

A LONDON HEARTH.

A RETROSPECT.

Once more, I see the flickering blaze
Pouring its stream of ruby rays
Upon the quiet floor;
Again, I hear its crackling sound
Of wild, staccato notes around,
As in the days of yore.

The shadows of a London gloom
Fall stealthily around the room,
And make the gleams appear
Like visions realized—a light
Which memory has traced to-night,
So tenderly and clear!

I cannot fashion as of yore,
The forelight radiance on the floor
From Hope's diviner rays;
And yet no later tasks can still
The gleams that glad or thoughtful that thrill
The terror of my days.

An eager stir is in my brain,
Of vague desires it can't contain,
That seek their olden guise,
As when affection made them clear!
And sympathy did hold them dear!
And love could call them wise!

The heavy-breathing, languid day,
Folded in clouds of sullen grey,
Is banished by the night;
The dim—the whirl—of London life—
The jarring roar—the lumbering strife—
Have followed in its flight.

Yet hushed around with silent gloom
Within my fire-illumined room,
My thoughts take wing to thee—
Companion—friend—beloved one—
Whose love is radiant as a sun
That shines eternally!

For in this alien clime to me,
For all its glow and purity,
Like a mute throbbing star,
Thy love, O mother, ever beams
To round with chastening light my dreams
In glory from afar!

O dearest life that seems like mine!
Since what is best in me is thine,
Stray hopes still rush to thee,
From the dread cloud of weary days
Immersed in wilderness, to some haze,
To clasp thee tenderly!

Though wreaths of mist enshroud the street,
These thoughts can make the dullness sweet:
With thine so closely bound,
And London's vague and vast unrest,
Which even night has not suppress'd,
May seem a happy sound!

Once more, I scan our steadfast skies,
Pure in their clearness, as thine eyes,
And breathe that vigorous air
That lent to purpose zeal and fire,
And made the laboring soul aspire
To mount ambition's stair!

With buoyant step again I tread,
As when my dreams by hope were fed,
The dear old streets and ways,
While memory's peopling light
Is symbolized on the hush of night
Through London's callous haze.

And though around this silent room,
There sometimes steals a passing gloom,
The firelight's constant rays
Purge me to that olden time,
When life seemed like a happy rhyme
Set in melodious lays.

London Eng.

ISIDORE G. ASCHER.

BEAUTIES OF "MARMION."

A STUDY ON THE INTRODUCTIONS TO THE POEM.

There are many young men, and not a few old ones, who make it a boast how many books they have "gone through." It is usual to hear it remarked by such as these—"Well, I have finished Byron." He is grand! splendid! gorgeous! and at the same time, if you were to ask them what is his surpassing excellency, wherein does he best display his power, what character he depicts well, what are ill, in what vein did his genius run, over what sort of verse does he display most power, what passages exhibit his manner best, or similar test questions, you will soon find that they have no better idea of Byron than when they began to read his works; that they have learned nothing except a few lines that may have stuck in their memory somehow, or they may have learned the names of some character whom Byron has given to literature.

The first time I read Sir Walter Scott's poem "Marmion," I did not perceive anything peculiarly fine in it. I did not even master the plot. I read just for the sake of having to say I read it—a boyish pride, which believes that your real worth and knowledge is commensurate with the books over which you skim—for when you read many books in a short time, you must skim over them. Since, I have learned otherwise. It is far better to read one good work well, than to read fifty superficially. When you read a well-written work, carefully and completely, you get above the work, you understand its construction, you enter into the author's confidence, you become possessed of the best of what he knows on the subject, and he tells you this in his best manner. Therefore I read "Marmion" a second time and was very much pleased. I read it a third and fourth time and was delighted.

The introductions to the cantos are tagged on to the poem. They do not in the least way serve to throw light upon the poem. They introduce nothing of "Marmion" except its author. They are like magnificent porticoes through which you pass, and having passed and admired their beauty, you find you have not advanced a step towards the main building, but by circuitous passages you exit where you came in. Though in a critical point of view we cannot approve of the "introductions," yet we feel thankful to the poet for letting us so much into

his private views, for being so communicative, for saying so many true things so finely. Each "Introduction" is a dedicatory epistle—and a desultory one at that.

From amid a casket of gems we might select one for its lustre, another for its shape, or another for its value; but of these six Introductions I know not which to prefer. Each has something in it so beautiful that when we would place it below one of its fellows, its beauty pleads and we relent.

The description opening the first is fine, well-drawn, well sustained.

The first two lines generalize and then follows a series of particularizations—always a test of power and, when well sustained, an evidence of it. The rivulet, the shepherd and his flock, his shivering dogs, the little children asking innocently will spring return, the summary of spring's glorious transformations, are exquisitely fine, and afford a fitting prelude to the elegiac verses on Nelson, Pitt and Fox which are so artfully introduced. After the Poet has said

"Rest, ardent spirits! till the cries
Of dying nature bid you rise;

The Bard you deigned to praise, your deathless
names, has sung."

there follows a succession of fine verses depicting his desire to have the illusion stay; at length he feels assured that

"It will not be—it may not last—
The vision of enchantment's past."

The concluding stanza "warmed by such names, &c.," has some exquisite personifications and metaphors.

Alliteration is continuous, and the Alexandrine verses introduced at the conclusion of some of his themes produce an admirable effect. The Alexandrine verses that occur in the Introduction are three; viz—"And brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's laws." "The Bard, &c.," as above, and "Profound the God-given strength, and married the lofty line."

The second Introduction opens well with the description of a lonely old tree, and then follows an imaginative tale, told by this old tree, of sights it had seen and sounds it had heard since it, a slender sapling bough, had waved in the breeze of its native dell. The eulogy on his deceased friend is tender and brief, the picture of their sports is real; but the summing up of the merits of a deceased lady to whom the Poet alludes is complete—

"And she is gone whose lovely face
Was but her best and loveliest grace;"

And how beautiful was that face!

"Though it to Scotland Queen, were given,
To show our earth the charms of heaven,
She could not glaze along the air
With form more light, or face more fair."

Then the allusion to the charities of the deceased, so well directed, so gentle, and yet so perfect. If I would go on I should quote the whole Introduction; for such truthful lines follow that they could not be passed over unnoticed. But to sum up: the first and second Introductions are sad. Their key-note is regret. In one there is mourning for dead nature, an orphaned country and neglected verse. In the other a picture of former sport, a lament for friends who are here no longer, a display of their merits, and it closes with the powerful effort of a gloomy imagination clad in rolling verse, by which we gain an insight of the poet's former life and the character of one of the personages of his poem—the Palmer.

The third Introduction gives us another glimpse of Scott himself. The regretful cadence swells along the opening lines like a lingering echo of the former Introduction. It is a choid on which Scott likes to dwell and he sounds it with a master hand. Erskine's advice is fine. Scott little deemed perhaps, as he wrote it, that he prophesied, especially in the last line—

"Deemed their own Shakespeare lived again."

which came literally true of himself as the author of the "Waverley Novels." In his answer to Erskine we have some inimitable personal sketches. The lines relative to his grandsire are strikingly true to life.

The first twenty-five lines of the fourth Introduction are repeated by Scott in a much more graceful manner at the beginning of the third canto of his "Lady of the Lake." However he expresses himself far more finely and makes a much better impression, because his illustrations in the latter example come home, as it were, to each one; while in the fourth Introduction of Marmion they are rather personal to Scott and Skene, and do not affect us so much, as we have no cognizance of them except through our imagination. The description of the Shepherd in the November snowstorm is minute and well executed. The verses—

"The blast that whistles o'er the fells
Stiffens his locks to icicles."

are peculiarly vivid; as are also the subsequent five or six, but he broke off abruptly, knowing well that he could not surpass Thomson, who in his "Seasons" describes most fully a man perishing in the snow. This story of Scott's

about the shepherd's fate is the completion of what he had spoken of in the first Introduction about the shepherd and his employments in November; and, if we notice, the fact is that he touches some of his landscape features before he speaks of the shepherd, in order to re-induce his picture of November in the first Introduction; and having recalled it, he does his best to make it vivid and striking. As soon as he has completed his November picture he turns to his theme of eulogizing the dead and spoils much of what he says of the object of his eulogy by giving him a character almost identical with the Lady over whom he (Scott) was mourning in the last canto. The picture of the Winter evening is very much like Scott, who is seldom lengthy in his descriptions; but, sketching and touching always with a bold hand, he leaves us a well defined outline which we may fill for ourselves. The lines—

"Mirth was within; and Care without
Might gnaw her nails to hear our shout,"

are very suggestive.

All the descriptions of Nature which occur in the Introductions are of nature grown barren, of nature stripped of all her beauty; made gaunt and grim. As in the last he described a Winter evening, he now gives us a picture of a Winter day in the huntsman's dwelling. And with well applied art he introduces a reference to Edinburgh. Taking advantage of this he goes on in a beautiful strain speaking of what she was and what she is; and uses a beautiful simile founded on Spenser's character of Britomarte, the female champion, in the third book of the "Faery Queen." The metaphor in which he alludes to Tradition as a December noon—a fog of frost; and Fiction as the moonlight of a Midsummer night, is striking. The end of this Introduction gives Scott's plan—the passage to which I refer begins

"Come, listen!—bold in thy applause."

I would remark before beginning the Sixth that Scott's compliment to Ellis is too extravagant; it occurs towards the end of the last Introduction. Ellis is unheard of as a poet.

The description of an old-time Christmas is very amusing and in it occur some beautiful lines. His apology at the end for the numerous hobgoblin stories he has introduced into the poem proper is well timed, and may have been overlooked by many critics who have objected to his poem on account of the fairy agencies introduced. But poetry is the language of the imagination, and certainly imaginary images cannot be regarded as out of place when they occur in poems. Poetry is read for pleasure, and by this pleasure is derived instruction, and things which would be grossly repugnant in prose are admissible in poetry, especially in a poem like "Marmion," which essays to paint an era long past and to paint it after the manner of the "Bards" whom Scott studied so deeply and so keenly appreciated.

J. HAROLD LYNCH.

MONTREAL, December, 1876.

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

My first is skittish; my next is used for clothes; and my whole is considered by some a pleasant tittle at Christmas-time.

Answer—Lamb-wool.

I'm found in your bedroom; I ride through the darkness; I bring glad tidings; and the boys jump over me.

Answer—A Post.

My first is a lady; my next a warrior captain; and my whole, if not too rough, is amusing at Christmas.

Answer—Mis-chief.

My first holds liquor; my next is exceedingly heavy; and my whole fastens a lady's glove.

Answer—But-ton.

My first comes always before you; my next holds my first; and my whole is necessary to a social party.

Answer—Ten-pot.

My first is a place of public resort,
My second the entrance thereto;
When my first to my second is rightly conjoin'd,
In Cheshire a town you then find.

Answer—Park-gate.

My first is a trade quite as useful as any;
My second, we know, has been fatal to many;
My total long famous in history's pages
For horrible deeds we've not heard of for ages.

Answer—Smithfield.

My first's a tree that's always green,
And makes good timber for the cutter;
My second relatives doth mean;
My whole is often full of butter.

Answer—Fir-kin.

My first Voltaire was not;
My next a male is not;
My whole a child has got.

Answer—Father.

My first gives my second, and becomes my whole.

Answer—Lamp-light.

In days of old, I have been told
That British soldiers us'd a my first;
E'en now they're grand, when they do stand
In my second, when full dressed.
My whole I wear, on ships are seen,
By all who care to look,
From the cap'n to the boy,
From master's mate to cook.

Answer—Bow-line.

He that would first my last too free,
It can't be reckoned droll,
Though he should in a state thus get,
As to require my whole.

Answer—Support.

A vehicle is first, and one well known;
My second is peculiar, odd, or strange;
And huge and mighty in my whole is shown,
If you these parts will properly arrange.

Answer—Olig-antle (Oligantle.)

My first is to know or to study,
Or fix anything in your mind;
My second belongs to both father and mother,
And to love me they both seem inclin'd;
My third is an insect, and hard it doth labour,
It might teach a lesson to you and your neighbour,
My whole's but one letter, of which you may find
More than one in the alphabet if you're inclin'd.

Answer—Con-son-ant (Consonant.)

My whole is my second, who works on my first.

Answer—Sea-man.

My first is a mother; my second is a child;
my whole is a fruit.

Answer—Dam-ron.

My second is found in my first, and is called my whole.

Answer—Sea-weed.

My first of every garment forms a part;
My next conveys a thought of weight;
My whole doth cause the feeling heart
To pity her unhappy state.

Answer—Seam-stress.

My first is an animal; my next is a crossing;
my whole is an Irish town.

Answer—Fox-ford.

My first is an animal; my second is part of the face; my whole is a flower.

Answer—Ox-eye.

My first is a metal; my second is my whole;
and my whole is a town in Essex.

Answer—Silver-town.

My first (transposed) is a plant; my second is a name; my whole is a name.

Answer—Rue-ben.

My first is a boy's name; my second is a bird; and my whole is a bird.

Answer—Jack-daw.

Solutions of all previous puzzles in our next.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

MR. CHARLES MATHEWS is writing his "Life" and it is understood the first volume is ready for the printer.

A large number of Chopin's letters will be published soon at Dresden. They form part of a collection made and carefully preserved by his sister.

THE KING OF PORTUGAL, Don Luiz I., is engaged upon a translation of Shakespeare's tragedy of "Hamlet." The translation is made entirely in prose.

In nearly every city throughout the country the exits of theatres have been officially examined since the Brooklyn disaster, and in most of them alterations have been ordered.

MME. ALIDA MARCHAND, formerly a dancer at the Grand Opera, Paris, died in that city lately, at the age of 108. She made her first appearance in 1775, at the age of nine. She has left memoirs which are soon to be published by her executor.

"Paul and Virginia," by Victor Masse, is the greatest success of the season, the first ten performances having realized 100,000 francs. The one thousand three hundred and sixty seventh representation of Bouffé's "La Dame Blanche" was recently given in Paris.

M. GOUNOD has been asked to decide whether the great church scene in his "Faust" should precede or follow the death of Valentine. He has replied that he originally followed Goethe in putting the death of Valentine first, but on the production of the opera in Paris it was found more convenient to put the death scene last, and this arrangement he now prefers.

DOMESTIC.

ROAST SHOULDER OF BEEF.—Trim and tie up a shoulder of beef, removing all superfluous fat; roast before a bright clear fire, baste very frequently, sprinkle with salt, and serve with the gravy well freed from the fat; garnish with scraped horseradish and potato croquettes.

POTATO CROQUETTES.—Take six boiled potatoes, pass them through a sieve; add a little grated nutmeg, pepper, and salt to taste, and some chopped parsley; work into this mixture the yolks of three or four eggs, then fashion it into the shape of balls or corks, roll them in bread crumbs, and fry them in hot lard.

LOBSTER SAUCE.—Take a hen lobster, pick out the meat, and break it into pieces, not too small; pound the shell of the lobster and the spaw with some butter till a smooth paste, pass it through a sieve; make one pint of melted butter, put the meat from the lobster into it, add a dash of cayenne, and when the sauce boils stir into it the lobster butter that has come through the sieve, and half a pint of cream.

BRAISED TURKEY.—Truss the turkey as for boiling; stuff it with truffle and elegant stuffing. Line the bottom of a braising pan with slices of bacon; lay the turkey on these, and place more slices of bacon on top of it. Put in two carrots and two onions cut in slices, and sweet herbs, parsley, bay leaf, a clove of garlic, and whole pepper, and salt to taste; moisten with some stock and a tumblerful of sherry. Lay a round of buttered paper on the top, put on the lid, and braise with a moderate fire (under and above) for about four hours, then serve with the gravy strained and freed from excess of fat.