

SCOTT'S NARRATIVE POWER AS SEEN IN THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

BY MR. J. B. TURNER.

Prof. Bain in his Manual on Rhetoric, gives the following heads under which the Narrative Power of an author may be treated :

1. The Changes in the Scenes of the Events.
2. The Order of Events.
3. The Concurring Streams of Events.
4. The Explanatory Narrative.

1. *The Changes in the Scenes of the Events.*

In the Lady of the Lake the scenes of the events change more frequently and to a greater extent than we would expect to find occurring in real life. The poet, however, may be excused to a certain extent for these changes, as they seem almost to be forced on him by surrounding circumstances ; he has an end to accomplish, and in order to accomplish this end certain changes in the scenes of the event are necessary to the working out of the plot ; of these changes, rapidly as they follow one another, the reader is always given timely notice.

2. *The Order of Events.*

The order of events is well preserved throughout the poem. Each incident in the story is dependent on the preceding incidents, and also prepares the mind of the reader for what is to follow. The greatest error which the poet has committed in his order of events, is that he has attempted to crowd so

many important events into so short a space of time. Events that would have required weeks or even months he has crowded into the short space of six days.

3. *The Concurring Streams of Events.*

The object of the poet in the Lady of the Lake is to effect a reconciliation between the King and Douglas. In order to accomplish this object, the poet has employed a number of incidents which are so connected with and dependent on one another, as to form an unbroken chain of events which ends with the accomplishment of the object at which he aims.

4. *The Explanatory Narrative.*

It may be laid down as a rule in the narrative that nothing should be introduced that would in any way draw the attention of the reader from the main story and that nothing should be left out that would add to the interest. In this respect Scott has a claim to considerable merit. No doubt some of the minor incidents narrated in the poem might be omitted and the interest of the poem would not suffer to any great extent, but as they serve to relieve the mind of the reader the poet may be pardoned for introducing them. All the main incidents which he has narrated in his poem appear necessary to the working out of the plot and nothing is left out which would have given the story of the poem more finish.