

I. LIFE OF SCOTT

I

Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh, August 15, 1771, of an ancient Scotch clan numbering in its time many a hard rider and good fighter, and more than one of these petty chieftains, half-shepherd and half-robber, who made good the winter inroads into their stock of beeves by spring forays and cattle drives across the English Border. Scott's great-grandfather was the famous "Beardie" of Harden, so called because after the exile of the Stuart sovereigns he swore never to cut his beard until they were reinstated; and several degrees farther back he could point to a still more famous figure, "Auld Wat of Harden," who with his fair dame, the Flower of Yarrow, is mentioned in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The first member of the clan to abandon country life and take up a sedentary profession, was Scott's father, who settled in Edinburgh as Writer to the Signet, a position corresponding in Scotland to that of attorney or solicitor in England. The character of this father, stern, scrupulous, Calvinistic, with a high sense of ceremonial dignity and a punctilious regard for the honorable conventions of life, united with the wilder ancestral strain to make Scott what

he was. From "Auld Wat" and "Beardie" came his high spirit, his rugged manliness, his chivalric ideals; from the Writer to the Signet came that power of methodical labor which made him a giant among the literary workers of his day, and that delicate sense of responsibility which gave his private life its remarkable sweetness and beauty.

At the age of eighteen months, Scott was seized with a teething fever which settled in his right leg and retarded its growth to such an extent that he was slightly lame for the rest of his life. Possibly this affliction was a blessing in disguise, since it is not improbable that Scott's love of active adventure would have led him into the army or the navy, if he had not been deterred by a bodily impediment; in which case, though English history might have been a gainer, English literature would certainly have been immeasurably a loser. In spite of his lameness, the child grew strong enough to be sent on a long visit to his grandfather's farm at Sandyknowe; and here, lying among the sheep on the windy downs, playing about the romantic ruins of Smalholm Tower,¹ scampering through the heather on a tiny Shetland pony, or listening to stories of the thrilling past told by the old women of the farm, he drank in sensations which strengthened both the hardiness and the romanticism of his nature. A story is told of his being found in the fields during a thunder storm, clapping his hands at each

¹ See Scott's ballad *The Eve of St. John*

flash of lightning, and shouting "Bonny! Bonny!"—a bit of infantile intrepidity which makes more acceptable a story of another sort illustrative of his mental precocity. A lady entering his mother's room, found him reading aloud a description of a shipwreck, accompanying the words with excited comments and gestures. "There's the mast gone," he cried, "crash it goes; they will all perish!" The lady entered into his agitation with tact, and on her departure, he told his mother that he liked their visitor, because "she was a virtuoso, like himself." To her amused inquiry as to what a virtuoso might be, he replied: "Don't ye know? why, 'tis one who wishes to and will know everything."

As a boy at school in Edinburgh and in Kelso, and afterwards as a student at the University and an apprentice in his father's law office, Scott took his own way to become a "virtuoso;" a rather queer way it must sometimes have seemed to his good preceptors. He refused point-blank to learn Greek, and cared little for Latin. His scholarship was so erratic that he glanced meteor-like from the head to the foot of his classes and back again, according as luck gave or withheld the question to which his highly selective memory had retained the answer. But outside of school hours he was intensely at work to "know everything," so far as "everything" came within the bounds of his special tastes. Before he was ten years old he had

begun to collect chap-books and ballads. As he grew older he read omnivorously in romance and history; at school he learned French for the sole purpose of knowing at first hand the fascinating cycles of old French romance; a little later he mastered Italian in order to read Dante and Ariosto, and to his schoolmaster's indignation stoutly championed the claim of the latter poet to superiority over Homer; a little later he acquired Spanish and read *Don Quixote* in the original. With such efforts, however, considerable as they were for a boy who passionately loved a "bicker" in the streets, and who was famed among his comrades for bravery in climbing the perilous "kittle nine stanes" on Castle Rock,—he was not content. Nothing more conclusively shows the genuineness of Scott's romantic feeling than his willingness to undergo severe mental drudgery in pursuit of knowledge concerning the old storied days which had enthralled his imagination. It was no moonshine sentimentality which kept him hour after hour and day after day in the Advocate's Library, poring over musty manuscripts, deciphering heraldic devices, tracing genealogies, and unraveling obscure points of Scottish history. By the time he was twenty-one he had made himself, almost unconsciously, an expert paleographer and antiquarian, whose assistance was sought by professional workers in those branches of knowledge. Carlyle has charged against Scott that he poured

out his vast floods of poetry and romance without preparation or forethought; that his production was always impromptu, and rooted in no sufficient past of acquisition. The charge cannot stand. From his earliest boyhood until his thirtieth year, when he began his brilliant career as poet and novelist, his life was one long preparation,—very individual and erratic preparation, perhaps, but none the less earnest and fruitful.

In 1792, Scott, then twenty-one years old, was admitted a member of the faculty of advocates of Edinburgh. During the five years which elapsed between this date and his marriage, his life was full to overflowing of fun and adventure, rich with genial companionship, and with experience of human nature in all its wild and tame varieties. Ostensibly he was a student of law, and he did, indeed, devote some serious attention to the mastery of his profession. But the dry formalities of legal life his keen humor would not allow him to take quite seriously. On the day when he was called to the bar, while waiting his turn among the other young advocates, he turned to his friend, William Clark, who had been called with him, and whispered, mimicking the Highland lasses who used to stand at the Cross of Edinburgh to be hired for the harvest: "We've stood here an hour by the Tron, hinny, and deil a ane has speered¹ our price." Though Scott never made a legal reputation, either

¹ Asked.

as pleader at the bar or as an authority upon legal history and principles, it cannot be doubted that his experience in the Edinburgh courts was of immense benefit to him. In the first place, his study of the Scotch statutes, statutes which had taken form very gradually under the pressure of changing national conditions, gave him an insight into the politics and society of the past not otherwise to have been obtained. Of still more value, perhaps, was the association with his young companions in the profession, and daily contact with the racy personalities which traditionally haunt all courts of law, and particularly Scotch courts of law: the first association kept him from the affectation and sentimentality which is the bane of the youthful romanticist; and the second enriched his memory with many an odd figure afterward to take its place, clothed in the colors of a great dramatic imagination, upon the stage of his stories.

Added to these experiences, there were others equally calculated to enlarge his conception of human nature. Not the least among these he found in the brilliant literary and artistic society of Edinburgh, to which his mother's social position gave him entrance. Here, when only a lad, he met Robert Burns, then the pet and idol of the fashionable coteries of the capital. Here he heard Henry Mackenzie deliver a lecture on German literature which turned his attention to the

romantic poetry of Germany and led directly to his first attempts at ballad-writing. But much more vital than any or all of these influences, were those endless walking-tours which alone or in company with a boon companion he took over the neighboring country-side,—care-free, roystering expeditions, which he afterwards immortalized as Dandie Dinmont's "Liddesdale raids" in *Guy Mannerling*. Thirty miles across country as the crow flies, with no objective point and no errand, a village inn or a shepherd's hut at night, with a crone to sing them an old ballad over the fire, or a group of hardy dalesmen to welcome them with stories and carousal,—these were blithe adventurous days such as could not fail to ripen Scott's already ardent nature, and store his memory with genial knowledge. The account of Dandie Dinmont given by Mr. Shortreed may be taken as a picture, only too true in some of its touches, of Scott in these youthful escapades: "Eh me, . . . sic an endless fund of humour and drollery as he had then wi' him. Never ten yards but we were either laughing or roaring and singing. Wherever we stopped how brawlie he suited himsel' to everybody! He aye did as the lave did; never made himsel' the great man or took ony airs in the company. I've seen him in a' moods in these jaunts, grave and gay, daft and serious, sober and drunk—(this, however, even in our wildest rambles, was but rare)—but drunk or sober, he was aye the

gentleman. He looked excessively heavy and stupid when he was fou, but he was never out o' gude humour." After this, we are not surprised to hear that Scott's father told him disgustedly that he was better fitted to be a fiddling pedlar, a "gangrel scrape-gut," than a respectable attorney. As a matter of fact, however, behind the mad pranks and the occasional excesses there was a very serious purpose in all this scouring of the countryside. Scott was picking up here and there, from the old men and women with whom he hobnobbed, antiquarian material of an invaluable kind, bits of local history, immemorial traditions and superstitions, and, above all, precious ballads which had been handed down for generations among the peasantry. These ballads, thus precariously transmitted, it was Scott's ambition to gather together and preserve, and he spared no pains or fatigue to come at any scrap of ballad literature of whose existence he had an inkling. Meanwhile, he was enriching heart and imagination for the work that was before him. So that here also, though in the hair-brained and heady way of youth, he was engaged in his task of preparation.

Scott has told us that it was his reading of *Don Quixote* which determined him to be an author; but he was first actually excited to composition in another way. This was by hearing recited a ballad of the German poet Bürger, entitled *Lenore*, in which a skeleton lover carries off his bride to a

wedding in the land of death. Mr. Hutton remarks upon the curiousness of the fact that a piece of "raw supernaturalism" like this should have appealed so strongly to a mind as healthy and sane as Scott's. So it was, however. He could not rid himself of the fascination of the piece until he had translated it, and published it, together with another translation from the same author. One stanza at least of this first effort of Scott sounds a note characteristic of his poetry:

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

Here we catch the trumpet-like clang and staccato tramp of verse which he was soon to use in a way to thrill his generation. This tiny pamphlet of verse, Scott's earliest publication, appeared in 1796. Soon after, he met Monk Lewis, then famous as a purveyor to English palates of the crude horrors which German romanticism had just ceased to revel in. Lewis was engaged in compiling a book of supernatural stories and poems under the title of *Tales of Wonder*, and asked Scott to contribute. Scott wrote for this book three long ballads—*Glenfinlas*, *Cadyow Castle*, and *The Gray Brother*. Though tainted with the conventional diction of eighteenth century verse, these ballads are not unimpressive pieces of work; the second named, especially, shows a kind and degree of romantic

imagination such as his later poetry rather substantiated than newly revealed.

II

In the following year, 1797, Scott married a Miss Charpentier, daughter of a French refugee. She was not his first love, that place having been usurped by a Miss Stuart Belches, for whom Scott had felt perhaps the only deep passion of his life, and memory of whom was to come to the surface touchingly in his old age. Miss Charpentier, or Carpenter, as she was called, with her vivacity and quaint foreign speech "caught his heart on the rebound;" there can be no doubt that, in spite of a certain shallowness of character, she made him a good wife, and that his affection for her deepened steadily to the end. The young couple went to live at Lasswade, a village near Edinburgh, on the Esk. Scott, in whom the proprietary instinct was always very strong, took great pride in the pretty little cottage. He made a dining-table for it with his own hands, planted saplings in the yard, and drew together two willow-trees at the gate into a kind of arch, surmounted by a cross made of two sticks. "After I had constructed this," he says, "mamma (Mrs. Scott) and I both of us thought it so fine that we turned out to see it by moonlight, and walked backwards from it to the cottage door, in admiration of our magnificence and its picturesque effect." It would have been well

indeed for them both if their pleasures of proprietorship could always have remained so touchingly simple.

Now that he was married, Scott was forced to look a little more sharply to his fortunes. He applied himself with more determination to the law. In 1799 he became deputy-sheriff of Selkirkshire, with a salary of three hundred pounds, which placed him at least beyond the reach of want. He began to look more and more to literature as a means of supplementing his income. His ballads in the *Tales of Wonder* had gained him some reputation; this he increased in 1802 by the publication, under the title *Border Minstrelsy*, of the ballads which he had for several years been collecting, collating, and richly annotating. Meanwhile, he was looking about for a congenial subject upon which to try his hand in a larger way than he had as yet ventured. Such a subject came to him at last in a manner calculated to enlist all his enthusiasm in its treatment, for it was given him by the Countess of Dalkeith, wife of the heir-apparent to the dukedom of Buccleugh. The ducal house of Buccleugh stood at the head of the clan Scott, and toward its representative the poet always held himself in an attitude of feudal reverence. The Duke of Buccleugh was his "chief," entitled to demand from him both passive loyalty and active service; so, at least, Scott loved to interpret their relationship, making effective in

his own case a feudal sentiment which had elsewhere somewhat lapsed. He especially loved to think of himself as the bard of his clan, a modern representative of those rude poets whom the Scottish chiefs once kept as a part of their household to chant the exploits of the clan. Nothing could have pleased his fancy more, therefore, than a request on the part of the lady of his chief to treat a subject of her assigning, namely, the dark mischief-making of a dwarf or goblin who had strayed from his unearthly master and attached himself as page to a human household. The subject fell in with the poet's reigning taste for strong supernaturalism. Gilpin Horner, the goblin page, though he proved in the sequel a difficult character to put to poetic uses, was a figure grotesque and eerie enough to appeal even to Monk Lewis. At first Scott thought of treating the subject in ballad-form, but the scope of treatment was gradually enlarged by several circumstances. To begin with, he chanced upon a copy of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, and the history of that robber baron suggested to him the feasibility of throwing the same vivid light upon the old Border life of his ancestors as Goethe had thrown upon that of the Rhine barons. This led him to subordinate the part played by the goblin page in the proposed story, which was now widened to include elaborate pictures of mediæval life and manners, and to lay the scene in the castle of Branksome, formerly the

stronghold of Scott's and the Duke of Buccleugh's ancestors. The verse form into which the story was thrown was due to a still more accidental circumstance, i. e., Scott's overhearing Sir John Stoddard recite a fragment of Coleridge's unpublished poem *Christabel*. The placing of the story in the mouth of an old harper fallen upon evil days, was a happy afterthought; besides making a beautiful framework for the main poem, it enabled the author to escape criticism for any violent innovations of style, since these could always be attributed to the rude and wild school of poetry to which the harper was supposed to belong. In these ways the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* gradually developed in its present form. Upon its publication in 1805, it achieved an immediate success. The vividness of its descriptive passages, the buoyant rush of its metre, the deep romantic glow suffusing all its pages, took by storm a public familiar to weariness with the decorous abstractions of the eighteenth century poets. The first edition, a sumptuous quarto, was exhausted in a few weeks; an octavo edition of fifteen hundred was sold out within the year; and before 1830, forty-four thousand copies were needed to supply the popular demand. Scott received in all something under eight hundred pounds for the *Lay*, a small amount when contrasted with his gains from subsequent poems, but a sum so unusual nevertheless that he determined

forthwith to devote as much time to literature as he could spare from his legal duties; those he still placed foremost, for until near the close of his life he clung to his adage that literature was "a good staff, but a poor crutch."

A year before the publication of the *Lay*, Scott had removed to the small country seat of Ashestiel, in Selkirkshire, seven miles from the nearest town, Selkirk, and several miles from any neighbor. In the introductions to the various cantos of *Marmion* he has given us a delightful picture of Ashestiel and its surroundings,—the swift Glenkinnon dashing through the estate in a deep ravine, on its way to join the Tweed; behind the house the rising hills beyond which lay the lovely scenery of the Yarrow. The eight years (1804–1812) at Ashestiel were the serenest, and probably the happiest, of Scott's life. Here he wrote his two greatest poems, *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*. His mornings he spent at his desk, always with a faithful hound at his feet watching the tireless hand as it threw off sheet after sheet of manuscript to make up the day's stint. By one o'clock he was, as he said, "his own man," free to spend the remaining hours of light with his children, his horses, and his dogs, or to indulge himself in his life-long passion for tree-planting. His robust and healthy nature made him excessively fond of all out-of-door sports, especially riding, in which he was daring to fool-hardiness. It is a curious fact, noted by Lockhart,

that many of Scott's senses were blunt; he could scarcely, for instance, tell one wine from another by the taste, and once sat quite unconscious at his table while his guests were manifesting extreme uneasiness over the approach of a too-long-kept haunch of venison; but his sight was unusually keen, as his hunting exploits proved. His little son once explained his father's popularity by saying that "it was him that commonly saw the hare sitting." What with hunting, fishing, salmon-spearing by torchlight, gallops over the hills into the Yarrow country, planting and transplanting of his beloved trees, Scott's life at Ashestiel, during the hours when he was "his own man," was a very full and happy one.

Unfortunately, he had already embarked in an enterprise which was destined to overthrow his fortunes just when they seemed fairest. While at school in Kelso he had become intimate with a school fellow named James Ballantyne, and later, when Ballantyne set up a small printing house in Kelso, he had given him his earliest poems to print. After the issue of the *Border Minstrelsy*, the typographical excellence of which attracted attention even in London, he set Ballantyne up in business in Edinburgh, secretly entering the firm himself as silent partner. The good sale of the *Lay* had given the firm an excellent start; but more matter was presently needed to feed the press. To supply it, Scott undertook and completed at

Ashestiel four enormous tasks of editing,—the complete works of Dryden and of Swift, the Somers' Tracts, and the Sadler State Papers. The success of these editions, and the subsequent enormous sale of Scott's poems and novels, would have kept the concern solvent in spite of Ballantyne's complete incapacity for business, but in 1809 Scott plunged recklessly into another and more serious venture. A dispute with Constable, the veteran publisher and bookseller, aggravated by the harsh criticism delivered upon *Marmion* by Francis Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, Constable's magazine, determined Scott to set up in connection with the Ballantyne press a rival bookselling concern, and a rival magazine, to be called the *Quarterly Review*. The project was a daring one, in view of Constable's great ability and resources; to make it foolhardy to madness Scott selected to manage the new business a brother of James Ballantyne, a dissipated little buffoon, with about as much business ability and general calibre of character as is connoted by the name which Scott coined for him, "Rigdumfunnidos." The selection of such a man for such a place betrays in Scott's eminently sane and balanced mind a curious strain of impracticality, to say the least; indeed, we are almost constrained to feel with his harsher critics that it betrays something worse than defective judgment,—defective character. His greatest failing, if failing it can be called, was

pride. He could not endure even the mild dictations of a competent publisher, as is shown by his answer to a letter written by one of them proposing some salaried work; he replied curtly that he was a "black Hussar" of literature, and not to be put to such tame service. Probably this haughty dislike of dictation, this imperious desire to patronize rather than be patronized, led him to choose inferior men with whom to enter into business relations. If so, he paid for the fault so dearly that it is hard for a biographer to press the issue against him.

For the present, however, the wind of fortune was blowing fair, and all the storm clouds were below the horizon. In 1808 *Marmion* appeared, and was greeted with an enthusiasm which made the unprecedented reception of the *Lay* seem lukewarm in comparison. *Marmion* contains nothing which was not plainly foreshadowed in the *Lay*, but the hand of the poet has grown more sure, his descriptive effects are less crude and amateurish, the narrative proceeds with a steadier march, the music has gained in volume and in martial vigor. An anecdote is told by Mr. Hutton which will serve as a type of a hundred others illustrative of the extraordinary hold which this poetry took upon the minds of ordinary men. "I have heard," he says, "of two old men—complete strangers—passing each other on a dark London night, when one of them happened to be repeating to himself, just as

Campbell did to the hackney coachmen of the North Bridge of Edinburgh, the last lines of the account of Flodden Field in *Marmion*, 'Charge, Chester, charge,' when suddenly a reply came out of the darkness, 'On, Stanley, on,' whereupon they finished the death of *Marmion* between them, took off their hats to each other, and parted, laughing." The *Lady of the Lake*, which followed in little more than a year, was received with the same popular delight, and with even greater respect on the part of the critics. Even the formidable Jeffrey, who was supposed to dine off slaughtered authors as the Giant in Jack and the Beanstalk dined off young Englishmen, keyed his voice to unwonted praise. The influx of tourists into the Trossachs, where the scene of the poem was laid, was so great as seriously to embarrass the mail coaches, until at last the posting charges had to be raised in order to diminish the traffic. Far away in Spain, at a trying moment of the Peninsular campaign, Sir Adam Ferguson, posted on a point of ground exposed to the enemy's fire, read to his men as they lay prostrate on the ground the passage from the *Lady of the Lake* describing the combat between Roderick Dhu's Highlanders and the forces of the Earl of Mar; and "the listening soldiers only interrupted him by a joyous huzza when the French shot struck the bank close above them." Such tributes—and they were legion—to the power of his poetry to move adventurous and

nardy men, must have been intoxicating to Scott; there is small wonder that the success of his poems gave him, as he says, "such a heeze as almost lifted him off his feet."

III

Scott's modesty was not in danger, but so far as his prudence was concerned, his success did really lift him off his feet. In 1812, still more encouraged thereto by entering upon the emoluments of the office of Clerk of Sessions, the duties of which he had performed for six years without pay, he purchased Abbotsford, an estate on the Tweed, adjoining that of the Duke of Buccleugh, his kinsman, and near the beautiful ruins of Melrose Abbey. Here he began to carry out the dream of his life, to found a territorial family which should augment the power and fame of his clan. Beginning with a modest farm house and a farm of a hundred acres, he gradually bought, planted, and built, until the farm became a manorial domain and the farm house a castle. He had not gone far in this work before he began to realize that the returns from his poetry would never suffice to meet such demands as would thus be made upon his purse. Byron's star was in the ascendant, and before its baleful magnificence Scott's milder and more genial light visibly paled. He was himself the first to declare, with characteristic generosity,

that the younger poet had "bet" him at his own craft. As Carlyle says, "he had held the sovereignty for some half-score of years, a comparatively long lease of it, and now the time seemed come for dethronement, for abdication. An unpleasant business; which, however, he held himself ready, as a brave man will, to transact with composure and in silence."

But, as it proved, there was no need for resignation. The reign of metrical romance, brilliant but brief, was past, or nearly so. But what of prose romance, which long ago, in picking out *Don Quixote* from the puzzling Spanish, he had promised himself he would one day attempt? With some such questioning of the Fates, Scott drew from his desk the sheets of a story begun seven years before, and abandoned because of the success of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. This story he now completed, and published as *Waverley* in the spring of 1814,—an event "memorable in the annals of British literature; in the annals of British bookselling thrice and four times memorable." The popularity of the metrical romances dwindled to insignificance before the enthusiasm with which this prose romance was received. A moment before quietly resolved to give up his place in the world's eye, and to live the life of an obscure country gentleman, Scott found himself launched once more on the tide of brave fortunes.

¹ Bested, got the better of.

The Ballantyne publishing and printing houses ceased to totter, and settled themselves on what seemed the firmest of foundations. At Abbotsford, buying, planting, and building began on a greater scale than had ever been planned in its owner's most sanguine moments.

The history of the next eleven years in Scott's life is the history, on the one hand, of the rapidly appearing novels, of a fame gradually spreading outward from Great Britain until it covered the civilized world,—a fame increased rather than diminished by the *incognito* which the "author of *Waverley*" took great pains to preserve even after the secret had become an open one; on the other hand, of the large-hearted, hospitable life at Abbotsford, where, in spite of the importunities of curious and ill-bred tourists, bent on getting a glimpse of the "Wizard of the North," and in spite of the enormous mass of work, literary and official, which Scott took upon himself to perform, the atmosphere of country leisure and merriment was somehow miraculously preserved. This life of the hearty prosperous country laird was the one toward the realization of which all Scott's efforts were directed; it is worth while, therefore, to see as vividly as may be, what kind of life that was, that we may the better understand what kind of man he was who cared for it. The following extract from Lockhart's *Life of Scott* gives us at least one very characteristic aspect of the Abbotsford world:

"It was a clear, bright September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine; and all was in readiness for a grand coursing-match on Newark Hill. The only guest who had chalked out other sport for himself was the staunchest of anglers, Mr. Rose; but he, too, was there on his *shelty*, armed with his salmon-rod and landing-net. . . . This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about, to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sibyl, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip; and among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphrey Davy, Dr. Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish belles-lettres, Henry Mackenzie. . . . La.dlaw (the steward of Abbotsford) on a strong-tailed wiry Highlander, yeleft Hoddin Grey, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground, was the adjutant. But the most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp (Sir Humphrey Davy) . . . a brown hat with flexible brim, surrounded with line upon line of catgut, and innumerable fly-hooks; jack-boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made a fine contrast with the smart jacket, white-cord breeches, and well-polished jockey-boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr. Wollaston was in black; and with his noble serene dignity of countenance might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr. Mackenzie, at this time in the seventy-sixth year of his age, with a hat turned up

with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog-whistle round his neck. . . . Tom Purdie (one of Scott's servants) and his sub-alterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the grey-hounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose; but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gambolled about Sibyl Grey, barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

"The order of march had all been settled, when Scott's daughter Anne broke from the line, screaming with laughter, and exclaimed, 'Papa, papa, I knew you could never think of going without your pet!' Scott looked round, and I rather think there was a blush as well as a smile upon his face, when he perceived a little black pig frisking about his pony, evidently a self-elected addition to the party of the day. He tried to look stern, and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy soon found a strap round its neck, and was dragged into the background; Scott, watching the retreat, repeated with mock pathos the first verse of an old pastoral song—

'What will I do gin my hoggie die?
My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
My only beast, I had na mae,
And wow, but I was vogie!'

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

Let us supplement this with one more picture, from the same hand, showing Scott in a little more intimate light. The passage was written in 1821, after Lockhart had married Scott's eldest daughter,

and gone to spend the summer at Chiefswood, a cottage on the Abbotsford estate:

"We were near enough Abbotsford to partake as often as we liked of its brilliant and constantly varying society; yet could do so without being exposed to the worry and exhaustion of spirit which the daily reception of new-comers entailed upon all the family, except Scott himself. But in truth, even he was not always proof against the annoyances connected with such a style of open house-keeping. . . . When sore beset at home in this way, he would every now and then discover that he had some very particular business to attend to on an outlying part of his estate, and craving the indulgence of his guests overnight, appear at the cabin in the glen before its inhabitants were astir in the morning. The clatter of Sibyl Grey's hoofs, the yelping of Mustard and Spice, and his own joyous shout of *réveillée* under our windows, were the signal that he had burst his toils, and meant for that day to 'take his ease in his inn.' On descending, he was found to be seated with all his dogs and ours about him, under a spreading ash that overshadowed half the bank between the cottage and the brook, pointing the edge of his woodman's axe, and listening to Tom Purdie's lecture touching the plantation that most needed thinning. After breakfast he would take possession of a dressing-room upstairs, and write a chapter of *The Pirate*; and then, having made up and despatched his packet for Mr. Ballantyne, away to join Purdie wherever the foresters were at work . . . until it was time to rejoin his own party at Abbotsford, or the quiet circle of the cottage. When his guests were few and friendly, he often

made them come over and meet him at Chiefswood in a body towards evening. . . . He was ready with all sorts of devices to supply the wants of a narrow establishment; he used to delight particularly in sinking the wine in a well under the *brae* ere he went out, and hauling up the basket just before dinner was announced,—this primitive device being, he said, what he had always practised when a young housekeeper, and in his opinion far superior in its results to any application of ice; and in the same spirit, whenever the weather was sufficiently genial, he voted for dining out of doors altogether."

Few events of importance except the successive appearances of "our buiks," as Tom Purdie called his master's novels, and an occasional visit to London or the continent, intervened to break the busy monotony of this Abbotsford life. On one of these visits to London, Scott was invited to dine with the Prince Regent, and when the prince became King George IV., in 1820, almost the first act of his reign was to create Scott a baronet. Scott accepted the honor gratefully, as coming, he said, "from the original source of all honor." There can well be two opinions as to whether this least admirable of English kings constituted a very prime fountain of honor, judged by democratic standards; but to Scott's mind, such an imputation would have been next to sacrilege. The feudal bias of his mind, strong to start with, had been strengthened by his long sojourn among the visions of a feudal past; the ideals of feudalism were living

realities to him; and he accepted knighthood from his king's hand in exactly the same spirit which determined his attitude of humility towards his "chief," the Duke of Buccleugh, and which impelled him to exhaust his genius in the effort to build up a great family estate.

There were already signs that the enormous burden of work under which he seemed to move so lightly, was telling on him. *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *The Legend of Montrose*, and *Ivanhoe*, had all of them been dictated between screams of pain, wrung from his lips by a chronic cramp of the stomach. By the time he reached *Redgauntlet* and *St. Ronan's Well*, there began to be heard faint murmurings of discontent from his public, hints that he was writing too fast, and that the noble wine he had poured them for so long was growing at last a trifle watery. To add to these causes of uneasiness, the commercial ventures in which he was interested drifted again into a precarious state. He had himself fallen into the bad habit of forestalling the gains from his novels by heavy drafts on his publishers, and the example thus set was followed faithfully by John Ballantyne. Scott's good humor and his partner's bad judgment saddled the concern with a lot of unsalable books. In 1818 the affairs of the book-selling business had to be closed up, Constable taking over the unsalable stock and assuming the outstanding liabilities in return for copyright privileges covering some of Scott's

novels. This so burdened the veteran publisher that when, in 1825, a large London firm failed, it carried him down also—and with him James Ballantyne, with whom he had entered into close relations. Scott's secret connection with Ballantyne had continued; accordingly he woke up one fine day to find himself worse than beggared, being personally liable for one hundred and thirty thousand pounds.

IV

The years intervening between this calamity and Scott's death form one of the saddest and at the same time most heroic chapters in the history of literature. The fragile health of Lady Scott succumbed almost immediately to the crushing blow, and she died in a few months. Scott surrendered Abbotsford to his creditors and took up humble lodgings in Edinburgh. Here, with a pride and stoical courage as quiet as it was splendid, he settled down to fill with the earnings of his pen the vast gulf of debt for which he was morally scarcely responsible at all. In three years he wrote *Woodstock*, three *Chronicles of the Canongate*, the *Fair Maid of Perth*, *Anne of Geierstein*, the first series of the *Tales of a Grandfather*, and a *Life of Napoleon*, equal to thirteen volumes of novel size, besides editing and annotating a complete edition of his own works. All these together netted his creditors £40,000. Touched by the efforts he was