysses, the deep and politic Argyle; so that we never wanted subjects of dispute; but our disputes were always amicable." And he adds with great candour: "In all these tenets there was no real conviction on my part arising out of the views or principles of either party. . . . I took up politics at that period as King Charles II. did his religion, from an idea that the Cavalier creed was the more gentleman-like persuasion of the two."

In course of time Scott entered the college, and began his legal studies, first as apprentice to his father, and then in the law classes of the university, where, amidst other studies less congenial to his mind, he learnt Italian, and became so enamoured of that melodious language as to maintain in an essay, much to the indignation of the Greek professor, the superiority of Ariosto to Homer, "supporting his heresy," to

use his own words, "by a profusion of bad readings and flimsy arguments." Later on, and during his apprenticeship, he learned Spanish, and eagerly read Cervantes, whose novels, he said, first inspired him with the ambition to excel in fiction; and so gigantic was his memory, that all he read and admired he remembered. Such a value did Scott set on the acquisition of foreign languages, that he varied his legal studies by attending a German class, which some letters of Mackenzie, the author of "The Man of Feeling," had made popular in Edinburgh; and his earliest attempt at verse was a poetical version of Bürger's "Lemore," which he got printed in a single night to gratify a lady who was the friend of the fair one whose favour he was seeking at the time, though unsuccessfully, to win.

Scott continued to practise at the Bar for fourteen years, never making more in any one year than £230; and his practice, instead of increasing, diminished, his well-known love for literature and his reputation for unprofessional adventure telling much against his success. In his eighth year at the Bar he was appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire, with a salary of £300 a year, and as this occurred soon after his marriage to a lady of some means, his professional zeal became somewhat cooled. It was verified in his case, as in that of many others, that the "course of true love never did run smooth." One Sunday, as the congregation were leaving Greyfriars' Churchyard and the rain began to fall, Scott offered his umbrella to a young lady of great personal charms, and the tender being accepted, he accompanied her home. Scott lost his heart to the fair stranger, who turned out to be Margaret, daughter of Sir John and Lady Jane Stuart Belches, of Invernay; and their return from church together, his mother forming one of the party, grew into something like a custom. Mrs. Scott and Lady Jane had been friends in their youth, though they had scarcely seen each other for years, and they now renewed their former acquaintance. Scott's father, aware that the young lady had prospects of fortune far above his son's, thought it his duty to warn the baronet of Walter's views, and Sir John thanked him for his scrupulous attention, adding that "he believed he was mistaken," and he treated the whole business with great unconcern. The paternal interference produced no change in his relations with the object of his growing attachment; and for years he nourished the dream of an ultimate union with the object of his first and most passionate love; but all his hopes ended in her marriage to a gentleman of the highest character, who lived to act the part of a most generous friend to Scott throughout the anxieties and distresses of the closing period of his life. This was William Forbes, afterwards Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo, a banker, to whom some affectionate allusions occur in one of the greatest

of his works. The full story of this early passion, and the causes that led to the non-fulfilment of his hopes, will never be known. Whether Scott was mistaken as to the impression he had made on the lady, or whether she was mistaken in her own feelings regarding him; whether her father at last awoke to the truth that there was danger in their intimacy, are points in which we can reach no certainty; all that can be said is that this attachment had a powerful influence in keeping him from some of the most dangerous temptations that beset the young, and in nerving him for the sedulous diligence with which he pursued his legal studies during the two or three years that preceded his call to the Bar. That his sensitive nature would feel keenly the bitter ending to his youthful romance we can well believe; and, indeed, there is an entry in his diary respecting a visit, after many years, to the aged mother of his first love, which assures us that the events of the past were remembered with pain. It was in 1797, after his happy dream was rudely broken, that he wrote the beautiful lines "To a Violet," which betray the shock to his pride, and the bitterness of heart that resulted from his disappointment:

The violet in her greenwood bower,
Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle,
May boast itself the fairest flower
In glen, or copse, or forest dingle.

Though fair her gems of azure hue,
Beneath the dewdrop's weight reclining,
I've seen an eye of lovelier blue,
More sweet through watery lustre shining.

The summer sun that dew shall dry,
Ere yet the day be past its morrow;
Nor longer in my false love's eye
Remain'd the tear of parting sorrow.

It was in this year, 1797, and at the suggestion of his friend Charles Kerr, who had been residing a good deal in Cumberland, and was enchanted with the beauty of the scenery, that Scott, accompanied by his brother John and Adam Fergusson, set out on a tour to the English lakes. Proceeding southwards, and after visiting many a beautiful spot, they at length fixed their headquarters at the then peaceful and sequestered little watering place of Gilsland, and here it was that he first saw the amiable lady who was to make him a good, though by no means the ideal, wife for a man of his depth and intensity of character. This was Charlotte Margaret Carpenter, the daughter of Jean Charpentier, of Lyons, a devoted Royalist, who had died in the beginning of the Revolution. Madame Charpentier made her escape with her children, and came to England, where they had a warm friend and protector in the Marquis of Downshire.

Miss Carpenter had many personal attractions: "a form that was fashioned as light as a fay's;" a complexion of the clearest and lightest olive; eyes large, deep-set, and dazzling, of the finest Italian brown, and a profusion of silken tresses, black as the raven's wing. "A lovelier vision," says Lockhart, "as all who remember her in the bloom of her days have assured me, could hardly have been imagined; and from that hour the fate of the young poet was fixed." The union on the whole was a happy one, for she had a kindly nature and a true heart, though she was not able to enter into Scott's deeper anxieties, or to participate in his dreams. Scott carried his bride to a lodging in George Street, Edinburgh, a house which he had taken in South Castle Street not being quite prepared for her reception.

In the summer of 1798 Scott had hired a pretty cottage at Lasswade, on the Esk, about six miles from Edinburgh, and it was here, a beautiful retreat, where he spent some happy summers, and amidst some of the most romantic scenery of Scotland, that he produced the pieces which laid the imperishable foundation of all his fame.

His earliest attempt at poetry was a vigorous version of Bürger's "Lenore," published under the title of "William and Helen," a spectre ballad of great power, appealing to the emotions of pity and terror. The whole poem has a vividness calculated to touch the imagination; and the translation has been much commended for the fine effect attained by the repetition of certain words. For instance:

And hurry, hurry! clash, clash, clash!
 The wasted form descends,
 And fleet as wind through hazel bush
 The wild career attends.

Tramp, tramp! along the land they rode;
 Splash, splash! along the sea;
 The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
 The plashing pebbles flee.

William Erskine had showed Lewis, whose clever but indecent romance of "The Monk," with the ballads which it included, had made for him, in days barren of much literary merit, a brilliant reputation, the version of "Lenore" and "The Wild Huntsman," and further added that his friend had other specimens of German *diablerie* in his portfolio. Lewis, who was then busy with that Miscellany which at length came out, in 1801, under the name of "Tales of Wonder," and was anxiously looking out for contributions, requested that Scott might be enlisted in his cause. Scott, an aspirant for fame, and dazzled by the popularity of Lewis, placed whatever pieces he had translated, or imitated from the German "Volkslieder," at his disposal.

But "Tales of Wonder" did not entirely engross Scott's leisure at this time. His genius turned to more natural subjects, and to themes better calculated to arrest the feelings of his countrymen than any weird stories derived from German *diablerie*. And so he produced what he justly calls his "first serious attempts in verse," and collected materials for a book afterwards to be published, called "Contributions to Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." This was given to the world in 1802, and contains the poems of "Thomas the Rhymer," "Glenfinlas; or, Lord Ronald's Coronach," "The Eve of St. John," "Cadyow Castle," and "The Gray Brother."

The first of these is a poem on Thomas of Ercildoune, known as "The Rhymer," who united in his person the powers of both prophet and poet. Carried off at an early age to the fairy land where he acquired the knowledge which made him so famous, he came back to earth to astonish his countrymen by his prophetic powers, but remained bound to return to his royal mistress when she should intimate her pleasure. On one occasion he was making merry with his friends in the tower of Ercildoune when one came running and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest and were parading the street of the village. He immediately rose and left the tower, and followed the mysterious animals to the forest, whence he never returned.

"Glenfinlas; or, Lord Ronald's Coronach" is the legend of two Highland hunters who were passing the night in a solitary bothy or hut, built for hunting purposes, and were making merry over their venison and whisky. One of them expressed a wish that they had pretty lasses to complete their party, and the words were scarcely uttered when two beautiful young women clad in green entered the hut singing and dancing. One of the hunters was tempted by the siren, who attached herself to him, particularly to leave the bothy. The other remained, and, suspicious of the fair woman, continued to play, on a Jew's harp, some strain consecrated to the Virgin Mary. At the dawn of day the temptress vanished. Searching in the forest, the wiser hunter found the bones of his unfortunate friend, who had been torn to pieces and devoured by the fiend into whose toils he had fallen. The place was from this called the "Glen of the Green Women."

"In the 'Eve of St. John' Scott repeoples," as Lockhart says, "the tower of Smailholme, the awe-inspiring haunt of his infancy; it is a weird and ghostly vision of guilt and its terrible retribution."

"The Gray Brother" is founded on the belief that the holiest service of the altar cannot proceed if an unclean person, a heinous sinner, unconfessed and unabsolved, be present. The

ballad is only a fragment, but not the less impressive from its imperfect state, and in construction and metre is one of its author's happiest efforts in this style.

"Cadyow Castle" was composed in 1802, when Scott was thirty-one years of age; and in the same year he wrote the first canto of his first great romance in verse, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," a poem which was not published till 1805, when he was thirty-four. The "Lay" was suggested by the young and lovely Countess of Dalkeith, who requested that he would write a poem on the legend of the goblin page, Gilpin Horner; and the first canto was written in the lodgings to which he was confined for a fortnight in 1802, by a kick received from a horse on Portobello Sands, during a charge of the volunteer cavalry, in which Scott was cornet. The poem was originally intended to form part of the third volume of the "Minstrelsy," but it soon outgrew the limits which he had originally contemplated, and the design was abandoned. Scott soon perceived that the story of the goblin was confused and uninteresting, and, as he confesses to Miss Seward, he was compelled to extricate himself from the original groundwork of the tale in the best way he could. "The story appeared so uncouth that I was fain to put it into the mouth of my old minstrel, lest the nature of it should be misunderstood, and I should be suspected of setting up a new school of poetry, instead of a feeble attempt to imitate the old. In the process of the romance the page, intended to be a principal person in the work, contrived (from the baseness of his natural propensities, I suppose) to slink downstairs into the kitchen, and now he must e'en abide there." In Lockhart's opinion "a single scene of feudal festivity, in the hall of Branksome, disturbed by some pranks of a nondescript goblin," was possibly all that he had originally designed, till suddenly there flashed on him the idea of extending his simple outline so as to embrace a vivid panorama of that old Border life of war and tumult, and all earnest passions, with which his researches on the minstrelsy had by degrees fed his imagination." If this opinion be correct, the change of plan was most happy, and led to the immediate success of the poem. The Duchess of the "Lay" was without doubt intended to represent the Countess at whose request he wrote it; and the aged harper was the poet himself, who, under this disguise, poured out his loyalty and devotion to Lord and Lady Dalkeith.

Though Francis Jeffrey, in the *Edinburgh Review*, which had been lately started, denounced the defective conception of the fable, "the great inequality in the execution," and especially condemned with extreme severity "the undignified and improbable picture of the goblin page, an awkward sort of mongrel between Puck and Caliban," yet the poem called forth universal

admiration, receiving even a warmer welcome on the south than on the north of the Tweed. The magnificent quarto edition of 750 copies was soon exhausted, and an octavo edition of 1,500 copies was sold out within the year. Two editions, containing together 4,250 copies, were disposed of in the following year; and before twenty-five years had elapsed, that is, before 1830, 44,000 copies had been bought by the public. Scott gained in all by the "Lay," £769, an unprecedented sum in those times for an author to obtain from any poem. Wordsworth and Campbell, his distinguished contemporaries, were prompt and cordial in their recognition of its excellence; and the great political rivals, Pitt and Fox, vied with each other in its praise. The lines in which Scott describes the trembling embarrassment of the aged minstrel as he tuned his harp before the Duchess produced on Pitt, according to his own account, "an effect which I might have expected in painting, but could never have fancied capable of being given in poetry."

The lines to which the great Minister refers are these :

The humble boon was soon obtain'd ;
 The aged minstrel audience gain'd.
 But when he reach'd the room of state,
 Where she with all her ladies sate,
 Perchance he wished his boon denied ;
 For when to tune the harp he tried,
 His trembling hand had lost the ease
 Which marks security to please ;
 And scenes long past, of joy and pain,
 Came wildering o'er his aged brain,—
 He tried to tune his harp in vain !

* * * * *

Here paused the harp ; and with its swell
 The master's fire and courage fell ;
 Dejectedly and low he bowed,
 And gazing timid on the crowd,
 He seem'd to seek in every eye
 If they approved his minstrelsy ;
 And diffident of present praise,
 Somewhat he spoke of former days,
 And how old age, and wandering long,
 Had done his hand and harp some wrong.

There is great tenderness and beauty in this passage, as well as strength, simplicity, and spirit, and the aged harper is brought vividly before the imagination as he strives to recall the emotions of the past, at first doubtful, distrustful; and then, when they revive, "the lightening up of his faded eye," the triumph of a fulfilled desire, and at last the oblivion of the present, his toils, his wants, till, as he sweeps the sounding chords,

Cold diffidence and age's frost,
 In the full tide of song are lost.

Shortly after the publication of the "Lay," he formally,

though secretly, joined Ballantyne as a partner in the printing business. He embarked in the concern almost the whole of the capital at his disposal—nearly the £5,000 which he had received for Rosebank, and which he had, a few months before, designed to invest in the purchase of Broad meadows. He explains his motives for this step—so far, at least, as he then recalled them—in a letter written after his misfortunes in 1826. "It is easy," he said, "no doubt, for any friend to blame me for entering into connection with commercial matters at all. But I wish to know what I could have done better—excluded from the Bar, and then from all profits for six years, by my colleague's prolonged life. Literature was not in those days what poor Constable has made it; and with my little capital I was too glad to make, commercially, the means of supporting my family. I got but £600 for 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel,' and—it was a price which made men's hair stand on end—£1,000 for 'Marmion.' I have been far from suffering by James Ballantyne. I owe it to him to say that his difficulties, as well as his advantages, are owing to me."

Scott ceased to practise at the Bar, no doubt in great measure because his pride was hurt at his want of success; and having a horror of resting on literature alone as his main resource, he hoped that if he could but use his literary instinct to feed some commercial undertaking, managed by a man he could trust, he might obtain, at least, a share in those more liberal rewards which commercial men managed to gain for themselves out of successful authors. Nor would this oblige him either to give up his status as a sheriff, or his official duties as a clerk of session, or his literary undertakings. "The forming of this commercial connection," says Lockhart, "was one of the most important steps in Scott's life. He continued bound by it during twenty years, and its influence on his literary exertions and his worldly fortunes was productive of much good, and not a little evil. Its effects were, in truth, so varied and balanced during the vicissitudes of a long and vigorous career, that I, at this moment, doubt whether it ought, on the whole, to be considered with more of satisfaction or of regret."

Scott had now several literary projects on hand. "I have imagined," he says in a letter to Ballantyne, "a very superb work. What think you of a complete edition of British poets, ancient and modern? Johnson's is imperfect, and out of print; so is Bell's, which is a Lilliputian thing; and Anderson's, the most complete in point of number, is most contemptible in execution both of the editor and printer. There is a scheme for you! At least a hundred volumes to be published, at the rate of ten a year." Scott opened his gigantic scheme to Constable, who entered into it with eagerness; but they found

that some of the London publishers had a similar plan on foot, and were in treaty for the biographical prefaces. Scott proposed that the Edinburgh and London houses should join in the adventure, and that the editorial tasks should be shared between himself and his brother poet. To this the publishers and Campbell warmly assented; but the design fell to the ground in consequence of the booksellers refusing to admit certain works which both Scott and Campbell insisted upon.

Scott now began to work seriously on Dryden, and also prepared for the *Edinburgh Review* an article on Todd's edition of Spenser; another on Godwin's "Fleetwood"; and several others for the same periodical, among them the Highland Society's report concerning the poems of Ossian, and one on some cookery-books, which contained excellent specimens of his humour. About 1805 he wrote the opening chapters of "Waverley"; and the second title, "'Tis Sixty Years Since"—selected, as he says, that the actual date of publication might correspond with the period in which the scene was laid—leaves no doubt that he had begun the work so early in 1805 as to contemplate publishing it before Christmas.

"Marmion," Scott's greatest poem, was published on the 23rd of February, 1808, three years after the publication of the "Lay." The literary world was, at the time of its publication, divided on the merits of the "Lay" and the new poem; and it was Southey's opinion that "though the story of Marmion was made of better materials, yet they were not so well fitted together. As a whole," he says, "it has not pleased me so much—in parts it has pleased me more. There is nothing so finely conceived in your former poem as the death of Marmion; there is nothing finer in conception anywhere." Wordsworth, in writing to Scott, says: "In the circle of my acquaintance it seems as well liked as the 'Lay,' though I have heard that in the world it is not so. Had the poem been much better than the 'Lay,' it could scarcely have satisfied the public, which has too much of the monitor, the moral monitor, in its composition." Two months after the publication of "Marmion," Ellis writes to the author: "With respect to the two rivals, I think the 'Lay' is, on the whole, the greatest favourite;" and after giving some reasons for this, he adds: "Now all this may be very true; but it is no less true that everybody has already read 'Marmion' more than once, that it is the subject of general conversation—that it delights all ages and all tastes—and that it is universally allowed to improve upon a second reading. My own opinion is that both the productions are equally good in their different ways. Yet, upon the whole, I had rather be the author of 'Marmion' than of the 'Lay,' because I think its species of excellence of much more difficult attainment."

There is no doubt that the verdict of succeeding time has been in favour of "Marmion," and that it takes a place in general estimation above Scott's other poems, ranking higher than the "Lady of the Lake," and therefore higher than "Rokeby," or the "Lord of the Isles," or "The Bridal of Triermain." Modern criticism, I think, does not give Scott that place among poets to which he is justly entitled. No doubt his genius was at its freest and richest in prose, and that here his creative power finds its greatest stimulus. He has not, as a poet, the richness or variety of Byron, the luscious imagery of Keats, the ethereal grace of Shelley, the insight into the deeper side of life and nature that belongs to Wordsworth, or the lyric beauty of Tennyson. But he has an Homeric simplicity, a martial ardour, and a passionate sympathy with all that is noble and great, which gives him a high place among "the immortals." There is many an exquisite description of nature in his poems; many a heart-stirring battle-scene, in which we hear the shouts of the foemen, and see the charge of the archers, and behold the rapid onset, the hurrying strength, until we feel the joy of battle and the triumph of the victory. What a lovely bit of description we have in the introduction to the second canto of "Marmion"!—

 Oft in my mind such thoughts awake
 By lone St. Mary's silent lake;
 Thou know'st it well,—nor fen, nor sedge,
 Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge;
 Abrupt and sheer the mountains sink
 At once upon the level's brink,
 And just a trace of silver sand
 Marks where the water meets the land.
 Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
 Each huge hill's outline you may view;
 Shaggy with heath, but lonely, bare,
 Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake is there,
 Save where, of land, yon slender line
 Bears thwart the lake the scatter'd pine.

In a different style, how admirable is the Battle of Flodden in its high patriotic feeling, its stern and deep excitement, its force and swiftness, its picturesque detail, its martial glow, and the light and glow thrown over the whole scene!—

 But as they left the dark'ning heath,
 More desperate grew the strife of death,
 The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
 In headlong charge their horse assailed;
 Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
 To break the Scottish circle deep,
 That fought around their king.
 But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
 Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
 Though bill-men ply the ghastly bow,
 Unbroken was the ring.

The stubborn spearmen still made good
 Their dark impenetrable wood,
 Each stepping where his comrade stood
 The instant that he fell.
 No thought was there of dastard flight ;
 Linked in the serried phalanx tight,
 Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
 As fearlessly and well ;
 Till utter darkness closed her wing,
 O'er their thin host and wounded king.

In his monograph on Scott in the "English Men of Letters" series Mr. Hutton tells the following anecdote of the impression left on the mind, not on excitable youth, but on sober and serious age, by the closing scenes of *Marmion*: "I have heard of two old men, complete strangers, passing each other on a dark London night, when one of them happened to be repeating to himself the last lines of the account of Flodden Field in '*Marmion*'—'Charge, Chester, charge!' when suddenly a reply came out of the darkness, 'On, Stanley, on!' whereupon they finished the death of *Marmion* between them, took off their hats to each other, and parted laughing."

Some lines in the magnificent ballad of "*Cadyow Castle*" made a strong impression on Thomas Campbell, the poet. He was found one night on the North Bridge at Edinburgh, wild with excitement, repeating these verses, which have all the ring of a trumpet :

Through the huge oaks of Evandale,
 Whose limbs a thousand years have worn,
 What sullen roar comes down the gale,
 And drowns the hunter's pealing horn ?
 Mightiest of all the beasts of chase
 That roam in woody Caledon,
 Crashing the forest in his race,
 The mountain bull comes thundering on.
 Fierce on the hunter's quivered band,
 He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow,
 Spurns with black hoof and horn the sand,
 And tosses high his mane of snow.
 Aim'd well, the chieftain's lance has flown ;
 Struggling in blood the savage lies ;
 His roar is sunk in hollow groan :
 Sound, merry huntsman ! sound the pryse !

Referring to these verses Campbell said : "I have repeated them so often on the North Bridge that the whole fraternity of coachmen know me by my tongue as I pass. To be sure, to a mind in sober, serious, street-walking humour it must bear an appearance of lunacy when one stamps with the hurried pace and fervent shake of the head which strong, pithy poetry excites."

C. D. BELL, D.D.

(*To be continued.*)