

of that kind into the form of narrative. If Scott's own genius, indeed, were to be described by any single epithet, it would be called a narrative genius. Hence, when he left off writing verse, he betook himself to the productions of fictions in prose; and, in that freer form of composition, succeeded in achieving a second reputation still more brilliant than his first.—CRAIK.

III. The secret of the success of Scott's poetry lay partly in his subjects, partly in his mode of treating them, and partly in his versification. He loves to sketch knighthood and chivalry, baronial castles, the camp, the court, the grove, with antique manners and institutions. To these he adds beautiful descriptions of natural scenery, and graphic delineations of passion and character. His personages he takes sometimes from history, and sometimes from imagination; the former idealized by fancy, and the latter made the more real by being associated with men and women already familiar to us on the page of history or in actual life. In the power of vivifying and harmonizing all his characters, Scott is second only to Shakespeare. For background he has magnificent groupings of landscape and incident, which acquire additional charm from the power he gives them of exciting human sentiment and emotion. Previous sketches of chivalry and of antiquity were made in stilted and obsolete phraseology; Scott's language is always forcible and transparent. His characters are all typical, rather than individual, and as such they excite universal sympathy. They are drawn, moreover, by broad and vigorous strokes: not by a delicate analysis of motives, or a curious exhibition of contending passion.

His versification, moreover, is ever appropriate to his purpose; it is based upon the eight-syllabled rhyming metre of the Trouvères, which was admirably adapted by its easy flow for narrative poems.—ANGUS.

IV. Scott and Byron were in succession the most successful of all poets of the period, and owed their popularity mainly to characteristics which they had in common.

They are distinctively poets of active life. They portray, in spirited narrative, idealized resemblances of the scenes of reality; events which arise out of the universal relations of society; hopes and fears and wishes which are open to the consciousness of all mankind. Both of them have described some of their works as tales; and it has been said of Scott, while it might with not less truth have been said of Byron, that his works are romances in verse. It is unquestionable, that they have neither the elevation nor the regularity belonging to the highest kind of narrative poetry; and the poems of Scott are in many points strikingly analogous to his own historical novels.

But the model of both was something different from the regular epic: Scott's originals were the Romances of Chivalry, and after the extraordinary success of his attempts at embodying the chivalrous and national idea, nothing was more natural than that the example should be applied by Byron as well as by others, in the construction of narratives founded on a different kind of sentiments.

In accounting for Scott's popularity, we must remember that he was the earliest adventurer in a region hitherto unknown; and that on his first appearance he stood in the eye of the world at large quite unaccompanied. No note of preparation had been sounded, unless by Scott's own "minstrelsy," when in 1805 he broke in on the public with his series of poetical narratives. In these he appealed to national sympathies through ennobling historic recollections; he painted the externals of scenery and manners with unrivalled picturesqueness; he embellished with an infectious enthusiasm all that was generous and brave in the world of chivalry; and he seldom forgot to dress out the antique in so much of modern trappings as might make it both intelligible and interesting.—SPALDING.