

Melrose Abbey—From page 172.

the usual way by a narrow lane leading past a rather obtrusive hotel, we walk about three-quarters of a mile out on the high road leading east from the Market Place at Melrose. We cannot help noting the tremendously high stone walls with which some gardens are surrounded here. It is characteristic of the neighborhood, and no doubt it is a relic from the age when, in this debateable land, every man's house was a castle. Presently we find a little gate close by such a wall through which we enter a field to the north. Here we come upon a path leading alongside a mill-lade. Now it was by this path the monks used to come to catch eels and trout for their Friday's dinner. Going westward by it we turn a corner and at once come in view of the Abbey, and from this point we have perhaps the finest possible prospect of it. The stateliness of the structure, ruin as it is, at once impresses us. The great east window, and the perspective of the south side are full in view. Crowned by the fragments of the tower, and surrounded by the green grass of the "kirkyard," this makes a picture not easily equalled or forgotten. The one jarring element is the hideous chimney stalk of a neighboring brewery. Proceeding still westward, we pass in full view of the south side of the Abbey, and can gain a fine impression of this magnificent piece of architecture as a whole. Ordinarily the tourist enters the interior of the Abbey through a most prosaic wooden gate. The right plan is to take the walk above described, then going into the graveyard, to enter the Abbey through its own beautiful south doorway. In this way we obtain a far better conception of its beauty than otherwise we could.

Now, in visiting such a place, time must be taken. To rush through with the hurry-scurry of a Cook's tourist is to

visit but not to see. We see then the fragments of a chapel of, as compared with many another of that age, but moderate dimensions. The interior is almost a chaos; for not only has it been "rived" in pieces, but the prosaic utilitarianism of the 17th century erected a monstrosity of a retaining wall in the nave that has the effect of both hiding details and completely marring the lovely proportions of the original. Beauty was the ideal of the former builders, and, apparently, ugliness that of the later.

What at first attracts attention and



MELROSE ABBEY: High Street, Melrose, showing the Cross.

keeps it constantly, are the doorways and the windows. As one looks at these beautiful conceptions he sees them as "a poet's dream in stone." What inexhaustible fertility of mind is borne witness to here! And beyond that what evidence of sincere devotion inspiring the most patient handicraft! The hands that did the things we see wrought in devout sincerity. We feel that vaunted though our present day mastery over things material may be, these unknown designers and craftsmen were our masters in making the stones cry out, "Hosanna in the Highest." For ruin though it be, we instinctively feel, as we cross the threshold, that "This is none other than the house of God." What must it have been when (not garish with the gewgaws of modern churches) dim with the many

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