

## JAMES HOGG: The Ettrick Shepherd.

We have the pleasure to offer a real literary curiosity—a manuscript of one of this famous writer's best stories.

In his personal reminiscences the poet-novelist tells the story of the writing of this work and with his usual candour. "In 1822, perceiving that I was likely to run short of money, I began and finished in the course of a few months 'The Three Perils of Man, viz., War, Women and Witchcraft.' Lord preserve us; what a medley I made of it! And being impatient to get hold of some of Messrs. Longman & Co.'s money or bills, *which were the same*, I dashed on and mixed up with what might have been one of the best historical tales our country ever produced, such a mass of *Diablerie* as somewhat retarded the main story. I received £150 for the edition of 1000 copies." Afterwards going up to London the author found that Longman had no copies left, and except in a much abbreviated form, with a new title, "The Siege of Roxburgh: a legend of the wars of England and Scotland in the reign of Robert II," the work is not now known. This interesting manuscript came from Edinburgh into the hands of an early settler in the Guelph district.

It is written on foolscap of various sizes and qualities and is numbered up to 445 pages (both sides of the paper used.) The first 64 pages are in plain round hand, written with great care, as the writer's intention evidently was to make it "a monumental work of border history." Money pressure may have forced him on, as the rest of the MS is in his own characteristic chirography. The admirers of Hogg, now rapidly on the increase, will be pleased to know that this most valuable relic has been preserved in good condition. Nearly all of every page is quite legible, although some of the larger ones are slightly frayed at the edges. In this story Hogg has excelled himself. His narratives of fearful *Diablerie* or the 'Mysteries of Fairyland,' being told in the *con amore* spirit of one who was more than half persuaded of their truth. He tells with a wealth of detail of that famous "Battle of the Spirits between Friar Roger Bacon and Michael Scott, the Magician," which was suddenly ended by Bacon's sprinkling of black sand (gunpowder) and making an explosion such as quite confounded his opponents. This MSS. has thirty-two chapters, while "The Siege" has only fifteen.