

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

No country has more just cause to be proud of her heroes, her poets, her historians and philosophers than Scotland. In all ages, from the period that druidical superstition swayed its dark and mysterious tyranny over the Celtæ and the Britons, these have sprung up in various departments to amuse, enlighten or defend the land which gave them birth.—In times long gone by, a Fingal, an Ossian, a Wallace and a Bruce gave a strength and energy to the national character, at once luminous and imposing, who rendered it the envy and jealousy of surrounding kingdoms. In times nearer hand, though these bright luminaries in the page of Scotia's history have not been eclipsed or, perhaps, equalled by deeds of glory sufficiently splendid to throw the least shadow on the portraiture of such renowned ancestry; yet many individuals have crossed the stage of human existence whose acting has not been the less imposing because preceded by such unrivalled performers. On the contrary, we are inclined to think, that the men of a later age, either by imitating the example or recording the deeds of their national patriarchs, have embalmed with as much honour the memory of their fathers, as their fathers have advanced and maintained the honour of their country. At no period, however, has this opinion been more justly applicable than to the present time. The most remarkably literary characters which Scotland produced last century, shewed merely the force of their intellect, as applied to matters of reasoning. The generation of Hume and Smith, left matters of feeling very much unexplored. Their disquisitions on Morals were meant to be the vehicles of ingenious theories—not of convictions of sentiment. They employed therefore, even in them, only the national intellect, and not the national modes of feeling. The Scottish literati of the present day have inherited the ideas of these men and acted upon them in a great measure—with scarcely more than the one splendid exception of SIR WALTER SCOTT. While all the rest were contenting themselves with exercising and displaying their speculative acuteness, this man had the wisdom to grapple boldly with the feelings of his countrymen. His works are altogether the most remarkable phenomenon in the age of wonders—produced among a people whose taste had been well nigh weaned from all these ranges of feeling, on which their main inspiration and main power depend. They have, of themselves, been sufficient to create a more than passionate return of faith and homage to those deserted elements of greatness, in all the better part of his countrymen.

At a time when the literature of Scotland—and of England too—was becoming every day more and more destitute of command over every thing but the mere speculative understanding of men, this great genius seems to have been raised up to counteract, in the wisest and best of all ways, this unfortunate tendency of his age, by re-awakening the sympathies of his countrymen for the more energetic characters and passions of their forefathers. In so doing he employed, indeed, with the skill and power of a true master, and a true philosopher, what constitutes the only effectual means of neutralizing that barren spirit of lethargy into which the progress of civilization is in all countries so apt to lull the