

## “Scott’s Women.”

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**B**EFORE beginning a study of Scott’s women, it may not be amiss to devote some thought to womankind in general; and in this connection a few principles suggest themselves: The human heart changes not. It is in its normal condition susceptible to love and hatred and jealousy; to hope and despair and happiness. Human nature is, in general, and essentially for all time, a constant quantity. Manners, customs, prevailing conditions, local or temporary influences, which form the settings of society, may modify or artificialize the expression of human nature or individual character, and especially of feminine nature or character, but a woman is still a woman in the depths of her nature. Thus the standard of morality yielding to temporary influences, has varied with the ages, sometimes holding to the natural and strong, sometimes yielding to the artificial and lax in various degrees.

Scott’s women, like Shakespeare’s, are all women of history, belonging to ages sufficiently remote from the beginning of the Twentieth Century as, in dealing with them, to require an additional criterion or standard of judgment besides that which is required in considering woman-characters of the age in which we live.

Scott’s woman-characters must, therefore, be considered from two standpoints:

- I. From the standpoint of true, universal womanhood.
- II. With reference to the times in which they lived.

(I) calls for the exercise of the philosophy of human nature:  
(II) calls for an intimate knowledge of history.

Scott’s heroines, from the first of these standpoints, would form an excellent subject for study, which, however, can only be perfected by bringing to bear on it the influences of the periods in which they lived. Scott’s knowledge of history was immense, profound and detailed, and his historical pictures and portraits must, therefore, be considered reliable, allowing always for the slight latitude given a novelist and denied an historian.

Heroines, in novels, may conveniently for analysis of charac-