

which we gather, at random, such lines as these, lines of monumental beauty :

' (He) doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.'

' Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart.'

' This sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers.'

The best of Coleridge's work, also, bears the mark of strong compression, coupled with lucidity of meaning, but the closeness of texture was not produced by any labour of cutting out, it was the result of those wonderful powers of insight which produced before him a vivid picture of the scene he wished to depict, accompanied, as he has himself explained by an inward suggestion of such words as would most appropriately embody the vision. We cannot be prolix or diffuse in looking at a landscape,—and, when that landscape passes into our being, like a lovely strain of music, we have, as Coleridge had in *Kubla-Khan*, a representation of sacred river and 'caverns measureless by man,' which could not contain a superfluous epithet any more than the hill-sides of *Zanadu* could be darkened by a single cedar too many.

The failure of Southey to achieve a permanent position abreast of his brother Lake-poets, appears to us in a large measure due to the fact that his verse is lacking in that richness of thought which we have singled out as the leading characteristic of the poetry of the nineteenth century. The quantity of poetry which really existed in Southey's nature would have qualified admirably for a poet of the epoch of the earlier George's, supposing that his 'lawless structure of blank verse' could have then been tolerated. Or had he been content to accept the post of a minor poet, and, leaving 'the more important mythologies known to the world' without the long poems he sought to found upon them, had concentrated his energies on a few more little pieces like the 'Holly Tree,' or the 'Battle of Blenheim,' it would have been better for his fame. But this he could not do. Ten volumes of verse, unnumbered prose writings, and a host of miscellaneous and fugitive pieces did not satisfy him. He must needs write two poems at once, an idiosyncrasy which he attributes to his own over great excitability which could not bear the burden of his own fictitious woes too

long together. It would be almost too bad to suggest that the same regard for his own throbbing brain led him to water down his poems and tragedies to their present pitch of wholesome mawkishness. Judging by their effect on the reader they could hardly have given their author a nervous fever.

We do not find that Southey influenced the course of modern poetry as his other great Tory contemporary, Scott, did. In many respects we find that the effect produced by the latter depends upon the associations which he confidently knew could be conjured up in the then state of the public taste by the use of an archaic word. Where 'helmet' would fall flat on the ear, a reference to the 'barred aventayle' carried with it an irresistible smack of the Middle Ages. No doubt there was a little charlatanism in all this, so that the title 'Wizard of the North,' is not altogether inappropriate, despite its modern associations with Wiljaba Frikel and the pulling of rabbits out of gentlemen's hat-gear. Unless Sir Walter prefers to shuffle off the blame upon the 'infirm old Minstrel' we must charge him with sinning against knowledge in that famous passage about the knights at Branksome Towers, who

' Carved at the meal with gloves of steel
And drank the red wine through the helmet
barred.'

Yet the impossible verse has roused many a boy's blood to fever heat and sent him to old chronicle and ballad monger with an awakened belief in the reality of those bygone times, albeit his studies must inevitably result in his looking back at his genial teacher with critical eye which detects, to use the language of Prof. Goldwin Smith's introductory essay, the 'bastard Gothic' alike in his baronial mansion at Abbotsford and in 'many details of his poems.' Scott's ballad of 'The Eve of St. John' is very judiciously selected as an example of his power in a very difficult branch of poetry, and affords the student a favourable opportunity of tracing out the effect which the study of Bürger and other German writers of the *Sturm und Drang* school had in modifying the pure Border Ballad when revived by the last of the Borderers.

In Byron we find a spirit of antagonism towards most, if not all, of the forms in which the poetic thought of his age found vent and towards the poets who