

tinued to dream of liberty and reformation. Scott never sympathized with these poets of liberty; the whole struggle only confirmed him in his determined opposition to the demands of the "rabble." These, then, were the forces at work to produce this remarkable activity in the literary world of England, and we can now point out the leading peculiarities of the period.

1st. We have the love of nature gradually increasing till in Wordsworth it became a vital principle. Now, for the first time, we have natural scenery introduced for æsthetic effect, and the art of description fully developed. A more healthy sentiment permeated the poems of this age. Those great passions and impulses that concern so intimately mankind in general, and not merely a section, formed the theme of poetry; hence the poor and lowly were, at first apologetically, but finally boldly, taken as the subject of the finest poems.

2d. The language became less refined. As in the Elizabethan age, more stress was laid on the substance than on the outward form; the poets of both ages excel more in originality of genius than in perfection of execution. Much of this originated in this period from the reaction against the cold elaboration of the critical age, and in the irregularity of the ballads and romances. Many of the poets aimed at a studied simplicity of style and sentiment and a rugged versification.

3d. The popularity of old writers continued to some extent. It was shown chiefly by Byron's imitation of Spenser in the first canto of *Childe Harold*, and by Scott in his metrical romances and the antiquarian lore so profusely employed in his poems.

4th. It was perhaps in imitation of the old romances of chivalry and their offshoot, the narrative ballad, that Scott adopted a narrative form for his poems; and so successfully did he employ it that it became the most popular and prevailing form of poem, and, indeed, continues to this day to be the only kind favourably received by the public. From narrative in verse it was an easy transition to the prose narrative of the romance and the novel into which Scott glided. The novel is less ambitious and less artificial; but it is simply an inferior sort of poem, and requires