

## INTRODUCTION TO THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN

**T**HE Author has stated in the preface to the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, 1827, that he received from an anonymous correspondent an account of the incident upon which the following story is founded. He is now at liberty to say that the information was conveyed to him by a late amiable and ingenious lady, whose wit and power of remarking and judging of character still survive in the memory of her friends. Her maiden name was Miss Helen Lawson, of Girthhead, and she was wife of Thomas Goldie, Esq., of Craigmuirie, Commissary of Dumfries.

Her communication was in these words :

‘I had taken for summer lodgings a cottage near the old Abbey of Lincluden. It had formerly been inhabited by a lady who had pleasure in embellishing cottages, which she found perhaps homely and even poor enough ; mine therefore possessed many marks of taste and elegance unusual in this species of habitation in Scotland. Here a cottage is literally what its name declares.

‘From my cottage door I had a partial view of the old Abbey before mentioned ; some of the highest arches were seen over, and some through, the trees scattered along a lane which led down to the ruin, and the strange fantastic shapes of almost all these old ashes accorded wonderfully well with the building they at once shaded and ornamented.

‘The Abbey itself from my door was almost on a level with the cottage ; but on coming to the end of the lane, it was discovered to be situated on a high perpendicular bank, at the