

ing sensation."* And you feel this all through "Marmion" even more than in "The Lay." Mr. Darwin would probably say that Auld Wat of Harden had about as much responsibility for "Marmion" as Sir Walter himself. "You will expect," he wrote to the same lady, who was personally unknown to him at that time, "to see a person who had dedicated himself to literary pursuits, and you will find me a rattle-skulled, half-lawyer, half-sportsman, through whose head a regiment of horse has been exercising since he was five years old."† And what Scott himself felt in relation to the martial elements of his poetry, soldiers in the field felt with equal force. "In the course of the day, when 'The Lady of the Lake' first reached Sir Adam Fergusson, he was posted with his company on a point of ground exposed to the enemy's artillery, somewhere no doubt on the lines of Torres Vedras. The men were ordered to lie prostrate on the ground; while they kept that attitude, the captain, kneeling at the head, read aloud the description of the battle in Canto VI., and the listening soldiers only interrupted him by a joyous huzza when the French shot struck the bank close above them."‡ It is not often that martial poetry has been put to such a test; but we can well understand with what rapture a Scotch force lying on the ground to shelter from the French fire, would enter into such passages as the following:

"Their light-armed archers far and near
Survey'd the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
A twilight forest frown'd,

Their barb'd horsemen, in the rear,
The stern battalia crown'd.
No cymbal clash'd, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum:
Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aspen seem'd to quake,
That shadow'd o'er their road.
Their vanward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing
Save when they stirr'd the roe;
The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
Where rise no rocks its power to brave.
High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is pass'd and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosach's rugged jaws,
And hear the horse and spearman pause,
While to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

"At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends from Heaven that fell
Had peal'd the banner-cry of Hell!
Forth from the pass, in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear;
For life! for life! their plight they ply,
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broad-swords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued;
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearman's twilight wood?
'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your lances down,
Bear back both friend and foe!'
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay lell'd low;
And, closely shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide—
'We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel cows the game!
They came as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'

(From *Hutton's Scott, in Morley's Men of Letters Series*.—Conclusion in our next issue.)

* Lockhart's "Life of Scott," ii. 137.

† Ibid. ii. 259. ‡ Ibid. iii. 327.