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WALTER SCOTT.*

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WALTER SCOTT ranks in imaginative power hardly below any writer save Homer and Shakespeare. His best works are his novels; but he holds a high place as a poet in virtue of his metrical romances and of his lyrical pieces and ballads. He was the first great British writer of the Romantic school, and the first who turned the thoughts and hearts of his countrymen towards the Middle Ages. The author of "The Castle of Otranto" and the builder of Strawberry Hill was his feeble precursor: Bishop Percy with his "Reliques" had lighted the way: Ellis with his "Specimens of Early English Poems and Romances" ministered to the same taste. In Germany the Romantic school prevailed at the same time over the Classical. There is in the poetry of Coleridge an ele-

ment derived from that school; and Scott's earliest works were translations from the German ballads of Bürger and of a romantic tragedy by Goethe, though the rill of foreign influence was soon lost in a river which flowed from a more abundant spring.

It is always said of Scott that he was above all things a Scotchman. The pride of Scotland he was indeed; and by the varied scenery and rich stores of romance, Lowland and Highland, Island and Border, which lie within the compass of that small realm, his creative genius was awakened and the materials for its exercise were supplied. But his culture, connections, and interests were British, and for the British public he wrote. To the Highland Celts, whose picturesqueness made them the special darlings of his patriotic fancy, he was, like other Lowlanders, really an alien. In his poems, at least, there is little

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