

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Lichtenberg Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lenz Hambrecht Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Hanrieder Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma Verne Hägele Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Melville Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Strachwitz Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
Nestroy Marie de France
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht Ringelnatz
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Irving
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Marmion

Walter, Sir Scott

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

I. SCOTT AT ASHESTIEL.

Sir Walter Scott's love of the country induced him, after his marriage in 1797, to settle in a cottage at the pretty village of Lasswade, near Edinburgh. Four years after leaving this district he took Mr. Morritt of Rokeby to see the little dwelling, telling him that, though not worth looking at, 'it was our first house when newly married, and many a contrivance it had to make it comfortable.' He then enumerated various devices, by which he had secured for Mrs. Scott and himself what seemed to both, at the time, additional convenience and elegance in and about their home. His reminiscences culminated in an account of an arch over the gate-way, which he had constructed by fastening together the tops of two convenient willows and placing above them 'a cross made of two sticks.' This is very beautiful and characteristic; and there is much freshness and charm in the further picture of the young cottagers rejoicing over the success of the arrangements. 'To be sure,' Scott concluded, 'it is not much of a lion to show a stranger; but I wanted to see it again myself, for I assure you after I constructed it, Mamma (Mrs. Scott) and I both of us thought it so fine, we turned out to see it by moonlight, and walked backwards from it to the cottage-door in admiration of our own magnificence and its picturesque effect.' It was his way to invest his circumstances with an interest over and above what intrinsically belonged to them, and to prompt his friends to a share in his delight.

When, in 1804, Scott was appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire, a condition attaching to his post was that he should reside during part of the year within the bounds of his sheriffdom. He then removed from Lasswade, and settled at Ashestiel on the Tweed, seven miles from Selkirk. This is his own account of the new home:--

'We found a delightful retirement, by my becoming the tenant of

my intimate friend and cousin-german, Colonel Russell, in his mansion of Ashestiel, which was unoccupied during his absence on military service in India. The house was adequate to our accommodation, and the exercise of a limited hospitality. The situation is uncommonly beautiful, by the side of a fine river, whose streams are there very favourable for angling, surrounded by the remains of natural woods, and by hills abounding in game. In point of society, according to the heartfelt phrase of Scripture, we dwelt "amongst our own people"; and as the distance from the metropolis was only thirty miles, we were not out of reach of our Edinburgh friends, in which city we spent the terms of the summer and winter Sessions of the Court, that is, five or six months in the year.'

The functions of the Sheriff of Selkirkshire admitted of considerable leisure, and Scott settled at Ashestiel full of literary projects, as well as heartily prepared to meet his new responsibilities and to add to his numerous and valuable friendships. An enterprise that early engaged his attention was a complete edition of the British poets, but the deliberations on the subject came to nothing except in so far as they helped towards the preparation of Campbell's 'Specimens of the British Poets,' which appeared in 1819. Writing Scott regarding his project of a complete edition of the poets, his friend George Ellis said, 'Much as I wish for a corpus poetarum, edited as you would edit it, I should like still better another Minstrel Lay by the last and best Minstrel; and the general demand for the poem seems to prove that the public are of my opinion.' The work of editing, however, he seemed at the time determined on having, and he finally abandoned the idea of an exhaustive issue of the British poetry previous to his own time and settled down to edit Dryden. This was a work much needed, and Scott did it extremely well, as may be seen by comparing his own issue of Dryden's *Life and Works* in 1808 with the recent reproduction of it, admirably edited by Mr. George Saintsbury.

He had likewise, as he mentions in the General Preface to the Novels, begun *Waverley* 'about 1805,' and other literary engagements received their share of attention. He wrote articles for the *Edinburgh Review*, besides doing such minor if useful literary service as editing for Constable 'Original Memoirs written during the Great

Civil Wars,' and so on. At the same time, there were prospects of professional advancement, an account of which he gives in the following terms, in the 1830 Introduction to 'Marmion':--

'An important circumstance had, about the same time, taken place in my life. Hopes had been held out to me from an influential quarter, of a nature to relieve me from the anxiety which I must have otherwise felt, as one upon the precarious tenure of whose own life rested the principal prospects of his family, and especially as one who had necessarily some dependence upon the favour of the public, which is proverbially capricious; though it is but justice to add, that, in my own case, I have not found it so. Mr. Pitt had expressed a wish to my personal friend, the Right Hon. William Dundas, now Lord Clerk Register of Scotland, that some fitting opportunity should be taken to be of service to me; and as my views and wishes pointed to a future rather than an immediate provision, an opportunity of accomplishing this was soon found. One of the Principal Clerks of Session, as they are called, (official persons who occupy an important and responsible situation, and enjoy a considerable income,) who had served upwards of thirty years, felt himself, from age, and the infirmity of deafness with which it was accompanied, desirous of retiring from his official situation. As the law then stood, such official persons were entitled to bargain with their successors, either for a sum of money, which was usually a considerable one, or for an interest in the emoluments of the office during their life. My predecessor, whose services had been unusually meritorious, stipulated for the emoluments of his office during his life, while I should enjoy the survivorship, on the condition that I discharged the duties of the office in the meantime. Mr. Pitt, however, having died in the interval, his administration was dissolved, and was succeeded by that known by the name of the Fox and Grenville Ministry. My affair was so far completed, that my commission lay in the office subscribed by his Majesty; but, from hurry or mistake, the interest of my predecessor was not expressed in it, as had been usual in such cases. Although, therefore, it only required payment of the fees, I could not in honour take out the commission in the present state, since, in the event of my dying before him, the gentleman whom I succeeded must have lost the vested interest which he had stipulated to retain. I had the honour of an interview with

Earl Spencer on the subject, and he, in the most handsome manner, gave directions that the commission should issue as originally intended; adding, that the matter having received the royal assent, he regarded only as a claim of justice what he would have willingly done as an act of favour. I never saw Mr. Fox on this, or on any other occasion, and never made any application to him, conceiving that in doing so I might have been supposed to express political opinions contrary to those which I had always professed. In his private capacity, there is no man to whom I would have been more proud to owe an obligation, had I been so distinguished.

‘By this arrangement I obtained the survivorship of an office, the emoluments of which were fully adequate to my wishes; and as the law respecting the mode of providing for superannuated officers was, about five or six years after, altered from that which admitted the arrangement of assistant and successor, my colleague very handsomely took the opportunity of the alteration, to accept of the retiring annuity provided in such cases, and admitted me to the full benefit of the office.’

At Ashestiel Scott systematically planned his day. He had his mornings for his multifarious work, and the after part of the day was given to necessary recreation and to his friends. He was an ardent member of the Edinburgh Light Horse, at a time when volunteers of a practical and energetic character seemed likely to be needed, and at Ashestiel he combined a certain military routine with his legal and literary arrangements. James Skene of Rubislaw, one of his best friends and most frequent visitors, mentions that ‘before beginning his desk-work in the morning he uniformly visited his favourite steed, and neither *Captain* nor *Lieutenant*, nor the *Lieutenant’s* successor, *Brown Adam* (so called after one of the heroes of the Minstrely), liked to be fed except by him.’ Skene is the friend to whom Scott addresses the Introduction to Canto IV, charged with touching and beautiful reminiscences of earlier days. They were comrades in the Edinburgh Light Horse Volunteers, Scott being Quartermaster and Skene Cornet. Their friendship had been one of eleven years’ standing when the dedicatory epistle was written:--

‘Eleven years we now may tell,

Since we have known each other well;
Since, riding side by side, our hand
First drew the voluntary brand.'

With regard to the Introductions, it may now be said that they are better where they are than if the poet had published them separately, as at one time he seems to have intended (see Notes, p. 187). It is sometimes said by those anxious to learn the story that these introductory Epistles should be steadily ignored, and the cantos read in strict succession. In answer to an assertion of opinion like this, it is hardly necessary to say more than that probably those interested in the narrative alone could not do better than avoid the Introductions. But it will be well for them to miss various other things besides: will they, for example, care for the impassioned address of Constance to her judges, for the landlord's tale of grammarie, for Sir David Lyndsay's narrative, or even for the many descriptive passages that interrupt the free progress of the tale? Their reading would appear to be done on the plan of those who get through novels, or other works of imagination, by carefully omitting the dialogue and all those passages in which the author pauses to describe or to reflect. It is needless to say that this is not the spirit in which to approach 'Marmion' as it stands. Scott wrote with his friends about him, and it was part of his own enjoyment of his work to interest them in what for the time was receiving the main part of his attention. His talk with Mr. Morrith in front of the little cottage at Lasswade is highly significant as illustrative of his attitude towards his friends. His healthy, humorous, happy nature wanted sympathy, appreciation, sociality, and good cheer for its complete normal development, and this alone would explain the writing of the Introductions. But there is more than this. He talked over his subject and his progress with friends competent to discuss and advise, and he showed them portions of the poem as he advanced. There are indications in the Introductions of certain discussions that had arisen over his conception and treatment, and surely few readers would like to miss from the volume the clever and humorous apology for his own method which the poet advances in the Introduction to the third canto. William Erskine, refined critic and life-long friend, is asked to be patient and generous while the poet proceeds in his own way:--

'Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
And in the minstrel spare the friend,
Though wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,
Flow forth, flow unrestrain'd, my Tale!'

Further, the Introductions do not in any case interrupt the progress of the Poem. Scott was dealing with a great national theme--a cause he and his friends could understand and appreciate--and both before starting and at every pause he has something to say that is apposite and suggestive. His country's wintry state is the key-note of the first Introduction, which is an appropriate prelude to a great national tragedy; weird Border legends and the touching and mysterious silences of lone St. Mary's Lake fitly introduce the 'mysterious Man of Woe'; the third and the fourth Introductions, with their features of personal interest and their bright reminiscences of 'tales that charmed' and scenes on 'the field-day, or the drill,' are easily connected with the Hostel and the Camp; Spenser's 'wandering Squire of Dames,' the vigorous description of the 'Queen of the North,' and the tribute to the notes that 'Marie translated, Blondel sung,' all tell in their due place as preparatory to the canto on The Court; while the ominous record, emanating from a Yule-tide retreat, could not be more fitly interrupted than by a battle of national disaster. Scott, then, may have thought of publishing the Introductions separately, but it is well that he ultimately allowed his better judgment to prevail. It is not necessary to dwell on their special descriptive features, which readily assert themselves and give Scott a high and honoured place among Nature-poets. His quick and minute observation, his sense of colour and harmonious effects, and his skill of arrangement are admirable throughout.

II. COMPOSITION OF 'MARMION.'

In 1791 Scott accompanied an uncle into Northumberland, and made his first acquaintance with the scene of Flodden. Writing to his friend William Clerk (Lockhart's Life, ii. 182), he says, 'Never was an affair more completely bungled than that day's work was. Suppose one army posted upon the face of a hill, and secured by

high grounds projecting on each flank, with the river Till in front, a deep and still river, winding through a very extensive valley called Milfield Plain, and the only passage over it by a narrow bridge, which the Scots artillery, from the hill, could in a moment have demolished. Add that the English must have hazarded a battle while their troops, which were tumultuously levied, remained together; and that the Scots, behind whom the country was open to Scotland, had nothing to do but to wait for the attack as they were posted. Yet did two-thirds of the army, actuated by the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*, rush down and give an opportunity to Stanley to occupy the ground they had quitted, by coming over the shoulder of the hill, while the other third, under Lord Home, kept their ground, and having seen their King and about 10,000 of their countrymen cut to pieces, retired into Scotland without loss.' Fifteen years after this was written Scott began the composition of 'Marmion,' and it is interesting to note that, so early in life as the date of this letter indicates, he was so keenly alive to the great blunder in military tactics made by James IV and his advisers, and so manifestly stirred to eloquent expression of his feeling.

In November 1806 Scott began 'Marmion,' designed as a romance of Feudalism to succeed the Border study in 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel.' The circumstances of the time, no doubt, to some extent prompted the choice of subject. Napoleon was diligently working out his ambitious scheme of a Western Empire, and plotting the ruin of Great Britain as an indispensable feature of the arrangement. Scott was not always intimately acquainted with the details of current politics, but when a subject fairly roused his interest he was not slow to take part in its discussion. This is notably illustrated, in this very year 1806, by the outspoken and energetic political ballad he produced over the acquittal of Lord Melville from a serious charge. This ballad, which went very straight to the heart of its subject, and left no doubt as to the party feeling of the writer, not only arrested general attention but gave considerable offence to the leaders on the side so sharply handled. It is given, with an explanation of the circumstances that called it forth, in Lockhart's Life, ii. 106, 1837 ed.

While, however, party politics was not always a subject that inter-

ested Scott, patriotism was a constituent element of his character. He had a keen sense of national dignity and honour--as the extract from his Flodden letter alone sufficiently testifies--and, had circumstances demanded it of him, he would almost certainly have distinguished himself as a trooper on the field of battle. Thus it was not only his love of a picturesque theme that inspired him with his Tale of Flodden Field, but likewise his patriotic ardour and his desire to touch the national heart. 'Marmion' is epical in character and movement; and it is at the same time a brilliant and suggestive delineation of a national effort, illustrating keen sense of honour, resolute purpose, and pathetic manly devotion. James IV was probably wrong, and he was certainly very rash, in attempting to do battle with Henry VIII, but although his people were aware of his mistake, and his advisers did all in their power to dissuade him, he was supported to the last with a heroism that recalls Thermopylae. This was a display of national character that appealed directly and powerfully to Scott, prompting him to the production of his loftiest and most energetic verse. Mournful associations will ever cluster around the tragic battle of Flodden--that 'most dolent day,' as Lyndsay aptly calls it--but all the same the record remains of what heroic men had it in them to do for King and country, where

'Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well.'

Scott intended to work slowly and carefully through his new poem, but, as he explains in the 1830 Introduction, circumstances interrupted his design. 'Particular passages,' he says, 'of a poem, which was finally called "Marmion," were laboured with a good deal of care, by one by whom much care was seldom bestowed.' The publication, however, was hastened by 'the misfortunes of a near relation and friend.' Lockhart (*Life*, ii. 115) explains that the reference is to 'his brother Thomas's final withdrawal from the profession of Writer to the Signet, which arrangement seems to have been quite necessary towards the end of 1806.' At any rate, the poem was finished in a shorter time than had been at first intended. The subject suited Scott so exactly that, even in default of a special stimulus, there need be no surprise at the rapidity of his composition after he had fairly begun to move forward with it. Dryden, it may be re-

membered, was so held and fascinated by his 'Alexander's Feast' that he wrote it off in a night. Cowper had a similar experience with 'John Gilpin,' and Burns's powerful dramatic tale, 'Tam O'Shanter,' was produced with great ease and rapidity. De Quincey records that, in his own case, his very best work was frequently done when he was writing against time. Scott's energy and fluency of composition are clearly indicated in the following passage in Lockhart's Life, ii. 117:--

'When the theme was of a more stirring order, he enjoyed pursuing it over brake and fell at the full speed of his *Lieutenant*. I well remember his saying, as I rode with him across the hills from Ashestiel to Newark one day in his declining years--"Oh, man, I had many a grand gallop among these braes when I was thinking of 'Marmion,' but a trotting canny pony must serve me now." His friend, Mr. Skene, however, informs me that many of the more energetic descriptions, and particularly that of the battle of Flodden, were struck out while he was in quarters again with his cavalry, in the autumn of 1807. "In the intervals of drilling," he says, "Scott used to delight in walking his powerful black steed up and down by himself upon the Portobello sands, within the beating of the surge; and now and then you would see him plunge in his spurs and go off as if at the charge, with the spray dashing about him. As we rode back to Musselburgh, he often came and placed himself beside me to repeat the verses that he had been composing during these pauses of our exercise.'"

This is wholly in keeping with the production of such poetry of movement as that of 'Marmion,' and it deserves its due place in estimating the work of Scott, just as Wordsworth's staid and sober walks around his garden, or among the hills by which he was surrounded, are carefully considered in connexion with his deliberate, meditative verse. Scott wrote the Introduction to Canto IV just a year after he had begun the poem, and between that time and the middle of February 1808 the work was finished. There is no rashness in saying that rapidity of production did not detract from excellence of result. Indeed, it is admiration rather than criticism that is challenged by the reflection that, in these short months, the poet should have turned out so much verse of high and enduring quali-

ty.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POEM.

'Marmion' is avowedly a descriptive poem. It is a series of skilful and impressive pictures, not only remarkable in themselves, but conspicuous in their own kind in poetical literature. Scott is said to have been deficient, or at any rate imperfectly trained, in certain sense activities, but there is no denying his quick perception of colour and his strong sense of the leading points in a landscape. Even minute features are seized and utilized with ease and precision, while the larger elements of a scene are depicted with breadth, sense of proportion, and clearness and impressiveness of arrangement. This holds true whether the description is merely a vivid presentment of what the imagination of the poet calls from the remote past, or a delineation of what has actually come under his notice. Norham at twilight, with the solitary warder on the battlements, and Crichtoun castle, as Scott himself saw it, instantly commend themselves by their realistic vigour and their consistent verisimilitude. Any visitor to Norham will still be able to imagine the stir and the imposing spectacle described in the opening stanzas of the first canto; and it is a pleasure to follow Scott's minute and faithful picture of Crichtoun by examining the imposing ruin as it stands at the present day. Then it is impossible not to feel that the Edinburgh of the sixteenth century was exactly as it is depicted in the poem, and that the troops on the Borough Moor were disposed as seen by the trained military eye of Sir Walter Scott. It would be difficult to find anywhere a more striking ancient stronghold than Tantallon, nor would it be easy to conceive a more appropriate scene for that grim and exciting morning interview in which the venerable Douglas found that he had harboured a recreant knight. Above all, there is the great battle scene, standing alone in literature for its carefully detailed delineation--its persistent minuteness, its rapidity of movement, its balanced effects, its energetic purpose--and surpassing everything in modern verse for its vivid Homeric realism. Fifteen years before, as we have seen, Scott had the progress of the battle in his mind's eye, and at length he produced his description as if he had been present in the character of a skilful and

interested spectator. There are envious people who decline to admit that Scott discovered his scenery, and who contend that others knew all about it before and appreciated it in their own way. Be it so; and yet the fact remains that Scott likewise saw and appreciated in the way peculiar to him, and thereby enabled his numerous readers to share his enjoyment. A very interesting and suggestive account of the new popularity given to the Flodden district by the publication of 'Marmion' will be found in Lockhart's Life, iii. 12. In the autumn of 1812 Scott visited Rokeby, doing the journey on horseback, along with his eldest boy and girl on ponies. The following is an episode of the way:--

'Halting at Flodden to expound the field of battle to his young folks, he found that "Marmion" had, as might have been expected, benefited the keeper of the public-house there very largely; and the village Boniface, overflowing with gratitude, expressed his anxiety to have a *Scott's Head* for his sign-post. The poet demurred to this proposal, and assured mine host that nothing could be more appropriate than the portraiture of a foaming tankard, which already surmounted his doorway. "Why, the painter man has not made an ill job," said the landlord, "but I would fain have something more connected with the book that has brought me so much good custom." He produced a well-thumbed copy, and handing it to the author, begged he would at least suggest a motto from the Tale of Flodden Field. Scott opened the book at the death-scene of the hero, and his eye was immediately caught by the "inscription" in black letter:--

"Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and pray
For the kind soul of Sibyl Grey," &c.

"Well, my friend," said he, "what more would you have? You need but strike out one letter in the first of these lines, and make your painter-man, the next time he comes this way, print between the jolly tankard and your own name:--

'Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and PAY.'"

Scott was delighted to find, on his return, that this suggestion had

been adopted, and for aught I know the romantic legend may still be visible.'

The characters in the poem are hardly less vigorous in conception and presentation than the descriptions. It may be true, as Carlyle asserts in his ungenerous essay on Scott, that he was inferior to Shakespeare in delineation of character, but, even admitting that, we shall still have ample room for approval and admiration of his work. So far as the purposes of the poem are concerned the various personages are admirably utilized. We come to know Marmion himself very intimately, the interest gradually deepening as the real character of the Palmer and his relations to the hero are steadily developed. These two take prominent rank with the imaginary characters of literature. James IV, that 'champion of the dames,' and likewise undoubted military leader, is faithfully delineated in accordance with historical records and contemporary estimates. Those desirous of seeing him as he struck the imagination of a poet in his own day should read the eulogy passed upon him by Barclay in his 'Ship of Fools.' The passage in which this occurs is an interpolation in the division of the poem entitled 'Of the Ruine and Decay of the Holy Faith Catholique.' The other characters are all distinctly suited to the parts they have to perform. Acting on the licence sanctioned by Horatian authority:--

'Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,
Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum'--

Scott appropriates Sir David Lyndsay to his purpose, presenting him, even as he presents the stately and venerable Angus, with faithful and striking picturesqueness. Bishop Douglas is exactly suited to his share in the development of events; and had room likewise been found for the Court poet Dunbar--author of James's Epithalamium, the 'Thrissill and the Rois'--it would have been both a fit and a seemly arrangement. Had Scott remembered that Dunbar was a favourite of Queen Margaret's he might have introduced him into an interesting episode. The passage devoted to the Queen herself is exquisite and graceful, its restrained and effective pathos making a singularly direct and significant appeal. The other female characters are well conceived and sustained, while Constance in the

Trial scene reaches an imposing height of dramatic intensity.

After the descriptions and the characterisation, the remaining important features of the poem are its marked practical irony and its episodes. Marmion, despite his many excellences, is throughout--and for obvious reasons--the victim of a persistent Nemesis. Scott is much interested in his hero; one fancies that if it were only possible he would in the end extend his favour to him, and grant him absolution; but his sense of artistic fitness prevails, and he will abate no jot of the painful ordeal to which he feels bound to submit him. Marmion is a knight with a claim to nothing more than the half of the proverbial qualifications. He is *sans peur*, but not *sans reproche*; and it is one expression of the practical irony that constantly lurks to assail him that even his fearlessness quails for a time before the Phantom Knight on Gifford Moor. The whole attitude of the Palmer is ironical; and, after the bitter parting with Angus at Tantallon, Marmion is weighted with the depressing reflection that numerous forces are conspiring against him, and with the knowledge that it is his old rival De Wilton that has thrown off the Palmer's disguise and preceded him to the scene of war. In his last hour the practical irony of his position bears upon him with a concentration of keen and bitter thrusts. Clare, whom he intended to defraud, ministers to his last needs; he learns that Constance died a bitter death at Lindisfarne; and just when he recognises his greatest need of strength his life speedily ebbs away. There is a certain grandeur of impressive tragical effort in his last struggles, as he feels that whatever he may himself have been he suffers in the end from the merciless machinery of a false ecclesiastical system. The practical irony follows him even after his death, for it is a skilful stroke that leaves his neglected remains on the field of battle and places a nameless stranger in his stately tomb.

As regards the episodes, it may just be said in a word that they are appropriate, and instead of retarding the movement of the piece, as has sometimes been alleged, they serve to give it breadth and massiveness of effect. Of course, there will always be found those who think them too long, just as there are those whose narrowness of view constrains them to wish the Introductions away. If the poet's conception of Marmion be fully considered, it will be seen that the

Host's Tale is an integral part of his purpose; and there is surely no need to defend either Sir David Lyndsay's Tale or the weird display at the cross of Edinburgh. The episode of Lady Heron's singing carries its own defence in itself, seeing that the song of 'Lochinvar' holds a place of distinction among lyrics expressive of poetical motion. After all, we must bear in mind that though it pleases Scott to speak of his tale as flowing on 'wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,' he was still conscious that he was engaged upon a poem, and that a poem is regulated by certain artistic laws. If we strive to grasp his meaning we shall not be specially inclined to carp at his method. It may at the same time be not unprofitable to look for a moment at some of the notable criticisms of the poem.

IV. CRITICISMS OF THE POEM.

When 'Marmion' was little more than begun Scott's publishers offered him a thousand pounds for the copyright, and as this soon became known it naturally gave rise to varied comment. Lord Byron thought it sufficient to warrant a gratuitous attack on the author in his 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.' This is a portion of the passage:--

'And think'st thou, Scott! by vain conceit perchance,
On public taste to foist thy stale romance.
Though Murray with his Miller may combine
To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.'

As a matter of fact, there was on Scott's part no trade whatever in the case. If a publisher chose to secure in advance what he anticipated would be a profitable commodity, that was mainly the publisher's affair, and the poet would have been a simpleton not to close with the offer if he liked it. Scott admirably disposes of Byron as follows in the 1830 Introduction:--

'The publishers of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," emboldened by the success of that poem, willingly offered a thousand pounds for

"Marmion." The transaction being no secret, afforded Lord Byron, who was then at general war with all who blacked paper, an apology for including me in his satire, entitled "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." I never could conceive how an arrangement between an author and his publishers, if satisfactory to the persons concerned, could afford matter of censure to any third party. I had taken no unusual or ungenerous means of enhancing the value of my merchandise--I had never higgled a moment about the bargain, but accepted at once what I considered the handsome offer of my publishers. These gentlemen, at least, were not of opinion that they had been taken advantage of in the transaction, which indeed was one of their own framing; on the contrary, the sale of the Poem was so far beyond their expectation, as to induce them to supply the author's cellars with what is always an acceptable present to a young Scottish housekeeper, namely, a hogshead of excellent claret.'

A second point on which Scott was attacked was the character of Marmion. It was held that such a knight as he undoubtedly was should have been incapable of forgery. Scott himself; of course, knew better than his critics whether or not this was the case, but, with his usual good nature and generous regard for the opinion of others, he admitted that perhaps he had committed an artistic blunder. Dr. Leyden, in particular, for whose judgment he had special respect, wrote him from India 'a furious remonstrance on the subject.' Fortunately, he made no attempt to change what he had written, his main reason being that 'corrections, however in themselves judicious, have a bad effect after publication.' He might have added that any modification of the hero's guilt would have entirely altered the character of the poem, and might have ruined it altogether. He had never, apparently, gone into the question thoroughly after his first impressions of the type of knights existing in feudal times, for though he states that 'similar instances were found, and might be quoted,' he is inclined to admit that the attribution of forgery was a 'gross defect.' Readers interested in the subject will find by reference to Pike's 'History of Crime,' i. 276, that Scott was perfectly justified in his assumption that a feudal knight was capable of forgery. Those who understand how intimate his knowledge was of the period with which he was dealing will, of course, be the readiest to believe him rather than his critics; but when he seems doubtful of

himself, and ready to yield the point, it is well that the strength of his original position can thus be supported by the results of recent investigation.

Jeffrey, in the *Edinburgh Review*, not being able to understand and appreciate this new devotion to romance, and probably stimulated by his misreading of the reference to Fox in the Introduction to *Canto I*, did his utmost to cast discredit on 'Marmion.' Scott was too large a man to confound the separate spheres of Politics and Literature; whereas it was frequently the case with Jeffrey--as, indeed, it was to some extent with literary critics on the other side as well--to estimate an author's work in reference to the party in the State to which he was known to belong. It was impossible to deny merits to Scott's descriptions, and the extraordinary energy of the most striking portions of the Poem, but Jeffrey groaned over the inequalities he professed to discover, and lamented that the poet should waste his strength on the unprofitable effort to resuscitate an old-fashioned enthusiasm. They had been the best of friends previously--and Scott, as we have seen, worked for the *Edinburgh Review*--but it was now patent that the old literary intimacy could not pleasantly continue. Nor is it surprising that Scott should have felt that the *Edinburgh Review* had become too autocratic, and that he should have given a helping hand towards the establishing of the *Quarterly Review*, as a political and literary organ necessary to the balance of parties.

V. THE TEXT OF THE POEM.

Scott himself revised 'Marmion' in 1831, and the interleaved copy which he used formed the basis of the text given by Lockhart in the uniform edition of the Poetical Works published in 1833. This will remain the standard text. It is that which is followed in the present volume, in which there will be found only three--in reality only two--important instances of divergence from Lockhart's readings. The earlier editions have been collated with that of 1833, and Mr. W. J. Rolfe's careful and scholarly Boston edition has likewise been consulted. It has not been considered necessary to follow Mr. Rolfe in several alterations he has made on Lockhart; but he introduces