

power to mould our own characters, and to make ourselves what we wish to become, and if any outside inducement is needed, to stimulate the public school teachers of Ontario, to avail themselves to the utmost of this inherent power, they need not go for such inducement beyond the consideration that theirs is one of the highest of all callings, inasmuch as the materials upon which it is theirs to work—human minds—are the noblest and most imperishable of all things, and that with them it rests, in a very large degree, to determine not only what shall be the mental and moral characteristics of a large number of the individuals of the coming generation, but also through these individuals the distinctive features of the

typical Canadian of fifty or a hundred years hence. The Canadian national character is now in process of formation. We all wish that it may become a synonym for all that is intelligent and energetic in mentality, and all that is manly and straightforward in morality. To what extent this wish is to be realized depends more probably upon the public school teachers of the country, than upon any other human agency—that of mothers alone excepted. It has been truly said that “mothers and school teachers sow the seeds of nearly all the moral good and evil in the world.” Let the school teachers of Ontario sow only good seed, and coming generations shall rejoice in an abundant harvest of intelligence and virtue.

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S MATURER POEMS.

SCOTT'S genius flowered late. “Cadyow Castle,” the first of his poems, I think, that has indisputable genius plainly stamped on its terse and fiery lines, was composed in 1802, when he was already thirty-one years of age. It was in the same year that he wrote the first canto of his first great romance in verse, “The Lay of the Last Minstrel,” a poem which did not appear till 1805, when he was thirty-four. The first canto (not including the framework, of which the aged harper is the principal figure) was written in the lodgings to which he was confined for a fortnight in 1802, by a kick received from a horse on Portobello sands, during a charge of the Volunteer Cavalry, in which Scott was cornet. The poem was originally intended to be included in the “Border Minstrelsy,” as one of the

studies in the antique style, but soon outgrew the limits of such a study both in length and in the freedom of its manner. Both the poorest and the best part of “The Lay” were in a special manner due to Lady Dalkeith (afterward Duchess of Buccleugh), who suggested it, and in whose honour the poem was written. It was she who requested Scott to write a poem on the legend of the goblin page, Gilpin Horner, and this Scott attempted, and so far as the goblin himself was concerned, conspicuously failed. He himself clearly saw that the story of this unmanageable imp was both confused and uninteresting, and that in fact he had to extricate himself from the original groundwork of the tale, as from a regular literary scrape, in the best way he could. In a letter to Miss Seward,