

Sir Walter Scott.

In all the splendid roll of great Scotsmen no name shines with a greater lustre than that of Walter Scott. Though nearly a hundred years have elapsed since he was laid to rest in "lone St. Mary's aisle" at Dryburgh, his work has remained and will remain. As the product of creative genius and sustained imaginative power, it will remain his best memorial.



Passing years have but added proof of the extent to which it can affect the thought and feelings. Of recent years there has been, not a revival, but a remarkable increase of interest in Scott and all that was associated with him. The freshness of his work, the romance of his spirit, the naturalness of his genius are more appreciated than ever. He excels in the romantic as Burns does in the lyric and Carlyle in the didactic. He was master of the era between these two.

Scott was cradled and nurtured amid scenes that did not fail to make him, in spirit and talent, their child. Born in the romantic "grey metropolis of the North," he spent his early years in the heart of that Border land, the love of which became one of his dominant passions. He saw the last of the old Edinburgh of pre-Union days and gained his first knowledge of romance from the old folk who, at Sandyknowe, poured into his impressionable mind their unstinted store of Border legend and ballad. The predisposition thus created ruled his after life and its years were ranged around the two foci of Auld Reekie and the Vale of Tweed. With what affection does he speak of them when he describes how

" Dusky grandeur clothed the height,
Where the huge castle holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town ;"

or, telling of the hasty ride of Deloraine outlines his midnight course through Teviotdale and Tweeddale, and finishes with the beautiful lines

" If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go, visit it by the pale moonlight ;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray."

There is not a doubt that his own life and career were deeply influenced by scenes like these and the sentiments they inspired. All through, even in the darkest days with which his life so sadly closed, he exhibited a high courage and a noble chivalry. A close student of men and manners of other and especially ancient days, he himself was an embodiment of the best that they were. He was "one very parfit gentil knight." Think of the high courage with which he faced the crushing disaster of his later years, of the strenuous endeavour to meet and discharge every obligation, of the gent