ENGLISH CLASSICS FOR SCHOOLS

IVANHOE

A Romance

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

New York · Cincinnati · Chicago ·
AMERICAN · BOOK · COMPANY ·

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SCOTT

Jessie Holdsworth

McCaughan.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting to the young student this English classic, it is the aim of the notes and the Introduction to suggest rather than to explain at great length. Historical details and minutiæ of manners and customs of the period are therefore outlined only, their amplification being left to the student.

Sir Walter Scott, the seventh child in a family of twelve, was born at Edinburgh, August 15, 1771. His father was Walter Scott, a writer to the signet, or solicitor, and akin to the border Scotts of Harden, a connection of the powerful house of Buccleuch. This connection of his father with the great house was a source of considerable pride to Scott: indeed, it was the aim of his life to be recognized among the landed gentry, and it was to the establishment of his family as such that he bent, later on, the full force of his literary energy. His mother was Anne Rutherford, daughter of Dr. John Rutherford, a medical professor in Edinburgh University. Scott was a delicate child, and when three years old was taken to Sandyknowe, his grandfather's farm. It was here, in his early youth, that he heard the traditions of that border war whose spirit he afterward infused so thoroughly into his poetry. Undoubtedly the influence of Sandyknowe was one of the strongest upon his mind. In 1779 he returned to Edinburgh, improved in health, but with a slight lameness in his step, the result of a fever. The lameness was incurable. After

a period at the high school, he entered the university in 1783; and at college, as at school, he was a prodigious reader of travels, romances, poetry, and old plays. The ballad literature and Percy's "Reliques" had an especial fascination for him. A marked trait that afterward showed itself conspicuously in his poems and novels was his susceptibility to the charms of natural scenery. In 1786 he entered his father's law office; and six years after, in July, 1792, he was called to the Scottish bar. In this year he began the study of German, and in 1796 published translations of Bürger's "Lenore" and "Wild Huntsman." In 1802 appeared the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." The "Lay of the Last Minstrel" was brought out in 1805, and aroused widespread enthusiasm. The next year, through the Buccleuch, he received the appointment of a clerkship in the Scottish Court of Session, with a salary of £800, afterward £1,300. He then gave up his profession, and devoted himself to literature. In 1808 "Marmion" appeared; and in 1810, the picturesque "Lady of the Lake." The next year, 1811, he bought Abbotsford, in Roxburgh County, about twenty-eight miles southeast from Edinburgh, commanding a view of the Tweed and Melrose Abbey, and began the fulfillment of his long-cherished wish to found a family. It was the expense of Abbotsford that caused the financial difficulties that later came upon him. In June, 1814, "Waverley" appeared, and not only at once established its author as a novelist of extraordinary power in the delineation of character and the description of natural scenery, but revolutionized the English novel, lifting its tone, broadening its scope, making it artistic, in strong contrast to the droning sentimentality of Richardson and the coarseness of Fielding and Smollett, his predecessors. Moreover, besides raising the novel to a higher

plane, Scott infused into it a new element by weaving pleasing story about historical characters, thus creating the historical novel. The success of "Waverley" was encouraging, and novel after novel came from his pen with remarkable rapidity,—"Guy Mannering" (1815), "The Black Dwarf" and "Old Mortality" (1816), "Rob Roy" (1817), and "Ivanhoe" (1819). In 1820 the rank of baronet was conferred upon him, and his success seemed assured. But a storm was gathering, and six years later it burst. In January, 1826, came the failure of the publishing-house of the Ballantynes (of which he was a partner), and also of that of Constable & Co., with which it was connected. Scott's indebtedness was about £130,000, and, refusing all compromise, at the age of fifty-five he bravely sat down to write it off. He worked with an industry that was astounding. Novels, tales, histories, followed each other in rapid succession. The struggle was a grand one, and grandly did he accomplish it. Abbotsford was saved; but the strain had been too severe. In 1830–31 symptoms of paralysis appeared, followed by one stroke in February, and another in November. He went to Italy, October, 1831, but, his strength failing, came back to Abbotsford, June 11, 1832. He died there September 21, 1832.

The student is referred for further details to Lockhart's "Life of Scott," "English Men of Letters Series," W. H. Prescott's "Miscellanies," and Leslie Stephen's "Hours in a Library."

Of all Scott's novels, "Ivanhoe" is generally admitted to be the most popular. Its action is stirring, and the reader is led through the story by a change of incidents as varied as they are interesting. The name "Ivanhoe," as the author tells us, was chosen at random from some jingling rhymes that ran in his head,

recording the names of three manors forfeited by the ancestor of the celebrated Hampden for striking the Black Prince a blow with his racket in a quarrel at tennis. He took the name "Ivanhoe," because it had an ancient English sound, and a happy quality of giving no inkling of the nature of the story. The rhymes ran,—

> "Tring, Wing, and Ivanhoe
> For striking of a blow
> Hampden did forego,
> And glad he could escape so."

The elements of interest in the story are many, and chosen with the artistic grace that so characterized Scott. A pleasing chord is touched at the outset in the picture of contrast between the plain, blunt, homely Saxons and the fiery dash and valor of the Normans, with their high spirit of military glory and romantic chivalry. The one offsets and relieves the other. The period of the story is interesting also, — that momentous period in English history when new forces were uniting, out of which were to develop the Englishmen of Elizabeth's time and those of to-day. The exact time of the story is not at first quite clear. In the opening chapter the picture drawn by Gurth and Wamba has a closeness to the time of William the Conqueror; but, as the tale proceeds, the time is more that of Richard the Lion-hearted.

There is no more familiar figure in English history than Richard Cœur-de-Lion, third son of Henry II. and Eleanor of Aquitaine, and second king of the Plantagenet line (born, 1157; died, 1199). With his brothers Henry and Geoffrey, he revolted, when a boy, against his father, and, fleeing to France, was knighted by Louis VII. In 1183 Henry's sons were again embroiled with him. Henry died at Chinon, July 6, 1189, and Richard became king. After his coronation, Richard made a crusade with Philip Augus-

tus of France, and in the summer of 1190 Richard and Philip started out for the Holy Land. Quarrels destroyed the crusade, and Philip went home to seize Richard's continental domains. After a number of brilliant achievements, the King, enfeebled by fever, made a truce with Saladin (see Note 6, p. 45). Meanwhile England, during the absence of the King, was virtually ruled by the King's justiciars, the first of whom, William Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, was faithful to Richard. He was, however, deposed; and John, the King's brother, was put at the head of the government. Information that his brother, with Philip of France, was plotting against him, made Richard give up his crusade, and turn his steps homeward. While passing through Austria he was seized by Duke Leopold, who had been aggrieved by Richard during the crusade, and shut up in a castle in the Tyrol. In the mean time, nothing being heard of him in England, John declared him dead, and claimed the throne. After a year's captivity, Richard was ransomed, February, 1194. When Philip heard that the ransom had been fixed, it is said he wrote to John, "Take care of yourself, for the Devil is let loose." This incident, with the arrival of the King in England in disguise, is dramatically though fictitiously brought in at the Ashby tournament.

Another salient feature of the story, and one that lends its measure of interest, is the introduction, amid the green glades of Sherwood Forest, of Robin Hood and his band of jolly outlaws, — Robin Hood, that famous English outlaw about whose actual existence there is such very slight evidence. Though unknown to actual history, his name rings through English balladry, and has become a household word wherever the English language is spoken. According to tradition, says Morley, the name "Robin Hood" was corrupted from that of Robert Fitzooth,

reputed Earl of Huntingdon, born about 1160, in the reign of Henry II. Robin Hood, having run through his inheritance, was outlawed for debt, and lived in the woods on the King's game. Boldly defiant, he became a type of the popular spirit of restless indignation against the Forest Laws, so severe under the Norman sovereigns. His chief haunts were Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire, Barnsdale in Yorkshire, and Plompton Park in Cumberland; while his followers, or "merry men," as they are familiarly termed, were Little John, called so from his extraordinary stature (John Nailor, it is said); Scathlock, or Scarlet (William Scadlock); George à Green; Pinder of Wakefield; and Much, a miller's son. After a long woodland life filled with endless adventures, escapades, and bouts with friend and foe, Robin Hood went to his cousin, the prioress of Kirkless Nunnery in Yorkshire, to be bled. The prioress treacherously let him bleed to death. Even while dying, Robin, true to his character, so goes the story, sounded his horn faintly. Little John, hastening to his aid, sought leave to burn the nunnery, but Robin objected, and asked only to shoot from the window an arrow, and to be buried where it fell. Tradition has it that he was interred on an eminence overlooking the Calder, a longbow-shot from Kirkless (see Ritson's "Robin Hood," and the "British Ballads" by Professor Child).

The allusions to the Knights Templars are explained in the notes as they occur, but, should the student wish additional detail, he is referred to Addison's "Knights Templars." For further study of the manners and history of the period, aid will be found in J. R. Green's "Short History of the English People," H. A. Taine's "History of English Literature" (Chapter II.), and Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes."

IVANHOE.

CHAPTER I.

IN that pleasant district of merry England which is watered by the river Don,[1] there extended in ancient times a large forest, covering the greater part of the beautiful hills and valleys which lie between Sheffield and the pleasant town of Doncaster.[2] The remains of this extensive wood are still to be seen at the noble seats of Wentworth, of Wharncliffe Park, and around Rotherham. Here haunted of yore the fabulous Dragon of Wantley;[3] here were fought many of the most desperate battles during the civil Wars of the Roses;[4] and here also flourished in ancient times those bands of gallant outlaws whose deeds have been rendered so popular in English song.

Such being our chief scene, the date of our story refers to a

[1] A river of the West Riding of Yorkshire County, England.

[2] The termination "caster" is a remnant of the Latin *castra* ("a military camp"), and marks the traces of the early Roman occupation of the island. Other words of similar formation are "Lancaster" and "Winchester."

[3] Or Wharncliffe, the name of a lodge and wood in the parish of Penniston, Yorkshire. The dragon, a fabulous monster, was killed, so goes the legend, by More of More-Hall, who, clad in spiked armor, secreted himself in a well habituated by the dragon, kicked the monster in the mouth (its only vulnerable part), and so destroyed it.

[4] The intestine wars in England from the reign of Henry VI. to that of Henry VII., 1452–86. The name refers to the emblems or badges worn by the contesting parties; that of the House of York being a white rose, and that of the House of Lancaster a red rose.