

# **The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction eBook**

## **The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction**

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# Page 1

## NOTICES OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE LATE SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

With Five Engravings:

1. *Abbotsford, (from the Garden.)* 2. *The armoury.* 3. *The poet's study.* 4. *Portrait—(from the last painting.)* 5. *Dryburgh abbey.*

[Illustration: *Abbotsford, (from the garden, see page 247.)*]

Sir Walter Scott was the third son of Walter Scott, Esq., Writer to the Signet, in Edinburgh, and Anne, daughter of Dr. John Rutherford, Professor of Medicine in the University of the above city. His ancestry numbers several distinguished persons; though the well-earned fame of Sir Walter Scott renders his pedigree comparatively uninteresting; inasmuch as it illustrates the saw of an olden poet, that

Learning is an addition beyond  
Nobility of birth: honour of blood,  
Without the ornament of knowledge, is  
A glorious ignorance.

*Shirley.*

Sir Walter was born at Edinburgh, on the 15th of August, 1771—or, on the birthday of Napoleon Buonaparte. His father was a man of prosperous fortune and good report; and for many years was “an elder in the parish church of Old Grey Friars, while Dr. Robertson, the historian, acted as one of the ministers. The other clergyman was Dr. John Erskine, of whom Sir Walter has given an animated picture in his novel of *Guy Mannering*.”[1] Mrs. Scott is described as a well-educated gentlewoman, possessing considerable natural talents; though she did not enjoy the acquaintance of Allan Ramsay, Blacklock, Beattie, and Burns, as has been stated by some biographers. She, however, advantageously mixed in literary society, and from her superintendence of the early education of her eldest son, Walter, there is reason to infer that such advantages may have influenced his habits and taste. He was the third of a family, consisting of six sons and one daughter. The cleverest of the sons is stated by Sir Walter to have been Daniel, a sailor, who died young. Thomas, the next brother to Sir Walter, was a man of considerable talent, and before the avowal of the authorship of the *Waverley Novels*, report ascribed to him a great part or the whole of them. Sir Walter observes—“Those who remember that gentleman (of the 70th regiment, then stationed in Canada) will readily grant, that, with general talent at least equal to those of his elder brother, he added a power of social humour, and a deep insight into human character, which rendered him an universally delightful member of society, and that the habit of composition alone was wanting to render him equally successful as a writer. The Author



of Waverley was so persuaded of the truth of this, that he warmly pressed his brother to make such an experiment, and willingly undertook all the trouble of correcting and superintending the press." Ill health, however, unfitted Mr. Scott for the task, though "the author believes his brother would have made himself distinguished in that striking field, in which, since that period, Mr. Cooper has achieved so many triumphs." [2]

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[1] Chamber's Life of Sir Walter Scott.

[2] General Preface to the Waverley Novels, 41 vols.

The house in which Sir Walter Scott was born no longer exists. It was situated at the head of the College Wynd, at its entrance into North College-street. It was thus described by Sir Walter in 1825:—"It consisted of two flats above Mr. Keith's, and belonged to my father, Mr. Walter Scott, Writer to the Signet. There I had the chance to be born, 15th of August, 1771. My father, soon after my birth, removed to George's Square, and let the house in the College Wynd, first to Mr. Dundas, of Philipstoun, and afterwards to Mr. William Keith, father of Sir Alexander Keith. It was purchased by the public, together with Mr. Keith's (the inferior floors), and pulled down to make way for the new College."

### CHILDHOOD.

Mr. Cunningham relates some interesting particulars of this period. Before Sir Walter was two years old, his nurse let him fall out of her arms, so as to injure his right foot, and render him lame for life: "This accident did not otherwise affect his health; he was, as I have been informed by a lady who chanced to live near him, a remarkably active and dauntless boy, full of all manner of fun, and ready for all manner of mischief. He calls himself, in one of his introductions to *Marmion*—

A self-willed imp; a grondame's child;

and I have heard it averred, that the circumstance of his lame foot prompted him to take the lead among all the stirring boys in the street where he lived, or the school which he attended: he desired, perhaps, to show them, that there was a spirit which could triumph over all impediments." [3] If this statement be correct, it is a somewhat remarkable coincidence with the circumstance of Lord Byron's lameness; though, happily, the influence of the accident on the temperament of Scott is not traceable beyond his early years.

[3] Life of Sir Walter Scott; in the *Athenaeum*, No. 258.

Sir Walter was subsequently removed from Edinburgh, for the improvement of his health, to the farm-house of Sandyknowe, then inhabited by his paternal grandfather, and situated in the loveliest part of the Vale of Tweed. In the neighbourhood, upon a considerable eminence, stands Smailholm Tower, a Border fort which the future poet enshrined in his admirable ballad, *The Eve of St. John*. The romantic influence of the scenery of the whole district is told with much vigour and sweetness in the introduction to the third canto of *Marmion*.



**EDUCATION.**

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Little is known of the schooldom of Scott, that denotes anything like precocious talent. It is, however better ascertained that his early rambles amidst the Tweed scenery retarded his educational pursuits. He received the rudiments of knowledge under the home tuition of his mother; next attended an ordinary school at Edinburgh, and was then placed at the High School, his name first appearing in the school register in the year 1779. His masters, Mr. Luke Fraser, and Dr. Adam, were erudite and pains-taking teachers; but, to borrow a phrase from Montaigne, they could neither lodge it with him, nor make him espouse it, and Chambers illustratively relates, “apparently, neither the care of the master, nor the inborn genius of the pupil, availed much in this case; for it is said that the twenty-fifth place was no uncommon situation in the class for the future Author of the Waverley Novels.” Perhaps the only anecdote of any early indication of talent that can be relied on is that related by Mr. Cunningham, of Burns:—“The poet, while at Professor Ferguson’s one day, was struck by some lines attached to a print of a Soldier dying in the snow, and inquired who was the author: none of the old or the learned spoke, when the future author of *Marmion* answered, ‘They are by Langhorne.’ Burns, fixing his large, bright eyes on the boy, and, striding up to him, said, it is no common course of reading which has taught you this—’this lad,’ said he to the company, will be heard of yet.”

At school, Sir Walter represents himself to have excelled in what may be termed the *art*, or, as Swift calls it, the “knack,” of narrating a story, which, by the way, is as companionable an acquirement at school as elsewhere. His account is as follows:—“I must refer to a very early period of my life, were I to point out my first achievements as a tale-teller—but I believe some of my old school-fellows can still bear witness that I had a distinguished character for that talent, at a time when the applause of my companions was my recompense for the disgraces and punishments which the future romance writer incurred for being idle himself, and keeping others idle, during hours that should have been employed on our tasks. The chief enjoyment of my holydays was to escape with a chosen friend, who had the same taste with myself, and alternately to recite to each other such wild adventures as we were able to devise. We told, each in turn, interminable tales of knight-errantry and battles and enchantments, which were continued from one day to another as opportunity offered, without our ever thinking of bringing them to a conclusion. As we observed a strict secrecy on the subject of this intercourse, it acquired all the character of a concealed pleasure; and we used to select for the scenes of our indulgence, long walks through the solitary and romantic environs of Arthur’s Seat, Salisbury Crags, Braid Hills, and similar places in the vicinity of Edinburgh, and the recollection of those holydays still forms an *oasis* in the pilgrimage which I have to look back upon.”[4]

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[4] General Preface, p. ii.

This excellence in tale-telling drew Scott's attention from graver studies; but it was an indication of genius which may be regarded as the corner-stone of his future fame. This reminds us of Steele's idea, that "a story-teller is born as well as a poet." Scott, about this time, received some instructions in music, which was then considered a branch of ordinary education in Scotland; but the future poet, to use a familiar expression, wanted "an ear." Throughout life he, however, was highly susceptible of the delights of music, though his own execution was confined to a single song, with which he attempted to enliven the social board, but, it is stated, with such unmusical oddity as to content his hearers with a single specimen of his vocal talent. His early rambles around the "hills and holms of the border," is said to have kindled in Scott the love of painting landscapes, not strictly in accordance with the rules of art, though certainly from nature herself. Such attempts in art, by the way, are by no means uncommon in the early lives of men of genius; and, they are to be regarded, in many instances as their earliest appreciation of the beauties of nature.

In 1783, Scott was placed at the University of Edinburgh, where his studies were as irregular as at the High School: at the latter he is said to have made his first attempt at versification in the description of a thunderstorm in six lines, the recital of which afforded his mother considerable pleasure and promise; and, on another occasion, he is stated to have remarked, during a journey over a sterile district of Scotland, in a day of drizzling rain, "It is only nature weeping for the barrenness of her soil."

## LOVE OF READING.

Scott's early love of reading is described to have been of enthusiastic character, and to have been fostered by an accident at this period of his life. He had just given over the amusements of boyhood, and began to prepare himself for the serious business of life, or the study of the law, when, to use his own words, "a long illness threw him back on the kingdom of fiction, as it were by a species of fatality." His autobiography of this period is extremely interesting:—"My indisposition arose in part at least, from my having broken a blood-vessel; and motion and speech were for a long time pronounced positively dangerous. For several weeks I was confined strictly to my bed, during which time I was not allowed to speak above a whisper, to eat more than a spoonful or two of boiled rice, or to have more covering than one thin counterpane. When the reader is informed that I was at this time a growing youth, with the spirits, appetite, and impatience of fifteen, and suffered, of course, greatly under this severe regimen, which the repeated return of my disorder rendered indispensable, he will not be surprised that I was abandoned to my own discretion, so far as reading (my almost sole amusement) was concerned, and still less so, that I abused the indulgence which left my time so much at my own disposal.

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"There was at this time a circulating library at Edinburgh, founded, I believe, by the celebrated Allan Ramsay, which, besides containing a most respectable collection of books of every description, was, as might have been expected, peculiarly rich in works of fiction. I was plunged into this great ocean of reading without compass or pilot; and unless when some one had the charity to play at chess with me, I was allowed to do nothing save read, from morning to night. As my taste and appetite were gratified in nothing else, I indemnified myself by becoming a glutton of books. Accordingly, I believe, I read almost all the old romances, old plays, and epic poetry, in that formidable collection, and no doubt was unconsciously amassing materials for the task in which it has been my lot to be so much employed.

"At the same time, I did not in all respects abuse the license permitted me. Familiar acquaintance with the specious miracles of fiction brought with it some degree of satiety, and I began by degrees to seek in histories, memoirs, voyages and travels, and the like, events nearly as wonderful as those which were the works of the imagination, with the additional advantage that they were, at least, in a great measure true. The lapse of nearly two years, during which I was left to the service of my own free will, was followed by a temporary residence in the country, where I was again very lonely, but for the amusement which I derived from a good, though old-fashioned, library. The vague and wild use which I made of this advantage I cannot describe better than by referring my reader to the desultory studies of Waverley in a similar situation; the passages concerning whose reading were imitated from recollections of my own."[5]

[5] General Preface, &c.

## STUDIES IN THE LAW.

Upon the re-establishment of his health, Scott returned to Edinburgh, and resumed his studies in the law, which had been interrupted by illness. He states his progress to have been neither slow nor unsatisfactory, though by others he is said to have been an indolent student. He speaks of his "severe studies" occupying the greater part of his time, and amidst their dulness he seems to have underrated the incidents of his private life, which he afterwards related to the world with some share of self-satisfaction.

He appears to have succeeded tolerably in his legal lucubrations; for, in 1792, he was called to the bar as an advocate. He established himself in good style in Edinburgh, but had little practice; though the accounts of his progress are somewhat contradictory. That he passed much of his time in acquiring other than professional knowledge is more certain, though he rarely attempted composition. Mr. Chambers, with all his diligence and advantages for research, (and they are very meritorious and considerable,) "has not been able to detect any fugitive pieces of Sir Walter's in any of the periodical publications of the day, nor even any attempt to get one intruded (?) unless the following

notice in Dr. Anderson's *Bee* for May 9, 1792, refers to him:—"The Editor regrets that the verses of *W.S.* are *too defective for publication.*"

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### FIRST LITERARY ATTEMPTS.

About this time Sir Walter employed his leisure in collecting the ballad poetry of the Scottish Border. His inducement to this task was subsequently described by him as follows:—

“A period,” says Sir Walter, “when this particular taste for the popular ballad was in the most extravagant degree of fashion, became the occasion, unexpectedly indeed, of my deserting the profession to which I was educated, and in which I had sufficiently advantageous prospects for a person of limited ambition. \* \* I may remark that, although the assertion has been made, it is a mistake to suppose that my situation in life or place in society were materially altered by such success as I attained in literary attempts. My birth, without giving the least pretension to distinction, was that of a gentleman, and connected me with several respectable families and accomplished persons. My education had been a good one, although I was deprived of its full benefit by indifferent health, just at the period when I ought to have been most sedulous in improving it.” He then describes his circumstances as easy, with a moderate degree of business for his standing, and “the friendship of more than one person of consideration, efficiently disposed to aid his views in life.” In short, he describes himself as “beyond all apprehension of want.” He then notices the low ebb of poetry in Britain for the previous ten years; the fashionable but slender poetical reputation of Hayley, then in the wane; “the Bard of Memory slumbered on his laurels, and he of Hope had scarce begun to attract his share of public attention;” Cowper was dead, and had not left an extensive popularity; “Burns, whose genius our southern neighbours could hardly yet comprehend, had long confined himself to song-writing; and the realms of Parnassus seemed to lie open to the first bold invader.” The gradual introduction of German literature into this country during such a dearth of native talent, now led Sir Walter to the study of the German language. He also became acquainted with Mr. G. Lewis, author of *The Monk*, who had already published some successful imitations of the German ballad school. “Out of this acquaintance,” says Sir Walter, “consequences arose, which altered almost all the Scottish ballad-maker’s future prospects of life. In early youth I had been an eager student of ballad poetry, and the tree is still in my recollection, beneath which I lay and first entered upon the enchanting perusal of Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*. The taste of another person had strongly encouraged my own researches into this species of legendary lore; but I had never dreamed of an attempt to imitate what gave me so much pleasure.” He then speaks of some successful metrical translations which he made at the High School; but in original rhyme he was less fortunate. “In short,” says Sir Walter, “except the usual tribute to a mistress’

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eyebrow, which is the language of passion rather than poetry, I had not for ten years indulged the wish to couple so much as *love* and *dove*, when finding Lewis in possession of so much reputation, and, conceiving that, if I fell behind him in poetical powers, I considerably exceeded him in general information, I suddenly took it into my head to attempt the style by which he had raised himself to fame." Sir Walter next hearing a striking passage from Mr. W. Taylor's translation of Buerger's *Leonore*, was induced to procure a copy of the original poem from Germany, and "the book had only been a few hours in my possession, when I found myself giving an animated account of the poem to a friend, and rashly added a promise to furnish a copy in English ballad verse. I well recollect that I began my task after supper, and finished it about daybreak the next morning, (it consists of 66 stanzas,) by which time the ideas which the task had a tendency to summon up, were rather of an uncomfortable character." This success encouraged Sir Walter to publish his translation of *Leonore* with that of *Der Wilde Jager* (the Wild Huntsman,) in a thin quarto; but, other translations appearing at the same time, Sir Walter's adventure proved a dead loss: "and a great part of the edition was condemned to the service of the trunk-maker." This failure did not discourage Sir Walter; for, early in 1799 he published *Goetz of Berlichingen*, a tragedy, from the German of Goethe. We thus see that Sir Walter did not conceal his obligation to Lewis, for his aid in his translations; but Lord Byron's assertion that Monk Lewis corrected Scott's verse, and that he understood little then of the mechanical part of it—is far from true, as a comparison of their productions warrants us to conclude.

Sir Walter's first attempt at originality was in ballad poetry. He says:—"The ballad called *Glenfinlas* was, I think, the first original poem which I ventured to compose. After *Glenfinlas*, I undertook another ballad, called *The Eve of St. John*. The incidents, except the hints alluded to in the notes, are entirely imaginary; but the scene was that of my early childhood. Some idle persons had of late years during the proprietor's absence, torn down the iron-grated door of Smailholm Tower from its hinges, and thrown it down the rock." Sir Walter prevailed on the proprietor to repair the mischief, on condition that the young poet should write a ballad, of which the scene should lie at Smailholm Tower, and among the crags where it is situated. The ballad, as well as *Glenfinlas*, was approved of, and procured Sir Walter many marks of attention and kindness from Duke John of Roxburgh, who gave him the unlimited use of the Roxburgh club library.

## MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER.

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This work, although not original, may be said to be the superstructure of Sir Walter Scott's fame. It consists, as we have already hinted, of the ballad poetry of the Border district; but to obtain this vernacular literature was not the work of mere compilation. The editor's task was not performed in the closet, but in a sort of literary pilgrimage through a land of song, story, and romance. The farmers and peasantry from whose recitation the ballads were to be set down, were a primitive race; and the country among which oral traditions, anecdotes, and legends were to be collected for notes illustrative of the ballads, was of the most romantic character. Sir Walter found the most fertile field in the pastoral vale of Liddesdale, whither he travelled in an old gig with Mr. Shortreed, an intelligent observer of the manners of the people. In these researches, Sir Walter evinced a most retentive memory: he is stated to have used neither pencil nor pen, but to have made his own memoranda by cutting notches on twigs, or small sticks.[6] The *Minstrelsy* was published in 1802, in two volumes; it was reprinted in the following year with a third volume, of imitations, by Scott and others, of the ancient ballad; but Sir Walter refers to the second edition as rather a heavy concern.

[6] Many anecdotes are related in illustration of Sir Walter Scott's excellent memory. The Ettrick Shepherd tells of his attempting to sing his ballad of *Gilmanscleuch*, which had never been printed or penned, but which the Shepherd had sung once over to Sir Walter three years previously. On the second attempt to sing it, says the Shepherd, "in the eighth or ninth verse, I stuck in it, and could not get on with another line; on which he (Sir Walter) began it a second time, and recited it every word from beginning to the end of the eighty-eighth stanza;" and, on the Shepherd expressing his astonishment, Sir Walter related that he had recited that ballad and one of Southey's, but which ballads he had only heard once from their respective authors, and he believed he had recited them both without missing a word. Sir Walter also used to relate that his friend, Mr. Thomas Campbell, called upon him one evening to show him the manuscript of a poem he had written—*The Pleasures of Hope*. Sir Walter happened to have some fine old whisky in his house, and his friend sat down and had a tumbler or two of punch. Mr. Campbell left him, but Sir Walter thought he would dip into the manuscript before going to bed. He opened it, read, and read again—charmed with the classical grace, purity, and stateliness of that finest of all our modern didactic poems. Next morning Mr. Campbell again called, when to his

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inexpressible surprise, his friend on returning the manuscript to its owner, said he should guard well against piracy, for that he himself could repeat the poem from beginning to end! The poet dared him to the task, when Sir Walter Scott began and actually repeated the whole, consisting of more than two thousand lines, with the omission of only a few couplets.—*Inverness Courier*.

### MARRIAGE—SHERIFFDOM—LEAVES THE BAR.

Reverting to Sir Walter's domestic life, we should mention that in 1797, he married Miss Carpenter, a lady of Jersey, with an annuity of 400\_l.\_; soon after which he established himself during the vacations, in a delightful retreat at Lasswade, on the banks of the Esse, about five miles to the south of Edinburgh. In 1799, he obtained the Crown appointment of sheriff of Selkirkshire, with a salary of 300\_l.\_ a year; the duties of which office he is said to have performed with kindness and justice. Mr. Cunningham relates that Sir Walter had a high notion of the dignity which belonged to his post, and sternly maintained it when any one seemed disposed to treat it with unbecoming familiarity. On one occasion, it is said, when some foreign prince passed through Selkirk, the populace, anxious to look on a live prince, crowded round him so closely, that Scott, in vain attempted to approach him; the poet's patience failed, and exclaiming "Room for your sheriff! Room for your sheriff!" he pushed and elbowed the gapers impatiently aside, and apologised to the prince for their curiosity.[7]

[7] Memoir in the *Athenaeum*.

By the death of Sir Walter's father, his income was increased, and this addition, with the salary of his sheriffdom, left him more at leisure to indulge his literary pursuits. Soon after this period, about 1803, Sir Walter finding that his attempts in literature had been unfavourable to his success at the bar, says:—"My profession and I, therefore, came to stand nearly upon the footing on which honest Slender consoled himself with having established with Mrs. Anne Page. 'There was no great love between us at the beginning, and it pleased Heaven to decrease it on farther acquaintance!' I became sensible that the time was come when I must either buckle myself resolutely to 'the toil by day, the lamp by night,' renouncing all the Dalilahs of my imagination, or bid adieu to the profession of the law, and hold another course.

"I confess my own inclination revolted from the more severe choice, which might have been deemed by many the wiser alternative. As my transgressions had been



numerous, my repentance must have been signalized by unusual sacrifices. I ought to have mentioned that, since my fourteenth or fifteenth year, my health, originally delicate, had been extremely robust. From infancy I had laboured under the infirmity of

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a severe lameness, but, as I believe is usually the case with men of spirit who suffer under personal inconveniences of this nature, I had, since the improvement of my health, in defiance of this incapacitating circumstance, distinguished myself by the endurance of toil on foot or horseback, having often walked thirty miles a-day, and rode upwards of a hundred without stopping. In this manner I made many pleasant journeys through parts of the country then not very accessible, gaining more amusement and instruction than I have been able to acquire since I have travelled in a more commodious manner. I practised most sylvan sports also with some success and with great delight. But these pleasures must have been all resigned, or used with great moderation, had I determined to regain my station at the bar." After well weighing these matters, Sir Walter resolved on quitting his avocations in the law for literature; though he determined that literature should be his staff but not his crutch, and that the profits of his labour, however convenient otherwise, should not become necessary to his ordinary expenses.

### THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

Sir Walter's secession from the law was followed by the production of his noblest poem—*the Lay of the Last Minstrel*—the origin of which is thus related by the author:

"The lovely young Countess of Dalkeith, afterwards Harriet, Duchess of Buccleuch, had come to the land of her husband, with the desire of making herself acquainted with its traditions and customs. Of course, where all made it a pride and pleasure to gratify her wishes, she soon heard enough of Border lore; among others, an aged gentleman of property, near Langholm, communicated to her ladyship the story of Gilpin Horner—a tradition in which the narrator and many more of that county were firm believers. The young Countess, much delighted with the legend, and the gravity and full confidence with which it was told, enjoined it on me as a task to compose a ballad on the subject. Of course, to hear was to obey; and thus the goblin story, objected to by several critics as an excrescence upon the poem, was, in fact, the occasion of its being written."

Sir Walter having composed the first two or three stanzas of the poem—taking for his model the *Christabel* of Coleridge—showed them to two friends, "whose talents might have raised them to the highest station in literature, had they not preferred exerting them in their own profession of the law, in which they attained equal preferment." They were more silent upon the merits of the stanzas than was encouraging to the author; and Sir Walter, looking upon the attempt as a failure, threw the manuscript into the fire, and thought as little as he could of the matter. Sometime afterwards, Sir Walter meeting his two friends, was asked how he proceeded in his romance;—they were surprised at its fate, said they had reviewed

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their opinion, and earnestly desired that Sir Walter would proceed with the composition. He did so; and the poem was soon finished, proceeding at the rate of about a canto per week. It was finally published in 1805, and produced to the author 600\_l.; and, to use his own words, "it may be regarded as the first work in which the writer, who has been since so voluminous, laid his claim to be considered as an original author." We thus see that Sir Walter Scott was in his 34th year before he had published an original work.

### MARMION.

Sir Walter's second poem of consequence appeared in 1808, he having published a few ballads and lyrical pieces during the year 1806. The publishers, emboldened by the success of *the Lay of the Last Minstrel*, gave the author 1,000\_l. for *Marmion*. Its success was electric, and at once wrought up the poet's reputation. In his preface to the last edition, April, 1830, he states 36,000 copies to have been printed between 1808 and 1825, besides a considerable sale since that period; and the publishers were so delighted with the success, as "to supply the author's cellars with what is always an acceptable present to a young Scotch house-keeper—namely, a hogshead of excellent claret."

### CLERK OF SESSION.

Between the appearance of *the Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Marmion*, hopes were held out to him from an influential quarter of the reversion of the office of a Principal Clerk in the Court of Session; and, Mr. Pitt, having expressed a wish to be of service to the author, of *the Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Sir Walter applied for the reversion. His desire was readily acceded to; and, according to Chambers, George III. is reported to have said, when he signed the commission, that "he was happy he had it in his power to reward a man of genius, and a person of such distinguished merit." The King had signed the document, and the office fees alone remained to be paid, when Mr. Pitt died, and a new and opposite ministry succeeded. Sir Walter, however, obtained the appointment, though not from the favour of an administration differing from himself in politics, as has been supposed; the grant having been obtained before Mr. Fox's direction that the appointment should be conferred as a favour coming directly from his administration. The duties were easy, and the profits about 1,200\_l. a year, though Sir Walter, according to arrangement, performed the former for five or six years without salary, until the retirement of his colleague.

## EDITIONS OF DRYDEN AND SWIFT.

Sir Walter's next literary labour was the editorship of the *Works of John Dryden*, with Notes. Critical and Explanatory, and a Life of the Author: the chief aim of which appears to be the arrangement of the "literary productions in their succession, as actuated by, and operating upon, the taste of an age, where they had so predominating an influence," and the connexion of the Life of Dryden with the history of his publications. This he accomplished within a twelvemonth. Sir Walter subsequently edited, upon a similar plan, an edition of the *Works of Swift*.—Neither of these works can be said to entitle Sir Walter to high rank as a biographer.

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### THE LADY OF THE LAKE

Was written in 1809, and published in 1810, and was considered by the author as the best of his poetic compositions. He appears to have taken more than ordinary pains in its accuracy, especially in verifying the correctness of the local circumstances of the story. In his introduction to a late edition of the poem, he says—"I recollect, in particular, that to ascertain whether I was telling a probable tale, I went into Perthshire, to see whether King James could actually have ridden from the banks of Loch Venachar to Stirling Castle within the time supposed in the poem, and had the pleasure to satisfy myself that it was quite practicable." The success of the poem "was certainly so extraordinary, as to induce him for the moment to conclude, that he had at last fixed a nail in the proverbially inconstant wheel of Fortune, whose stability in behalf of an individual, who had so boldly courted her favours for three successive times, had not as yet been shaken."

### ABBOTSFORD.—(See the Cuts.)

Since Sir Walter's appointment to the sheriffdom of Selkirkshire, he had resided at Ashiesteel, on the banks of the Tweed, of which he was but the tenant. He was now desirous to purchase a small estate, and thereon build a house according to his own taste. He found a desirable site six or seven miles farther down the Tweed, in the neighbourhood of the public road between Melrose and Selkirk, and at nearly an equal distance from both of those towns: it was then occupied by a little farm onstead, which bore the name of Cartley Hole. The mansion is in what is termed the castellated Gothic style, embosomed in flourishing wood. It takes its name from a ford, formerly used by the monks of Melrose, across the Tweed, which now winds amongst a rich succession of woods and lawns. But we will borrow Mr. Allan Cunningham's description of the estate, written during a visit to Abbotsford, in the summer of 1831:—"On the other side of the Tweed we had a fine view of Abbotsford, and all its policies and grounds. The whole is at once extensive and beautiful. The fast rising woods are already beginning to bury the house, which is none of the smallest; and the Tweed, which runs within gunshot of the windows, can only be discerned here and there through the tapestry of boughs. A fine, open-work, Gothic screen half conceals and half shows the garden, as you stand in front of the house—(see *the Engraving*.) It was the offspring of necessity, for it became desirable to mask an unseemly old wall, on which are many goodly fruit-trees. What we most admired about the estate, was the naturally useful and elegant manner in which the great poet has laid out the plantations—first, with respect to the bounding or enclosing line; and secondly, with regard to the skilful distribution of the trees, both for the contrast of light and shade,

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and for the protection which the strong affords to the weak.[8] The horizontal profile of the house is fine, crowded with towers and clustered chimneys: it looks half castle, half monastery. The workmanship, too, is excellent: indeed we never saw such well-dressed, cleanly, and compactly laid whinstone course and gage in our life: it is a perfect picture." [9] "The external walls of Abbotsford, as also the walls of the adjoining garden, are enriched with many old carved stones, which, having originally figured in other situations, to which they were calculated by their sculptures and inscriptions, have a very curious effect. Among the various relics which Sir Walter has contrived to collect, may be mentioned the door of the old Tolbooth of Edinburgh, which, together with the hewn stones that composed the gateway, are now made to figure in a base court at the west end of the house." [10]

[8] Sir Walter possessed a practical as well as theoretical knowledge of Landscape Gardening, as may be seen in a valuable paper contributed by him to No. 47, of the *Quarterly Review*. The details of this paper were, however, disputed by some writers on the subject.

[9] Communicated to No. 199, of *The Athenaeum*. The mansion was built from designs by Atkinson. Sir Walter may, however, be termed the amateur architect of the pile, and this may somewhat explain its irregularities. We have been told that the earliest design of Abbotsford was furnished by the late Mr. Terry, the comedian, who was an intimate friend of Sir Walter, and originally an architect by profession. His widow, one of the Nasmyths, has painted a clever View of Abbotsford, from the opposite bank of the Tweed; which is engraved in No. 427, of *The Mirror*.

[10] Picture of Scotland, by Chambers.

[Illustration: (*Armoury*.)]

It would occupy a whole sheet to describe the *interior* of the mansion; so that we select only two apartments, as graphic memorials of the lamented owner. First, is the *Armoury*, (from a coloured lithograph, published by Ackermann)—an arched apartment, with a richly-blazoned window, and the walls filled all over with smaller pieces of armour and weapons, such as swords, firelocks, spears, arrows, darts, daggers, &c. These relics will be found enumerated in a description of Abbotsford, in *the Anniversary*, quoted in vol. xv. of the *Mirror*. The second of the *interiors* is the poet's *Study*—a room about twenty-five feet square by twenty feet high, containing of what is properly called furniture, nothing but a small writing-table and an antique arm-chair. On either side of

the fire-place various pieces of armour are hung on the wall; but, there are no books, save the contents of a light gallery, which runs round three sides of the

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room, and is reached by a hanging stair of carved oak in one corner. There are only two portraits—an original of the beautiful and melancholy head of Claverhouse, and a small full-length of Rob Roy. Various little antique cabinets stand about the room; and in one corner is a collection of really useful weapons—those of the forest craft, to wit—axes and bills, &c. Over the fire-place, too, are some Highland claymores clustered round a target. There is only one window, pierced in a very thick wall, so that the place is rather sombre.

[Illustration: (*Study.*)]

### ROKEBY, AND MINOR POEMS.

After the publication of *the Lady of the Lake*, Sir Walter's poetical reputation began to wane. In 1811, appeared *Don Roderick*; and in 1813, *Rokeby*; both of which were unsuccessful; and the *Lord of the Isles* followed with no better fortune. In short, Sir Walter perceived that the tide of popularity was turning, and he wisely changed with the public taste. The subjects of these poems were neither so striking, nor the versification so attractive, as in his earlier poems. The poet himself attributes their failure to the manner or style losing its charms of novelty, and the harmony becoming tiresome and ordinary; his measure and manner were imitated by other writers, and, above all Byron had just appeared as a serious candidate in the first canto of *Childe Harold*; so that Sir Walter with exemplary candour confesses that "the original inventor and his invention must have fallen into contempt, if he had not found out another road to public favour." We shall therefore now part with his poetic fame, and proceed in the more gratifying task of glancing at his splendid successes in prose fiction.

### WAVERLEY.

#### The first of the author's

long trails of light descending down,

had its origin in a desire to story the ancient traditions and noble spirit of the Highlands, aided by the author's early recollections of their scenery and customs; in short, to effect in prose what he had so triumphantly achieved in the poem of *the Lady of the Lake*. The author's own account will be read with interest:—"It was with some idea of this kind, that, about the year 1805, I threw together about one-third part of the first volume of *Waverley*. It was advertised to be published by the late Mr. John Ballantyne, under the name of 'Waverley,' or 'Tis Fifty Years since,'—a title afterwards altered to 'Tis Sixty Years since,' that the actual date of publication might be made to correspond with the

period in which the scene was laid. Having proceeded as far, I think, as the seventh chapter, I showed my work to a critical friend, whose opinion was unfavourable, and having some poetical reputation, I was unwilling to risk the loss of it by attempting a new style of composition. I therefore

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threw aside the work I had commenced, without either reluctance or remonstrance. This portion of the manuscript was laid aside in the drawers of an old writing desk, which, on my first coming to reside at Abbotsford in 1811, was placed in a lumber garret, and entirely forgotten. Thus, though I sometimes, among other literary avocations, turned my thoughts to the continuation of the romance which I had commenced, yet, as I could not find what I had already written, after searching such repositories as were within my reach, and was too indolent to attempt to write it anew from memory. I as often laid aside all thoughts of that nature."

The success of Miss Edgeworth's delineations of Irish life, and the author's completion of Mr. Strutt's romance of *Queen Hoo Hall*, in 1808, again drew his attention to *Waverley*. Accident threw the lost sheets in his way, while searching an old writing-desk for some fishing-tackle for a friend. The long-lost manuscript presented itself, and "he immediately set to work to complete it, according to his original purpose." Among other unfounded reports, it has been said, that the copyright was, during the book's progress through the press, offered for sale to various booksellers in London at a very inconsiderable price. This was not the case. Messrs. Constable and Cadell, who published the work, were the only persons acquainted with the contents of the publication, and they offered a large sum for it, while in the course of printing, which, however, was declined, the author not choosing to part with the copyright. *Waverley* was published in 1814: its progress was for some time slow, but, after two or three months its popularity began to spread, and, in a short time about 12,000 copies were disposed of. The name of the author was kept secret from his desire to publish the work "as an experiment on the public taste. Mr. Ballantyne, who printed the novel, alone corresponded with the author; the original manuscript was transcribed under Mr. Ballantyne's eye, by confidential persons; nor was there an instance of treachery during the many years in which these precautions were resorted to, although various individuals were employed at different times. Double proof sheets were regularly printed off. One was forwarded to the author by Mr. Ballantyne, and the alterations which it received were, by his own hand, copied upon the other proof-sheet for the use of the printers, so that even the corrected proofs of the author were never seen in the printing-office; and thus the curiosity of such eager inquirers as made the most minute investigation was entirely at fault." [11]

[11] Abridged from the General Preface, &c.

## OTHER NOVELS.

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The success of *Waverley* led to the production of that series of works, by which the author established himself “as the greatest master in a department of literature, to which he has given a lustre previously unknown;—in which he stands confessedly unrivalled, and not approached, even within moderate limits, except, among predecessors, by Cervantes, and among contemporaries, by the author of *Anastasi*us.” We shall merely enumerate these works, with the date of their publication, and, as a point of kindred interest, the sums for which the original manuscripts, in the hand-writing of Sir Walter, were sold in the autumn of last year. Of the merits of these productions it would be idle to attempt to speak in our narrow space; but, for a finely graphic paper, (probably the last written previously to the author’s death,) on the literary claims of Sir Walter Scott, as a novelist, we may refer the reader to No. 109 of the *Edinburgh Review*.

Year of Orig. MS.

Publication. sold in

Novels. Vols. 1831, for

L. s.

Waverley 3 1814 18 0

Guy Mannering 3 1815 27 10

The Antiquary\* 3 1816 42 0

Tales of My Landlord 4 1st ser. 1816 33 0

Rob Roy\* 3 1818 50 0

Tales of My Landlord 4 2nd ser. 1818

Tales of My Landlord 4 3rd ser. 1819 14 14

Ivanhoe 3 1820 12 0

The Monastery\* 3 1820 18 18

The Abbot 3 1820 14 0

Kenilworth 3 1821 17 0

The Pirate 3 1822 12 0

The Fortunes of Nigel 3 1822 16 16

Peveril of the Peak\* 3 1823 42 0

Quentin Durward 3 1823

St. Ronan’s Well 3 1824

Redgauntlet 3 1824

Tales of the Crusaders 4 1825

Woodstock 3 1826

Chronicles of the Canongate 2 1st ser. 1827

Chronicles of the Canongate 3 2nd ser. 1828

Anne of Gerstein 3 1829

Tales of My Landlord 4 4th ser. 1831

Making in all, 73 volumes, within 17 years.

(Those marked \* were alone perfect.)

## **MISCELLANEOUS WORKS.**

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To particularize Sir Walter's contributions to periodical literature would occupy considerable space. He wrote a few papers in the early numbers of the *Edinburgh Review*, and several in the *Quarterly Review*, especially during the last ten volumes of that journal, of which his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, is the accredited editor. Sir Walter likewise contributed the articles Chivalry, Drama, and Romance to the sixth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, the fruits of Sir Walter's tour through France and Belgium, in 1815, were published anonymously; and the *Field of Waterloo*, a poem, appeared about the same time. We may also here mention his dramatic poem of *Halidon Hill*, which appeared in 1822; and two dramas, *the Doom of Devergoil* and *Auchindrane*, in 1830—neither of which works excited more than temporary attention. Sir Walter likewise contributed a *History of Scotland*, in two volumes, to Dr. Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopaedia*, in 1830; and in the same year a volume on *Demonology and Witchcraft*, to Mr. Murray's *Family Library*: both which works, of course, had a circulation co-extensively with the series of which they form portions. We may here notice a juvenile *History of Scotland*, in three series, or nine volumes, under the title of *Tales of a Grandfather*, affectionately addressed to his grandchild, the eldest son of Mr. Lockhart, as Hugh Littlejohn, Esq.

### ABBOTSFORD—BARONETCY.

The large sums received by Sir Walter for the copyright of his earlier works had enabled him to expend nearly one hundred thousand pounds upon Abbotsford, so as to make it his "proper mansion, house, and home, the theatre of his hospitality, the seat of self-fruition, the comfortablest part of his own life, the noblest of his son's inheritance, a kind of private principedom, and, according to the degree of the master, decently and delightfully adorned." [12] Here Sir Walter lived in dignified enjoyment of his well-earned fortune, during the summer and autumn, and was visited by distinguished persons from nearly all parts of the world. He unostentatiously opened his treasury of relics to all visitors, and his affability spread far and wide. He usually devoted three hours in the morning, from six or seven o'clock, to composition, his customary quota being a sheet daily. He passed the remainder of the day in the pleasurable occupations of a country life—as in superintending the improvements of the mansion, and the planting and disposal of the grounds of Abbotsford; or, as Walpole said of John Evelyn, "unfolding the perfection of the works of the Creator, and assisting the imperfection of the minute works of the creature;" so as to render Abbotsford as Evelyn describes his own dear Wotton, "large and ancient (for there is an air of assumed antiquity in Abbotsford), suitable to those hospitable times, and so sweetly environed with those delicious streams and venerable woods, as in the judgment of strangers as well as Englishmen, it may be compared to one of the most pleasant seats in the nation, most tempting to a great person and a wanton purse, to render it conspicuous: it has rising grounds, meadows, woods, and water in abundance." [13]

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[12] Sir Henry Wootton's *Elements of Architecture*.

[13] Evelyn's *Diary*.

In 1820, the poet of *Marmion* was created a baronet, by George IV., but a few weeks after his accession—it being the first baronetcy conferred by the King, and standing alone in the *Gazette* which announced the honour. In 1822, Sir Walter distinguished himself in the loyal reception of the King, on his visit to Scotland; and soon afterwards the Baronet was appointed a deputy-lieutenant for the county of Roxburgh.

### EMBARRASMENTS.

Thus stood the “pure contents” of Abbotsford, when, in January, 1826, the failure of Messrs. Constable threw a gloom over Sir Walter's affairs. The eminent publisher had been one of his earliest friends. “Archie Constable,” he once said, “was a good friend to me long ago, and I will never see him at a loss.” The sums given by Mr. Constable for the copyright of Sir Walter's novels were nominally immense; but they were chiefly paid in bills, which were renewed as the necessities of the publisher increased, till, on his failure, Sir Walter found himself responsible for various debts, amounting to 102,000\_l\_. About this time Lady Scott died, and her loss was an additional affliction to him. Various modes of settlement were proposed to Sir Walter for the liquidation of these heavy debts; but, “like the elder Osbaldistone of his own immortal pages, considering commercial honour as dear as any other honour,” he would only consent to payment *in full*; and, in the short space of six years, he paid off 60,000\_l\_ “by his genius alone; but he crushed his spirit in the gigantic struggle, or, in plain words, sacrificed himself in the attempt to repair his broken fortunes.” He sold his house and furniture in Edinburgh, and, says Chambers, “retreated into a humble lodging in a second-rate street (St. David-street, where David Hume had formerly lived.)” He reduced his establishment at Abbotsford, and retired, as far as his official duties would permit, from public life, accompanied only by his younger daughter. In this domestic retreat, at fifty-five years of age, he commenced

### THE LIFE OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

—visiting France, in 1826, for some information requisite to the work. In the following summer the *Life* appeared in nine volumes, an extent much beyond the original project. As might be expected, from the aristocratical turn of Sir Walter's political tenets, the opinions on this work were more various than on any other of his productions: it is, to say the best, the most faulty and unequal of them all; and, considering how clearly this has been shown, it is somewhat surprising to hear so clever a critic as Mr. Cunningham pronounce *The Life of Napoleon* as “one of the noblest monuments of Scott's genius.” We pass from these considerations to the excellence of the purpose to which the

proceeds (12,000\_l.) of this work were applied—namely, to the payment of 6\_s.\_ 8\_d.\_  
in the pound, as the first dividend of the debts of the author.

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In parting with the *Napoleon*, we might notice the conflicting opinions of the French critics on its merits; but, as that task would occupy too much space we content ourselves with the following passage from a journal published a few days subsequent to the melancholy intelligence of the death of Sir Walter Scott being received in Paris. The criticism is in every sense plain-spoken:—

“If Sir Walter Scott’s politics did not square with the natural state of things—if upon this subject he still remained the victim of early prejudices, and, perhaps, of the predilections of a poetical mind, yet he was fortunate enough to promote, by his writings, the real improvement of the people. France has reason to reproach him severely for the unaccountable statements in his “Paul’s Letters to his Kinsfolk,” and in the “History of Bonaparte.” But those errors were imputable to carelessness much more than to malice. A prose writer, a poet, a novelist—he yielded, during his long and laborious career, to the impulse of a fancy, rich, copious, and entirely independent of present circumstances, aloof from the agitations of the day, delighting in the memory of the past, and drawing from the surviving relics of ancient times the traditionary tale, to revive and embellish it. He was one of those geniuses in romance who may be said to have been impartial and disinterested, for he gave a picture of ordinary life exactly as it was. He painted man in all the varieties produced in his nature by passion and the force of circumstances, and avoided mixing up with these portraits what was merely ideal. Persons gifted with this power of forgetting themselves, as it were, and of assuming in succession an infinite series of varied characters, who live, speak, and act before us in a thousand ways that affect or delight us, such men are often susceptible of feelings the most ardent on their own account, although they may not directly express as much. It is difficult to believe that Shakspeare and Moliere, the noblest types of this class of exalted minds, did not contemplate life with feelings of deep and, perhaps, melancholy emotion. It was not so, however, with Scott, who certainly belonged not to their kindred, possessing neither the vigour of combination, nor the style which distinguished those men. Of great natural benevolence, gentle and kind, ardent in the pursuit of various knowledge, accommodating himself to the manners and sentiments of his day, good-humoured, and favoured by happy conjunctures of circumstances, Scott came forth under the most brilliant auspices, accomplishing his best and most durable works almost without an effort, and without impressing on these productions any sort of character which would connect them with the personal character of the author. If he be represented, indeed, in any part of his writings, it is in such characters as that of Morton (one of the Puritans), a sort of ambiguous, undetermined, unoffending, good sort of person.”

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### “WAVERLEY NOVELS.”

Up to this period, the secret of the authorship of the novels was not generally known, though more extensively so than was at the time imagined. The public had made up their minds to the fact; but the identity was *not proven*. The adjustment of Messrs. Constable's affairs, however, rendered it impossible longer to conceal the authorship, which was revealed by Sir Walter, at the anniversary dinner of the Edinburgh Theatrical Fund, in February, 1827. Thus he acknowledged before three hundred gentlemen “a secret which, considering that it was communicated to more than twenty people, had been remarkably well kept.” His avowal was as follows:—

“He had now to say, however, that the merits of these works, if they had any, and their faults, were entirely imputable to himself.” [Here the audience broke into an absolute shout of surprise and delight.] “He was afraid to think on what he had done. ‘Look on’t again I dare not.’ He had thus far unbosomed himself, and he knew that it would be reported to the public. He meant, then, seriously to state, that when he said he was the author, he was the total and undivided author. With the exception of quotations, there was not a single word written that was not derived from himself, or suggested in the course of his reading. The wand was now broken, and the rod buried. His audience would allow him further to say, with Prospero, ‘Your breath has filled my sails.’”

The copyright of the novels was soon afterwards sold for 8,400\_l., and they have since been republished, with illustrations, and notes and introductions by the author, in forty-one volumes, monthly; the last volume appearing within a few days of the author's death.

### FATAL ILLNESS.

Towards the close of 1830, Sir Walter retired from his office, retaining a portion of his salary, but declining a pension which had been offered to him by the present administration. He was now in his 60th year; his health broke apace; it was evident that the task of writing to pay off debts, which were not of his own contracting, was alike too severe for his mental and physical powers; and in the succeeding winter they became gradually paralyzed. He somewhat rallied in the spring, and, unfortunately for his health, embroiled himself in the angry politics of the day, at a county meeting at Jedburgh, upon the Reform question. He was then very feeble, but spoke with such vehemence as to draw upon him the hisses of some of his auditors: this ebullition of feeling is said to have much affected him; and he is stated (we know not how truly) to have been observed on his way home in tears.

In the autumn of last year Sir Walter, at the recommendation of his physicians, resolved to winter in the more congenial climate of Italy; though it required the most earnest entreaties of his friends to induce him to consent to the change, so strong was his love



of country and apprehension of dying in a foreign land. He accordingly set sail in H.M.S. the Barham for Malta, on the 27th of October; previous to which he appended to the Fourth and Last Series of *Tales of my Landlord* the following affecting, and, as we lately observed, almost prophetic, passage:

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“The gentle reader is acquainted that these are, in all probability, the last tales which it will be the lot of the author to submit to the public. He is now on the eve of visiting foreign parts; a ship of war is commissioned by its royal master, to carry the Author of Waverley to climates in which he may readily obtain such a restoration of health as may serve him to spin his thread to an end in his own country. Had he continued to prosecute his usual literary labours, it seems indeed probable that, at the term of years he has already attained, the bowl, to use the pathetic language of Scripture, would have been broken at the fountain; and little can one, who has enjoyed on the whole, an uncommon share of the most inestimable of worldly blessings, be entitled to complain, that life, advancing to its period, should be attended with its usual proportion of shadows and storms. They have affected him, at least, in no more painful manner, than is inseparable from the discharge of this part of the debt of humanity. Of those whose relations to him in the ranks of life, might have insured their sympathy under indisposition, many are now no more; and those who may yet follow in his wake, are entitled to expect, in bearing inevitable evils, an example of firmness and patience, more especially on the part of one who has enjoyed no small good fortune during the course of his pilgrimage.

“The public have claims on his gratitude, for which the Author of Waverley has no adequate means of expression; but he may be permitted to hope that the powers of his mind, such as they are, may not have a different date from his body; and that he may again meet his patronizing friends, if not exactly in his old fashion of literature, at least in some branch which may not call forth the remark, that—

“Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage.”

Sir Walter resided at Malta for a short time; thence he proceeded to Naples, where he was received with almost pageant honours. In the spring he visited Rome; but “the world’s chief ornament” had few charms for one bereft of all hope of healthful recovery. His strength was waning fast, and he set out to return with more than prudent speed to his native country. He travelled seventeen hours for six successive days, and, in descending the Rhine, had a second attack of paralysis which would have carried him off but for the timely presence of mind of his servant, who immediately bled him. The illustrious Goethe had looked forward with great pleasure to the meeting with Sir Walter when he returned through Germany, but the destroyer had fell also on him. On his arrival in London, Sir Walter was conveyed to the St. James’s Hotel, Jermyn-street, and attended by Sir Henry Hallford and Dr. Holland, with Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart. He lay some weeks in a hopeless condition, and when the flame of life was just flickering out, he entreated to be conveyed to his own home. The journey was a hazardous one, but, as the dying wish of the poet, was tried and effected: on July 9th, he was conveyed to Edinburgh, whence he was removed to his fondly-cherished home on the 11th.

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### DEATH.

Sir Walter's return to Abbotsford was an afflicting scene. On approaching the mansion he could scarcely be kept from attempting to raise himself in his carriage, such was his eagerness to catch a glimpse of his home: he murmured, on his arrival, "that *now* he knew he was at Abbotsford." He lingered for two months, during which he recognised and spoke kindly to friends, and was even pleased in listening to passages read from the poems of Crabbe and Wordsworth: till, on September 21st, 1832, he died, apparently free from pain, and surrounded by his family.

### FUNERAL.

His remains were placed in a coffin of lead, enclosed in another coffin covered with black cloth, and gilt ornaments. The inscription plate bore the words, "SIR WALTER SCOTT, of ABBOTSFORD, Bart. AN. AETAT. 62." The funeral took place at Dryburgh, amidst the ruins of the venerable abbey, at night-fall, on Sept. 25th; the body being borne from the hearse to the grave by his domestics, and followed by upwards of 300 mourners. A Correspondent has furnished us with the subjoined note of the funeral.

It has been remarked that at the grave, the burial service of the Episcopal Church was read by a clergyman of the Church of England (the Rev. John Williams, of Baliol College, Oxford, Rector of the Edinburgh Academy, and Vicar of Lampeter), although Sir Walter through life adhered to the persuasion of the Presbyterian or Church of Scotland. In Scotland no prayers are offered over the dead; when the mourners assemble in the house of the deceased, refreshments are handed round, previous to which a blessing is implored, (as at meals,) and *then* only the minister alludes to the bereavement the family have suffered, and strength and grace are implored to sustain them under it. This gratuitous custom was adhered to, and previous to the funeral *cortege* setting out from Abbotsford, the Rev. Principal Baird, offered up a prayer. But although a Presbyterian in practice, Sir Walter in several parts of his works expressed his dissent from several of the rigid canons of that Church, and an example occurs in that graphic scene in *the Antiquary*, the funeral group of *Steenie Mucklebacket*, where "the creak of the screw nails announced that the lid of the last mansion of mortality was in the act of being secured above its tenant. The last act which separates us for ever from the mortal relicks of the person we assemble to mourn has usually its effect upon the most indifferent, selfish, and hard-hearted:" and he adds in condemnation, "With a spirit of contradiction which we may be pardoned for esteeming narrow-minded, the fathers of the Scottish Kirk rejected even on this most solemn occasion the form of an address to the Divinity, lest they should be thought to give countenance to the ritual of Rome or of England." And he seizes the opportunity to applaud the liberal judgment of the present Scottish clergymen who avail themselves of the advantage of offering a prayer, suitable to make an impression on the living.

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The scenery around his burial-place is fraught with melancholy associations—enshrined as have been its beauties by him that now sought a bourn amidst them. It had been the land of his poetical pilgrimage: through its “bosomed vales” and alongside its “valley streams” his genius had journeyed with untiring energy, then to spread abroad its stores for the gratification of hundreds of thousands, who may about his grave

Make dust their paper, and with rainy eyes  
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.

—Only let us glance at a few of the storied sites that are to be seen around this hallowed spot: at Melrose, with antique pillar and ruins grey—

Was ever scene so sad and fair.

Eildon Hill, where Sir Walter said he could stand and point out forty-three places famous in war and verse;<sup>[14]</sup> and above all, the tower of Smailholm Castle, where once “his careless childhood strayed,”—the *Alpha* of his poetic fame.

[14] Cunningham.

## FAMILY.

Sir Walter Scott had two sons and two daughters. The elder daughter, Sophia Charlotte, was married, April 28, 1820, to Mr. John Gibson Lockhart, advocate, editor of the *Quarterly Review*. The eldest son, Walter, who has succeeded to the baronetcy, is now in his thirty-second year, and Major of the 15th or King’s Hussars. In 1825, he married Jane, daughter and sole heiress of John Jobson, Esq., an opulent Scottish merchant, with which lady, report affirmed at the time, Major Scott received a fortune of 60,000\_l\_. The estate of Abbotsford was also settled by Sir Walter upon the young pair; but, as the owner is stated not to have been at this time in a state of solvency, though he thought himself so, and his estate now proves to be encumbered with heavy debts, the deed of entail, of course, becomes invalid, and the paternal property must be sold by the creditors of the estate. There is, however, ample reason to hope that such a step will be averted, by the gratitude of the public, and that Abbotsford will be preserved for the family. The younger son, Charles, who is, we believe, a junior clerk in the Foreign Office, is unmarried; as is the younger daughter, Anne. The death of Lady Scott occurred May 15, 1826. Mrs. Lockhart’s children are as yet the only descendants of Sir Walter in the second generation.

## PORTRAITS.

The reader may be somewhat familiar with the personal appearance of Sir Walter Scott, through the several portraits which have from time to time been painted and engraved

of the illustrious Baronet. His height is stated at upwards of six feet; and his frame was strongly knit, and compactly built. His right leg was shrunk from his boyhood, and required support by a staff. Mr. Cunningham describes the personal habits of Sir Walter with his usual characteristic force: "his arms were strong and sinewy;

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his looks stately and commanding; and his face, as he related a heroic story, flushed up as a crystal cup when one fills it with wine. His eyes were deep seated under his somewhat shaggy brow;[15] their colour was a bluish grey—they laughed more than his lips did at a humorous story. His tower-like head and thin, white hair marked him out among a thousand, while any one might swear to his voice again who heard it once, for it had a touch of the lisp and the burr; yet, as the minstrel said, of Douglas, 'it became him wonder well,' and gave great softness to a sorrowful story: indeed, I imagined that he kept the burr part of the tone for matters of a facetious or humorous kind, and brought out the lisp part in those of tenderness or woe. When I add, that in a meeting of a hundred men, his hat was sure to be the least, and would fit no one's head but his own, I have said all that I have to say about his appearance." [16]

[15] Mr. Chambers describes Sir Walter's eyebrows as so shaggy and prominent, that, when he was reading or writing at a table, they *completely* shrouded the eyes beneath; and the Ettrick Shepherd speaks of Sir Walter's shaggy eyebrows dipping deep over his eyes.

[16] One of the amusements of Sir Walter's retirement was to walk out frequently among his plantations at Abbotsford, with a small hatchet and hand-saw, with which he lopped off superfluous boughs, or removed an entire tree when it was marring the growth of others. The author of *Anastasi* delighted in a similar pursuit; he would stroll for hours through the winding walks of the Deepdene plantation, and with a small hatchet or shears lop off the luxuriant twigs or branches that might spoil the trim neatness of the path.

Among the accredited portraits of Sir Walter Scott is that painted by the late Sir Henry Raeburn, which has been engraved in a handsome style; another portrait, by Mr. Leslie, was engraved in the *Souvenir*, a year or two since, and was styled in the Noctes of *Blackwood's Magazine*, "the vera man himsel;" but the latest, and perhaps the best, was painted not many month's since, by Mr. Watson Gordon, and admirably engraved by Horsburgh, of Edinburgh, for the revised edition of the Novels. A whole-length portrait of the Poet in his Study, at Abbotsford, was painted a few years since, in masterly style, by Allan, and engraved by Goodall for the *Anniversary*, edited by Mr. Cunningham, who informs us that "a painting is in progress from the same hand, showing Sir Walter as he lately appeared—lying on a couch in his principal room: all the windows are closed save one, admitting a strong central light, and showing all that the room contains—in deep shadow, or in strong sunshine." A splendid portrait of the Poet was painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence for the late King, and exhibited at the Royal Academy a few years

since; an engraving of which has been announced by Messrs. Moon, Boys, and Graves, his present Majesty having graciously granted the loan of the picture for this purpose.  
[17]

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[17] A portrait of Sir Walter was painted by Knight for the late Mr. Terry, in the year 1825: it is described in the *Literary Gazette* as, "particularly excellent," and was unfortunately destroyed a short time since by a fire at the house of Mr. Harding, Finchley, in whose possession it was. This portrait, it is feared, has not been engraved.—See *Literary Gazette*, No. 819.

[Illustration: (*Sir Walter Scott*.—*Sketched by Mr. W.H. Brooke, from the engraving by Horsburgh.*)]

### UNPUBLISHED WORKS.

Report states that there are in the library of Abbotsford, unfinished manuscripts and letters, which will compose ten volumes of correspondence of Sir Walter with nearly all the distinguished literary characters of his time. These will, of course, be given to his creditors, as directed by his will. His son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, has likewise a great number of letters from Sir Walter; and Mrs. Terry possesses the baronet's correspondence with the late Mr. Terry, who was one of Sir Walter's intimate friends. This lady has likewise in her possession a tragedy written by Sir Walter for her eldest son, Walter Scott Terry, and intended by the author as a legacy for Walter's first appearance on the stage.

With such materials, and the poet's autobiographical sketches prefixed to his works, a competent biographer will, doubtless, be found among Sir Walter's personal acquaintance. Mr. Allan Cunningham's "Account" is, perhaps, the most characteristic that has yet appeared: it is full of truth, nature, kindly feeling, and tinged throughout with a delightfully poetic enthusiasm. Mr. Ballantyne, the intelligent printer of nearly the whole of Sir Walter's works, and whom the Poet much respected for his taste and good sense, has promised a memoir of the deceased. Public expectation, however, points more decidedly to Mr. Lockhart; although the Ettrick Shepherd will, doubtless, pay his announced tribute to the talents and virtues of his illustrious contemporary. In his *Reminiscences of Former Days*, prefixed to the first volume of the *Altrive Tales*, published a few months since, is the following striking passage:—"There are not above five people in the world who, I think, know Sir Walter better, or understand his character better than I do; and if I outlive him, which is likely, as I am five months and ten days younger, I shall draw a mental portrait of him, the likeness of which to the original shall not be disputed." [18]

[18] Hogg is indebted to Sir Walter for many valuable suggestions of subjects for his ballads, &c. There is touching gratitude in the following lines by the

Shepherd, in his dedication of the *Mountain Bard* to Scott:

Bless'd be his generous heart for aye;  
He told me where the relic lay;  
Pointed my way with ready will,  
Afar on Ettrick's wildest hill;  
Watch'd my first notes with curious eye,  
And wonder'd at my minstrelsy:  
He little ween'd a parent's tongue  
Such strains had o'er my cradle sung.

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### MEDAL.

A handsome Medal, in bronze, of the lamented Baronet, has been published from the establishment of Mr. Parker, (medallist, and the originator of some ingenious improvements in the construction of lamps), in Argyle-place. The obverse is from Chantrey's celebrated Bust of Sir Walter, and the reverse a graceful female figure, with the inscription, "to great men;"—designed by R. Stothard, Esq., the venerable Academician, and engraved by his son, A.J. Stothard, Esq. The profile of the obverse is encircled with a motto chosen by Sir Walter, as will be seen by the following letter; the date of which shows that the medal was submitted to his approbation some months since, together with a medal of his present Majesty. The letter is likewise treasurable, [19] as well for the writer's opinion of the Monarch, as of the productions of his own pen:

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[19] First printed in the *Literary Gazette*, No. 819.

"Sir,—I would long ere now have answered your very obliging letter with the medals. That representing our Sovereign seems most beautifully executed, and is a striking resemblance. I have very little turn for imagining mottos, it being long since I read the classics, which are the great storehouse of such things. I think that a figure or head of Neptune upon the reverse, with the motto round the exergue, *Tridens Neptuni sceptrum mundi*. I think this better than any motto more personally addressed to the King himself than to his high kingly office. I cannot, of course, be a judge of the other medal; but such of my family as are with me think it very like. If there is any motto to be added, I should like the line

"Bardorum citharas patrio qui redidit Istro.

"because I am far more vain of having been able to fix some share of public attention upon the ancient poetry and manners of my country, than of any original efforts which I have been able to make in literature.

"I beg you will excuse the delay which has taken place. Your obliging communication, with the packet which accompanied it, travelled from country to town, and from town to country, as it chanced to miss me upon the road.

"I have the honour to be, sir, your obliged, humble servant,

"WALTER SCOTT.

"Edinburgh, 29th May.

"Samuel Parker, Esq., Bronze Works,

“12, Argyle-place, London.”

The likeness of the medal is strikingly correct; and Mr. Parker, with becoming taste, causes an autograph copy of the letter to be delivered with each medal.

The deference of the latter opinion conveyed in this letter is perhaps one of the most delightful characteristics of the genius of Sir Walter Scott,—especially if we admit the position of the writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, that no writer has ever enjoyed in his lifetime so extensive a popularity as the Author of *Waverley*. His love of fame and acquisition of honourable distinction all over the world had not the common effect of making him vain. Hear, in proof, the following unassuming declaration, from the delightful autobiographic sketch to a late edition of *Rokeby*:—

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"I shall not, I believe, be accused of ever having attempted to usurp a superiority over many men of genius, my contemporaries; but, in point of popularity, not of actual talent, the caprice of the public has certainly given me such a temporary superiority over men, of whom, in regard to poetical fancy and feeling, I scarcely thought myself worthy to loose the shoe-latch. On the other hand, it would be absurd affectation in me to deny, that I conceived myself to understand more perfectly than many of my contemporaries, the manner most likely to interest the great mass of mankind. Yet, even with this belief, I must truly and fairly say, that I always considered myself rather as one who held the bets, in time to be paid over to the winner, than as having any pretence to keep them in my own right."

Mr. Cunningham well observes—"Though the most accomplished author of his day, yet he had none of the airs of authorship." He continues—"He was a proud man; not a proud poet, or historian, or novelist." His was the pride of ancestry—a weakness, to be sure, but of a venial nature: "he loved to be looked on as a gentleman of old family, who *built Abbotsford*, and laid out its garden, and planted its avenues, rather than a genius, whose works influenced mankind, and diffused happiness among millions." His own narrative will best illustrate his labours of leisure at Abbotsford. He writes of that period which men familiarly call *the turn of life*:—"With the satisfaction of having attained the fulfilment of an early and long-cherished hope, I commenced my improvements, as delightful in their progress as those of the child who first makes a dress for a new doll. The nakedness of the land was in time hidden by woodlands of considerable extent—the smallest possible of cottages was progressively expanded into a sort of dream of a mansion-house, whimsical in the exterior, but convenient within. Nor did I forget what was the natural pleasure of every man who has been a reader—I mean the filling the shelves of a tolerably large library. All these objects I kept in view, to be executed as convenience should serve; and although I knew many years should elapse before they could be attained, I was of a disposition to comfort myself with the Spanish proverb, 'Time and I against any two.'"

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\*\*\* In the preceding account we have purposely abstained from reference to the position of the affairs of Sir Walter Scott, from our inability to obtain any decisive information on the subject. The most pleasing and the latest intelligence will be found in the *Morning Chronicle* of Thursday, wherein it is stated that the prospects of the family of Sir Walter are much better than have been represented. "We are assured that there are funds sufficient to cover all his debts, without touching Abbotsford. In the Biography of Allan Cunningham, it was stated that there would only be a balance due to his creditors

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of 21,000\_l\_. But Mr. Cadell, the bookseller, has undertaken to pay 20,000\_l\_ for the publication of the remainder of his works, on the plan which had been so far proceeded in. This will clear off all the claims. A near relative of Lady Scott left 60,000\_l\_ to the children of Sir Walter, to which, of course, they are entitled; and the eldest son received a large fortune with his wife. The public, therefore, are spared the pain of knowing that the family of one to whom they are so largely indebted, are left in a state of destitution.”—We hope this statement is as correct as it is gratifying.

[Illustration: (*Dryburgh Abbey.*)]

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