

JAMES HOGG

THE ETRICK SHEPHERD

THE exact date of Hogg's birth is not known, but the register of his native parish contains the entry that he was baptized on the ninth of December, 1770. It is definitely known that he passed into that world of which he sang and wrote so much on the 21st of November, 1835. He thus lived most likely to see his sixty-fifth birthday. These were wonderful years in the history of Britain, and especially in that of Scotland. In addition to covering the life of Hogg, they included the last twenty-six years of Robert Burns', and all of Sir Walter Scott's life. There is only one other country which produced three great poets in such a short period under conditions so peculiar, and that country was Greece, in her golden age, when she gave to the world Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Let us look into the life and writings of Hogg, and try to ascertain wherein they should claim our attention, and to what extent Hogg made Scotland and the world of letters his debtor, for surely the legacy he bequeathed is both large and of most precious material. In the words of Milton:—

“He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower.”

I do not place Hogg above Scott, or Burns, but I place him with them, and these three