

grateful reminiscences. While on the road his conversation never flagged—story suggested story, and ballad came upon ballad in endless succession. But what struck me most was the apparently omnivorous grasp of his memory. That he should recollect every stanza of any ancient ditty of chivalry or romances that had once excited his imagination, could no longer surprise me; but it seemed as if he remembered everything without exception, so it were in anything like the shape of a verse, that he had ever read."

Scott's relations with his fellow-men were of the most genial character—indeed, we may say, with his fellow-creatures; for dumb animals had an instinctive fondness for him, and he lived almost on terms of friendship with his dogs. In the company of children he delighted. He won the attachment of his own servants and of the peasantry of his district. He gave even too much of his time and of his money to help his friends. There was no pettiness, no grudging jealousy in his relations with his literary contemporaries. No man was more sincerely modest about his own ability and works, or more generous in his praise of others. With Wordsworth, with Byron, his successful rival in poetry, he was on the most friendly terms. "He had an open nature," says Palgrave, "which is the most charming of all charms; was wholly free from the folly of fastidiousness; *had* real dignity, and hence never stood upon it; talked to all he met, and lived as friend with friend among his servants and followers. 'Sir Walter speaks to every man,' one of them said, 'as if they were blood-relations.'" "Few men," he himself writes, "have enjoyed society more, or been *bored*, as it is called, less, by the company of tiresome people. I have rarely, if ever, found any one out of whom I could not extract amusement and edification. Still, however, from the earliest time I can remember, I preferred the pleasure of being alone to wishing for visitors." "God bless thee, Walter, my man!" said his old uncle, "thou hast risen to be great, but thou wast always good."

Scott's character was submitted, without apparent deterioration, to what is considered the most severe of all tests—the test of long and extraordinarily brilliant prosperity. It was now to be tried by adverse fortune, which only served to bring to the surface some of the finer and more heroic qualities that lay in his sound and wholesome nature. In 1826, at a time of widespread commercial disaster, the house of Ballantyne failed, with obligations amounting to £117,000, due partly to Scott's lavish expenditure, but mainly to the lack of business ability in the avowed members of the firm. Instead of taking advantage of bankruptcy, Scott set himself resolutely to work to pay off this immense sum. His lavish