Thesis Approved

By

Paul F. Smith, Jr., Ph.D., Major Adviser

Henry H. Casper, Jr., Dean
SCOTT'S METRICAL ROMANCES:

A STUDY IN CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

BY

JOAN KRAGER

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
Creighton University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in the Department of English

OMAHA, 1950
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. CONTEMPORARY POPULARITY</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication Figures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Reviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Attitude toward the Middle Ages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Narrative Form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY HERITAGES</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Influences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Terror-Romanticist School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gothic Architectural Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison with Ossian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militarism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antiquarianism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. ESTABLISHING A ROMANTIC TRADITION</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition to Historical Fiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitation of Shakespeare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment of Nature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE QUINTESSENCE OF SCOTT</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disregard for Chronology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of Allegory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depiction of Action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and Disregard for Form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey of Criticism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Just as there are literary masterpieces which transcend age and nationality in their greatness and can be judged by the most absolute of artistic standards, so there are others, similarly the products of genius, which can best be evaluated relatively as highly significant to their age. Examples of the latter are the metrical romances of Sir Walter Scott. Overshadowed by the author's more popular novels, Scott's verse romances are historically more significant than his prose. While the Waverley Novels are the work of a mature writer who has struck off confidently in a new direction, Scott's narrative poems are preliminary skirmishes into the literary field and reveal the genius of their author's eclecticism in combining the materials and theories of two highly divergent literary periods.

The formal date for the beginning of the Romantic Period in literature is commonly given as 1798, the year of the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*. Yet the great number of writers did not reach the peak of their achievement until 1815 or later, when the second generation of romantic poets was spared much of the hostility with which the first
generation was greeted. Between 1798 and 1815 a major transition took place in the concept of literature and in public taste, and the one author who spanned the transition was Walter Scott. The eighteenth century was primarily concerned with prose as a medium of expression, the age of essayists; the Romantic Period of the early nineteenth century was a time of preference for verse. Scott took the material being abused in prose by Monk Lewis and Mrs. Radcliffe and, adding to it an intensely personal love of his native Scotland, created metrical romances embodying the tenets and enthusiasms which were to become inseparable from the new Romanticism.

It is generally unlucky for a writer to live in a time of literary transition. He cannot write with any conviction in the manner of the authors that have preceded him; on the other hand, the new age has not yet evolved the manner in which it is possible to write successfully. He falls between two stools. Such is the sad case of the poets between Chaucer and Spenser, of the dramatists between Fletcher and Wycherley; such is the sad case of almost every sort of writer today. But now and again there are exceptions to this rule. Of these the most striking example is English literature is Walter Scott.¹

While Scott's metrical romances are being considered as links in literary history, their intrinsic charm cannot be neglected or ignored. Unlike Byron's oriental narratives which captured contemporary fancy and immediately died, Scott's poems retain their original freshness and vigorous beauty to reward the reader who disregards the transitory eclipse of their fame and seeks them out.

The problem, then, is discovering the value, historical and literary, of those metrical romances of which critics have been so slighting. As a method of evaluating these compositions, three different viewpoints are to be adopted in the first three chapters of this dissertation. Chapter I considers Scott's contemporary popularity and reputation with special emphasis on the contemporary reviews and the limitations of the medium with which Scott was working. As a resumé of the background of the romances, Chapter II is concerned with evidences of Scott's adoption of eighteenth-century material and technique. Scott's participation in the romantic tradition which he helped to establish is the subject of Chapter III. The concluding chapter considers certain qualities peculiarly belonging to the genius of Scott and concludes with a short history of critical attitude.
toward his metrical romances. This method has been chosen in the belief that an understanding of Scott's historical position and the singularity of his poetic gifts will be conducive to greater appreciation of these neglected metrical romances.
CHAPTER I

CONTEMPORARY POPULARITY

Following his preliminary endeavors in the field of German translation\(^1\) and the editing of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*,\(^2\) Walter Scott began writing metrical romances, from which he was to advance to the even more fruitful medium of the novel. Because his novels grew from the poems and exceeded them in literary merit, the custom of critics and historians has been to ignore the earlier achievements and concentrate upon the later.

Of Scott's poetry his biographers have little to say. They do not condemn; they do not exactly damn with faint praise; but they do sidetrack with eulogies only a few sentences long.\(^3\)

That these lays or metrical romances deserve serious criticism because of both historical and literary significance will be demonstrated in the following chapters. Yet Scott's lays were received as best

---


\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 297-355.

\(^3\)Frederick E. Pierce, "Humanism, Romance-Coated," *Saturday Review of Literature*, IX (October 1, 1932), 143.
sellers by his contemporaries and the phenomenal sales which they reached indicate more than any ensuing criticism the high esteem at which they were held by his contemporaries. The metrical romances to be here-in considered are nine in number and by order of their publication are: The Lay of the Last Minstrel (1805), Marmion (1808), The Lady of the Lake (1810), The Vision of Don Roderick (1811), Rokeby (1813), The Bridal of Triermain (1813), The Lord of the Isles (1815), The Field of Waterloo (1815), and Harold the Dauntless (1817). ¹

From the time of its appearance in 1805 until 1830, The Lay of the Last Minstrel went through sixteen editions for the original publisher, one for J. Murray, Bookseller, and two "Foolscap" editions. ² Marmion, in the years from 1808 to 1830, appeared in twelve editions. ³ The first edition of The Lady of the Lake was published in 1810, and this most popular


³Ibid., pp. 49-58.
of the metrical romances was followed by fifteen more editions, making a total of sixteen by 1832.1 In 1811 the first edition of *The Vision of Don Roderick* appeared. Exclusive of the author's copy, which edition was not offered to the public, three single editions were published and a fourth appeared together with *The Field of Waterloo* by 1821.2 *Rokeby* was first published in 1813 and five more editions came out by 1815, the seventh appearing in 1821.3 Five editions of *The Bridal of Triermain* appeared between 1813 and 1817.4 Next to be published was *The Lord of the Isles* in 1815, of which five editions came out by 1830.5 *The Field of Waterloo* ran through all three of its editions in 1815.6 The first edition of *Harold the Dauntless* appeared in 1817. The second printing of the poem was in 1819, when it appeared together with

The Bridal of Triermain, making this volume the second edition of Harold and the sixth of The Bridal. ¹

A tabulation of publication figures from Ruff's very incomplete listing gives approximately 32,004 copies of The Lay of the Last Minstrel published in the period from 1805 to 1830. Although publication figures for several printings are missing from Ruff's figures, the total agrees quite closely with Lockhart's estimate that a total of 33,300 copies was distributed by 1825.² With regard to Marmion, Lockhart states that a total of 31,000 copies was printed prior to the first edition of the collected poetical works³ and Ruff's figures indicate a total of 31,850 in that time, or a variation of only 850 copies. For The Lady of the Lake Lockhart offers no figures, but a tabulation of Ruff's publication figures, from which figures for three editions are completely missing, indicates that at least 35,270 copies were distributed prior to 1832. Because of incomplete listings, publication figures for the remainder of the poems would be worthless, except that The Lord of

¹Ibid., pp. 93-4.
²Lockhart, op. cit., I, 418.
³Ibid., II, 45.
the Isles sold somewhat more than 14,190 copies by 1830 and The Field of Waterloo about 10,000 copies. The Lady of the Lake set the high mark in Scott's poetic popularity.

From the preceding publication figures, it is possible to judge the tremendous popularity with which Scott's metrical romances were first received and also to trace the gradual decline of preference for this medium. That the waning popularity was due in part to Byron's precedency in the field of verse romances has long been established and was obviously the judgment which Scott himself wished accepted. Yet from examination of the poems themselves, as well as from the notices of contemporary reviewers, indications are that Scott had exhausted his poetic vein and found a more congenial medium in the novel.

---

1In the Introduction to the poem written in 1830, Scott said: "Although the Poem cannot be said to have made a favourable impression on the public, the sale of fifteen thousand copies enabled the author to retreat from the field with the honours of war." Sir Walter Scott, Scott's Poetical Works, ed. J. G. Lockhart (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1833-34), X, 7.

2Lockhart quotes Scott's remark concerning The Giaour to James Ballantyne: "'James, Byron hits the mark where I don't even pretend to fledge my arrow.'" Lockhart, op. cit., III, 22.
that he could bring it out simultaneously with Rokeby and lay a trap for Jeffrey. However, Lockhart explains that Jeffrey that year made a trip to America "and thus lost the opportunity of immediately expressing his opinion either of Rokeby or The Bridal of Triermain." It was common knowledge that the relations between the friends and fellow countrymen, Scott and Jeffrey, became somewhat strained after the latter's review of Marmion in 1808. Tolerable, and even just, as Jeffrey's long list of critical strictures may have been, the pronouncement of "the neglect of Scotish feelings and Scotish character that is manifested throughout" was without doubt a disparaging falsehood made by a bigoted Whig speaking through the narrow partisanship of a thoroughly Whiggish organ against a Tory poet. As a protest against this unfair confusion of politics and literature, the matter of establishing a rival periodical, the Quarterly Review, was projected by Scott and his friends. In a letter to William Gifford, dated October 25, 1808, Scott observes:

1 Lockhart, op. cit., II, 291.

2 Ibid., II, 317.

After all, the matter is become very serious,—eight or nine thousand copies of the Edinburgh Review are regularly distributed, merely because there is no other respectable and independent publication of the kind. In this city, where there is not one Whig out of twenty men who read the work, many hundreds are sold; and how long the generality of readers will continue to dislike politics so artfully mingled with information and amusement, is worthy of deep consideration.

No time was lost in the establishment of the rival periodical, as in May, 1810, the Quarterly Review, now in its third volume, published a review of Scott's *Lady of the Lake* less intelligent and hardly more flattering than that written by Jeffrey the following August. On the whole Jeffrey's criticism bears up well in this and subsequent comparisons.

With reference to the other two contemporary periodicals referred to, the North American Review carried a review of *The Lord of the Isles* after the manner of Jeffrey in July, 1815, Jeffrey's review having appeared the previous February. Appearing in the first volume of the publication, this is the one review of Scott's poems contained in that periodical. In the first issue of its first volume Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine reviewed *Harold the Dauntless*, which had been

---

1As quoted by Lockhart, *op. cit.*, II, 95.
published anonymously, as being by the author of *The Bridal of Triermain.* ¹

Quotations and more specific references to the contemporary reviews will be contained in succeeding chapters; however, some generalizations may here be made with regard to the similarity in attitudes of the contemporary reviewers. All are agreed in high praise of Scott's descriptive powers, particularly when he paints Scottish scenery. His great fault, it is agreed, is lack of organization and frequent confusion and obscurity of plot, as well as passages revealing carelessness and disinterestedness in composition. All praise Scott's flair for catching military pageantry and his descriptions of battle scenes.

Significantly both Jeffrey and the Quarterly reviewer disparage Scott's choice of the Middle Ages as setting and the medieval metrical romance as a medium.

He has produced a very beautiful and entertaining poem, in a style which may fairly be considered as original, and which will be allowed to afford satisfactory evidence of the genius of the author, even though he should not succeed in converting

¹"Harold the Dauntless; a Poem," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, I (April, 1817), 76.
the public to his own opinion as to the interest or dignity of the subject.  

* * *

To write a modern romance of chivalry seems to be much such a fantasy as to build a modern abbey, or an English pagoda. We admire Mr. Scott's genius as much as any of those who may be misled by its perversion; and, like the curate and the barber in Don Quixote, lament the day when a gentleman of such endowments was corrupted by the wicked tales of knight-errantry and enchantment.  

* * *

Instead of following, as he unquestionably might have done, the examples of Voltaire and Tasso, who imitated Virgil, and of Virgil, who imitated Homer, or of writing, like Spenser, an allegorical epic, or like Milton, a sacred epic; he has abstained from writing any epic at all; and has repeatedly composed long poetical narratives, not formed on any classical model, but rather resembling, in the irregularity of their construction, the obsolete romances of chivalry.  

Yet from this attitude of scornful depreciation of poetry which did not imitate classical models and which treated the obsolete age of chivalry, a personal idiosyncrasy as foolish as English pagoda-building, the


3George Ellis, "Scott's Lady of the Lake," Quarterly Review, III (May, 1810), 493.
more honest reviewer was forced to withdraw. Jeffrey's attitude changes noticeably. In his later reviews he neglects to denounce so vehemently the choice of the Middle Ages as poetic setting. In his review of *The Vision of Don Roderick*, which, together with *The Field of Waterloo*, was written partly on contemporary events, Jeffrey goes so far as to insinuate his approval of Scott's earlier choice of subject matter.

Upon the whole, we can hardly recommend it to him to have his old style for that of which he has here presented us with a specimen;—and earnestly entreat him not to throw away his fine talents upon subjects of temporary interest; subjects on which a bombastical pamphlet will always produce more present effect than the most exquisite poetry,—and to which no poetical merit will ever be able to draw the attention of posterity.\(^1\)

On the other hand, the *Quarterly* reviewer, having condemned the medieval setting of *The Lady of the Lake*,\(^2\) highly praises *The Vision of Don Roderick* and in the interests of consistency writes a complimentary review of probably the poorest of Scott's poems.\(^3\) In the

---


\(^2\)George Ellis, "Scott's Lady of the Lake," *Quarterly Review*, III (May, 1810), 493.

\(^3\)"Scott's Vision of Don Roderick," *Quarterly Review*, VI (October, 1811), 221-35. Corson, on pages
review of *The Bridal of Triermain*, published two years later, the same reviewer praises the poem, published anonymously, declaring:

> Its merit, in our estimation, consists in its perfect simplicity, and in interweaving the refinements of modern times with the peculiarities of the ancient metrical romance, which are in no respect violated.¹

He further compromises himself by the following passage:

> In the regions of romance, as they have been termed, are to be found mines of which the riches are still unexplored. That mixture of ferocity and courtesy, of religion and barbarity, of rudeness and hospitality, of enthusiastic love, inflexible honour and extravagant enterprise, which distinguished the manners of the middle ages, opens the happiest and most fertile sources of poetical invention.²

Here is evidence of rapid reversal in literary taste with regard to two leading critics of the day.

From the excerpts quoted, the position of Scott in the transition between the two literary ages becomes undeniable. In his review of *Harold the Dauntless*, which

---

¹George Ellis, "The Bridal of Triermain," *Quarterly Review*, IX (July, 1813), 491.

²Ibid., p. 483.
appeared anonymously in 1817, the Blackwood reviewer remarked that "the character of Mr. Scott's romances has effected a material change in our mode of estimating poetrical compositions,"¹ and one is tempted to extend the application of this fact far beyond the limited explanation of the reviewer. However, before proceeding to a detailed analysis of Scott's literary heritages, a consideration of the particular poetic medium employed by Scott may assist in recalling the limitations under which the poet was working. Whatever their significance historically, the metrical romances deserve to be tried on intrinsic merits as well.

That The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border was "the real beginning, the taproot of Scott's later work as a poet and novelist"² is a fact which his critics have not disputed. Scott's work in German translation influenced him rather in details and that influence was not lasting, as will be shown later.

The metrical romance, as it was written by Scott, was avowedly derived from the metrical romances

¹"Harold the Dauntless; a Poem," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, I (April, 1817), 76.
of the Middle Ages, one of which Scott had edited and even concluded in the original metre: the Sir Tristram which he attributed to Thomas of Ercildoune.¹

Scott's early poetic endeavors had been in the ballad form. He succeeded in capturing the spirit of the ballads as no contemporary had done, but a longer piece demanded a more ambitious poetic form. The lay was a neglected medium which had been employed primarily in the celebration of historic action.

He [Scott] conceived the idea of blending the Lay with the metrical romance, and produced as a result a hybrid form, part epic, part ballad, part novel, part romance, which no one happily has attempted to perpetuate. Its structure was determined by no natural laws, but by the varied and sometimes incongruous interests of a single mind. It was one man's building, and no other's.²

Whatever went into the evolving of the type, the lay became peculiarly Scott's. Lockhart's description of the evolution of The Lay of the Last Minstrel³ would seem to verify the gloomy evaluation given above of Scott's poetic invention. However, Scott was writing narrative poetry and this implies many limitations upon

¹Arthur Symons, "Was Sir Walter Scott a Poet?," Atlantic Monthly, XCIV (November, 1904), 665.

²"The Lay," Living Age, CCLXXIX (December 20, 1913), 743.

the author. The freedom and rhythm of the ballad can hardly be retained in productions as lengthy as Scott's lays. The poet reveals a retention of the freshness which distinguished his ballads in the songs interspersed generously in his longer works. Poetry of any length requires action for continuity. Scott's frequent and highly admired descriptions of Scottish scenery detract from the unity which his poetic form requires; yet an even more serious limitation is that of character delineation.

The range of character which can be adequately delineated in narrative verse is much narrower than that which can be described in the combination of narrative with dramatic prose; and perhaps even the sentiment of the novels is manlier and freer; a delicate unreality hovers over the 'Lady of the Lake.'

Scott's contemporary critics complained justly that "of the characters, we cannot say much; they are not conceived with any great degree of originality, nor delineated with any particular spirit." While most of Scott's poetic characters are not distinguished, his later poems, such as Rokeby, show at least some indica-

---


tion of his power over character and disprove the theory generally held among critics that "for dialogue and exhibition of character his prose has a capacity of which his verse does not even give an inkling."¹

The great strength of narrative poetry lies in its adaptability to historic subject matter. Scott utilized this kinship with history to its full extent, reinforcing the historic details of the story with pages of supplementary notes. For him at least other disadvantages were outweighed by this affinity with history and the opportunity for exposition of historic and antiquarian lore, which, one begins to suspect, far exceeded his literary and aesthetic interest in his own verse. Well may litterateurs complain that:

Scott, having presented a romance, seems almost to feel under obligation to deflate it by parallel columns of history. It is a paradox something like Byron's alternations of romance and satire in Don Juan.²

Scott aggravated what may be called a weakness of the narrative medium by overloading it with history. With reason the weary Quarterly reviewer observed: "Narrative


poetry is nothing but another name for fiction, and fiction always revolts us when it ventures to intrude on the broad light of history and politics."¹ A further, more detailed consideration of Scott's historic and antiquarian tendencies will be undertaken in the following chapter, in which his affinities with the eighteenth century will be discussed. In conclusion, the preceding pages have proved, through an examination of publication figures and contemporary criticism, that Scott's poetic popularity was widespread and that his influence, though hindered by the technical limitations of his poetic medium, helped to shape contemporary public taste in preparation for those poets who were to follow in the romantic tradition.

¹ "Scott's Vision of Don Roderick," Quarterly Review, VI (October, 1811), 224.
CHAPTER II

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY HERITAGES

The assumption that Scott's metrical romances are all alike has misled many of his critics. While those displaying his greater poetic capacity are the earlier works, the later narratives reveal a growth in strength which led to the more complete command of plot and character in the Waverley Novels. Although writing about the Middle Ages, Scott in his early romances adopted the technique of the writers of the late eighteenth century. Contemporary critics, notably Jeffrey of the Edinburgh Review, recognized Scott's appropriation of the materials of the tales of terror of Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis and yet did not realize the refining that these materials were to receive at the hands of Scott. Significantly as well, Scott's early literary work had been in the field of German translation.

Lewis and Scott had the same hobby, the interpretation and introduction into English of German romanticism, and this would at once bring them into perfect harmony; secondly, their relations reflect the historical fact that the romantic school founded by Scott, Byron, Shelley, etc., was in point of fact based on the earlier school of Lewis and his predecessors, i.e., on a romanticism now comparatively unknown, which yet, despite the
modesty of its artistic achievements, represents an extensive preliminary labour of digestion and preparation, providing in many respects the vital basis for features that later attained brilliance and fame.¹

The complexity of the late eighteenth-century romanticism arises from its partaking of such diversified sources. The interplay of German and English influences became important in the development of what may be called a 'marvelous' school of fiction. Horace Walpole's Castle of Otranto had early set the style for mysterious, preternatural events, and the practice was furthered by a school of prolix imitators, notably Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis. Scott partook of this Germanic influence from its source by his early translations from the German. He had published translations of Bürger's The Chase and William and Helen in 1796, and Goethe's Goetz of Berlichingen in 1799.² Then in 1799 he contributed to Lewis' collection of Tales of Terror by the inclusion of his three poems, "The Erl-King," "The Chase," and "William and Helen."³ Two years later

²Ruff, op. cit., p. 18.
³Ibid., p. 23.

The sizable amount of German translation and the close acquaintance with Matthew Gregory Lewis, who had been nicknamed "Monk" after his famous novel of terror, could hardly have failed to influence Scott. However, traces of this influence are discovered primarily in his earlier compositions, especially The Lay and Marmion.

Jeffrey's early criticism of The Lay of the Last Minstrel condemned the character of the goblin page, which he considered to be "an awkward sort of mongrel between Puck and Caliban, of a servile and brutal nature, and limited in his powers to the indulgence of petty malignity and the infliction of despicable injuries." While Scott in his introduction to the poem attributed the genesis of this interesting character to a folk tale concerning Gilpin Horner, this is obviously the sort of personage which might be borrowed

1Ibid., pp. 24 & 29.
3Scott, op. cit., VI, 23.
from the typical tale of terror. The page's mysterious cry of "Lost! Lost! Lost!" is an indulgence in mystery for the sake of mystery, as is his unaccountable disappearance in the midst of the marriage festivity.

Then sudden, through the darken'd air,
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seem'd on flame.
Glanc'd every rafter of the hall,
Glanc'd every shield upon the wall;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flash'd the levin-brand,
And fill'd the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elvish page it broke.
It broke with thunder long and loud,
Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the proud,—
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish dwarf was seen no more!

The guests in silence pray'd and shook,
And terror dimm'd each lofty look.¹

To this introduction of a preternatural character is added the equally terroristic concern with wizardry. Lady Branksome practiced necromancy and conversed with the "Spirit of the Flood" and the "Spirit of the Fell" to learn secrets unknown to those less gifted.² The early part of the plot revolves about the

¹Ibid., VI, 210-12. Canto VI, Stanzas XXV & XXVI.
²Ibid., VI, 59. Canto I, Stanza XIV.
book of charms wrongly removed from the grave of the Wizard Michael Scott and stolen by the goblin page.

Marmion furthers this interest in the preternatural by introducing the added familiar terrorism of the medi­eval monastery. The banished knight, De Wilton, travels in the guise of a palmer, and the mistress of Marmion is a renegade Benedictine nun, Constance. Her trial by the monastic superiors in the dungeon of Castle Lindisfarne was early noted by Jeffrey:

The subterranean chamber, with its low arches, massive walls, and silent monks with smoky torches,—its old chandelier in an iron chain,—the stern abbots and haughty prioresses, with their flowing black dresses, and book of statutes laid on an iron table, are all images borrowed from the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe and her imitators. The public, we believe, has now supped full of this sort of horrors; or, if any effect is still to be produced by their exhibition, it may certainly be produced at too cheap a rate, to be worthy of a poet of original imagination.

Marmion was a person with great faith in signs and portents. In his desire to know the outcome of the approaching conflict he decided to challenge a spirit, which according to Pictish legend, could reveal the future to him. To his page he explains:

"Didst never, good my youth, hear tell,
That on the hour when I was born,
Saint George, who graced my sire's chapelle,
Down from his steed of marble fell,
A weary wight forlorn?
The flattering chaplains all agree,
The champion left his steed to me.
I would the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this Elfin Foe!
Elithe would I battle, for the right
To ask one question at the sprite:—
Vain thought! for elves, if elves there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea,
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their ring."

In comparing Marmion and The Lay one critic remarks:

The crimes of Marmion and the adventures of de Wilton recall the artifices employed by the authoress of The Mysteries of Udolpho and other contemporary romance-writers to engross the attention of their readers. By these means Marmion attains more unity of action than The Lay of the Last Minstrel.

Scott's interest in charms, however, is half-hearted and with the exception of the burning cross and the ritual of clan-gathering, his next poem, The Lady of the Lake, is almost free of terror-romanticist hints. The Quarterly reviewer of Rokeby praises Scott's confining himself "to the sober annuls of the seventeenth century," and renouncing "nearly all those ornaments of Gothic pageantry which, in consequence of the taste with

---

1 Scott, op. cit., VII, 169-70. Canto III, Stanza XXIX.

which he displayed them, had been tolerated, and even admired, by modern readers."\(^1\) By the time of composition of *The Lord of the Isles* only a mysterious beacon fire\(^2\) and a supposed miracle\(^3\) remain to indicate Scott's heritage.

Yet another phase of the eighteenth-century Gothicism utilized by Scott was a concern for architectural setting. An important feature of a Gothic romance was the castle, preferably haunted, in which it was laid. With modifications Scott partakes of this tradition. Perhaps, his most lurid architectural orgy is contained in *Rokeby*, where the reader witnesses the destruction by fire of Rokeby Castle.

Mid cries, and clashing arms, there came  
The hollow sound of rushing flame;  
New horrors on the tumult dire  
Arise—the Castle is on fire!  

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

But ceased not yet, the Hall within,  
The shriek, the shout, the carnage-din,  
Till bursting lattices give proof  
The flames have caught the rafter'd roof.  
What! wait they till its beams amain  
Crash on the slayers and the slain?

---

\(^{1}\)"Scott's Rokeby," *Quarterly Review*, VIII (December, 1812), 507.

\(^{2}\)Scott, *op. cit.*, X, 191. Canto V, Stanza XIII.

\(^{3}\)Ibid, X, 260-61. Canto VI, Stanzas XXIX & XXX.
The alarm is caught— the drawbridge falls,
The warriors hurry from the walls,
But, by the conflagration's light,
Upon the lawn renew the fight.\(^1\)

Such spectacle is rather the exception than the rule
with Scott. His architectural enthusiasm is usually
tempered by common sense, especially in his later work.

One feels that, but for his restraining sense
of humor, Scott might easily have launched
into all the architectural enthusiasms of Mrs.
Radcliffe.

In *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, he comes
very near to doing so. The description of Mel­
rose Abbey by moonlight, complete with owls,
graves, and broken arches, might almost have
been written by Mrs. Radcliffe. . . .Scott did
not permit himself, in prose, the descriptive
flights which occur in his earlier poetry.\(^2\)

With regard to the passage of *The Lay* with its mumbo
jumbo of Gothic terror props, the description itself is
far from striking the false note which might be expected
and has been quoted by many as being a striking example
of Scott's rare descriptive ability.

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;


\(^2\) W. H. Smith, *Architecture in English Fiction*
("*Yale Studies in English*"; New Haven: Yale University
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruined central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go--but go alone the while--
Then view St. David's ruined pile;
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair.\(^1\)

This and succeeding stanzas are worthy to have inspired
Keats.\(^2\) As the author of *Architecture in English Fiction*
shrewdly points out, architectural setting for Scott had
factual rather than atmospherical significance.\(^3\)

This fondness for facts was probably influential
as well in Scott's selection of poetic forms for personal
imitation. Letters, journals, and literary criticism of
the late eighteenth century are rife with references to
the disputed authenticity of the Ossianic poetry. In a
letter dated 1805, Scott wrote to Miss Seward at Litch­
field his opinion of the controversy and confessed his
intimate acquaintance with the poems since childhood,
remarking that "the eternal repetition of the same ideas

\(^1\)Scott, op. cit., VI, 73-4. Canto II, Stanza I.

\(^2\)John Clark Jordan, "The Eve of St. Agnes and
The Lay of the Last Minstrel," *Modern Language Notes*, XLIII
(January, 1928), 38-40.

\(^3\)Smith, op. cit., p. 182.
and imagery, however beautiful in themselves, is apt to pall upon a reader whose taste has become somewhat fastidious.\(^1\) He also advises his correspondent of his personal investigation and translation of the original Ossianic material, and his conclusion "that incalculably the greater part of the English Ossian must be ascribed to Macpherson himself, and that his whole introductions, notes, etc. etc. are an absolute tissue of forgeries."\(^2\) In his Introduction to The Lady of the Lake written in 1830 for the Poetical Works, Scott discusses Highland feuds as subjects for poetry and states:

> The Poems of Ossian had, by their popularity, sufficiently shown, that if writings on Highland subjects were qualified to interest the reader, mere national prejudices were, in the present day, very unlikely to interfere with their success.\(^3\)

At least in choice of subject, then, Scott was influenced by the poems of Ossian. Nothing of the Ossianic technique of desperate melancholy and vague pantheism is to be found in Scott's nature descriptions, since "there was not much in his sane, cheerful and robust nature upon

\(^1\)As quoted by Lockhart, *op. cit.*., I, 437.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Scott, *op. cit.*, VIII, 4.
which such poetry as Ossian could fasten. Sometimes his nature descriptions are permeated by a sadness or sobriety of tone, traceable, as one critic has observed, partly to that mood of mind which broods over an interesting and stirring past not to be recalled, and partly to what may be called the monotone of the Border moors, glens, and hills. At the brightest, the height of summer, the joy they inspire is a chastened one.

Although the subject of Scott's nature descriptions will be considered at length in the succeeding chapter, this digression relative to Ossian may help to indicate Scott's independence of external nature in the deliberate creation of mood. His interest in nature is not absolutely for nature itself.

Scott was no pure nature-worshiper like Wordsworth; a landscape meant little or nothing to him unless it were associated with romantic memories.

Instead of indulging in descriptions like that quoted from The Lay, Scott preferred to take a more factual view of his settings. W. H. Smith finds that


"Scott is rather fond of pseudo-technical terms, and one often encounters in his works such words as barbican, donjon, stanchion, fortalice, knosp, etc."¹ Scott's interest in the architectural aspects of his castles undoubtedly proceeded to some extent from his interest in them as fortifications, for it is true to say that "Scott apprehended the Middle Ages on their spectacular, and more particularly, their military side."² The two great battle descriptions in Scott's metrical romances did much to assure their contemporary popularity. Even a critic as cautious in his praise as Jeffrey polished up his superlatives for the battle of Flodden Field in Marmion.

The battle itself, as we have already intimated, is described as it appeared to the two squires of Lord Marmion, who were left on an eminence in the rear, as the guard of Lady Clare: And certainly, of all the poetical battles which have been fought, from the days of Homer and to those of Mr. Southey, there is none, in our opinion, at all comparable, for interest and animation,—for breadth of drawing and magnificence of effect,—with this of Mr. Scott's.³

¹Smith, op. cit., p. 179.


The other great battle is that of Bannockburn described in *The Lord of the Isles*. While Lockhart defends the second battle as equal to the first,\(^1\) he is supported neither by Jeffrey nor by succeeding critics. On the strength of his descriptions of these two historic Scotch battles, Scott's poetry has received the appellation of epic and its Homeric qualities have been injudiciously defended. "In subject, neither *Marmion* nor *The Lord of the Isles* falls below the epic pitch, unless it be that the whole history of Scotland is inadequate to furnish material for an epic."\(^2\)

In passing, mention might be made that both *The Field of Waterloo* and *The Vision of Don Roderick* are concerned with martial subjects. Yet both are such slight productions in comparison to the longer, more carefully planned metrical romances that little consideration of their merits can here be made. The former poem consists in sentimental philosophizing over the field of Waterloo and a glorification of the Duke of Wellington at the expense of Napoleon. The

\(^1\) Lockhart, op. cit., III, 21.

latter poem is composed of a feeble vision device whereby the licentious King of Spain is privileged to view the three great periods of Spanish history in their military aspects: the invasion of the Moors, the period of Christian chivalry, and modern Spain, protected by the timely arrival of British troops from the invasion of Bonaparte. Neither poem contributed to Scott's reputation or achievement.

His predilection for the military has frequently exposed Scott to the charge that he perceived the Middle Ages superficially.

His martial spirit gave quick and sympathetic response to the martial spirit of the feudal ages. But a large and exceedingly important—aspect of their life was altogether shut off from his view. He felt nothing of their passionate, emotional craving, their religious fervour, their spiritual self-torture, their mysticism, asceticism, and other-worldness.1 A Catholic critic has rightly pointed out that the chivalry which Scott perceived and which fascinated him "was not the creation of the Church," but that the Church merely humanized that which had been known even to barbarous and pagan states. "Scott has presented us with a galaxy of sterling Catholic characters, nursed in

the bosom of Holy Church; but for that Church itself which made them what they were he reserves the dimmest angle in his canvas."¹ Scott regarded the Church with the interest of the typical eighteenth-century antiquarian. Undoubtedly he did not penetrate the Gothic spirit beyond its objective side.

Here, manifestly, we touch the fundamental difference between the spirit of Scott and the spirit which, shortly after his death, produced the Oxford movement, and the Catholic reaction of Newman and his followers, and wrought with such startling results in the entire Pre-Raphaelite revival.²

Yet it is to Scott that Newman attributes in all justice the preparatory work of a movement in which Scott desired no sharing.

During the first quarter of this century a great poet was raised up in the North, who, whatever his defects, has contributed by his works, in prose and verse, to prepare men for closer and more practical approximation to Catholic truth. The general need of something deeper and more attractive than what had offered itself elsewhere, may be considered to have led to his popularity and by means of his popularity he re-acted on his readers, stimulating their mental thirst, feeding their hopes, setting before them visions, which, when once seen, are not easily forgotten, and silently indoctrinating them with nobler ideas, which might afterwards be appealed to as first

¹ Thomas Canning, "Catholicism in the Waverley Novels," Dublin Review, XXVI (October, 1891), 333-34.
² Hudson, op. cit., p. 242.
principles. Doubtless there are things in the poems and romances in question, of which a correct judgment is forced to disapprove; and which must be ever a matter of regret; but contrasted with the popular writers of the last century, with its novelists, and some of its more admired poets, as Pope, they stand as oracles of truth confronting the ministers of error and sin.¹

This is the same poet of whom Jeffrey could say:

His genius, seconded by the omnipotence of fashion, has brought chivalry again into temporary fashion; but he ought to know, that this is a taste too evidently unnatural to be long prevalent in the modern world.²

Before proceeding to a consideration of those qualities in Scott which mark him as a romantic and ally him to the nineteenth century, one more aspect of eighteenth-century influence must be considered, his antiquarianism. Along with a taste for terror, that early spring of romanticism in the eighteenth century conceived a taste for ruins and for those bibelots which recalled the past. In comparing the journals of Scott and James Boswell, Pottle remarks upon the similarity of their interests both in architectural ruins and histor-


ical objects and legends. The huge appendixes of notes following Scott's metrical romances are store-houses of antiquarian lore, and he never lost this love of the antiquarian as he did his fascination in the Gothic or the marvelous. In 1805 he had appended sixty-three pages of notes to The Lay, and he continued the practice by adding thirty-seven pages to Marmion, forty-eight pages to The Lady of the Lake, forty-four to Rokeby, and a final high of seventy-three pages to The Lord of the Isles. Justly may it be said that "Scott was in love with mediaevalism, and especially with its trappings." He touches upon every subject from family lineage, to second sight, to drinking cups, to local legends, to military records. Chesterton has observed:

Human beings were perhaps the principal charac-
ters in his stories, but they were certainly not the only characters. A battle-axe was a person of importance, a castle had a character and ways of its own. A church bell had a word to say in the matter. Like a true child, he almost ignored the distinction between the animate and the inanimate.  

1Pottle, op. cit., p. 173.  
Jeffrey complains with characteristic justice and ill humor about

the insufferable number, and length, and minuteness of those descriptions of ancient dresses; and manners, and buildings; and ceremonies, and local superstitions; with which the whole poem is overrun,—which render so many notes necessary, and are, after all, but imperfectly understood by those to whom chivalrous antiquity has not hitherto been an object of peculiar attention.¹

Perhaps the greatest achievement possible to an editor working for popularization of Scott's poetry is to divest the metrical romances of their over-impressive notes, which create the impression that the author wrote through a delight in history and not in poetry.

Without the genius for assimilation of the dramatist, Scott "felt it as part of his duty to furnish chronicle-history, very much as Shakspere seems to have done in his so-called chronicle-history plays."²

That delicate relationship between history and romance and Scott's contribution to the evolution of historical background so important to nineteenth-century romanticism will be considered in the following chapter. While


some repetition may be inevitable in re-examining Scott's metrical romances from a nineteenth-century point of view, the greater part of the following chapter will be devoted to a consideration of Scott's individualistic traits, which, paradoxically enough, unite him to the romantic spirit while separating him from more typical romantic practice.
The period of production of the metrical romances is undeniably the time at which Scott was most susceptible to the new romanticism which he helped to promulgate and which reached its flower in his successors. In his essential personality Scott lacked the disregard for tradition and authority which characterizes a thoroughly romantic person. He clung tenaciously to social institutions, especially the hierarchy of the Scottish clan which "was fundamentally at odds with the romantic experimental mood." While unsympathetic toward romantic freedom in his regard for law and traditions, Scott brought to the new age an attachment for history of which all partook and which became characteristic of the period.

Man's relation to historic environment is a dry-sounding phrase, but it means romance--all that vast area of romance that is associated with time and place, the romance of ancient tales, of picturesque distant places, of buildings heavy with the weight of man's history, of those wild places of the earth on which man, for all his history, has left no mark at all. It means all the emotions stirred in us by association,

personal or historic, by a relic hallowed by
connection with home or hero, by a stave of
old song, a place loved in childhood, by any
of the thousand frail, unbreakable ties of
sentiment that bind us to the past.¹

In the transition between Gothic romance and
historical fiction Scott occupies a major position.
Considering the interest in historical veracity to­
gether with the increasing interest in architectural
veracity, William H. Smith says:

The line between historical fiction (in its
earlier stages) and the Gothic romance is
difficult to draw, but the former always
tended toward realism both in narration and
description. The presence of a few historical
characters, a few actual events and a few real
buildings suffices to distinguish these early
historical novels from pure fiction.

In this substitution of historic fact for roman­
tic glamour, the whole trend from romance to
realism in architectural descriptions is fore­
shadowed. The culmination of the historic
tendency in fiction comes in the novels of Scott
and his followers.²

The truth of this statement with regard to the novels
of Scott may also be applied to his verse romances.
The striking example of Scott's use of history is in
The Lord of the Isles, a later work. However, Marmion
makes use of historical material as well and The Lady

¹David Cecil, "Sir Walter Scott: a Study in
²Smith, op. cit., p. 169, p. 175.
of the Lake, for all its escapist romanticism, introduces the personage of King James IV. In connection with Scott's treatment of history a special method was developed which he used both in verse and prose.

To Scott has been given the credit for combining successfully the methods of historical drama and of romance dealing with the past. By retaining great historic figures in his background, Scott enjoyed the advantage of their reputation and the honor of making his countrymen acquainted with history. By introducing his own romantic characters in the foreground, he enjoyed the privilege of arranging his plot and characters as he might desire.¹

This is precisely the method employed in The Lord of the Isles where, Jeffrey complains, King Robert Bruce is the personage of paramount historical interest "and the Lord of the Isles nothing more than one of his less considerable adherents—whose fickle loves and prudential marriage choices but feebly divide the interest which is exclusively due to that heroic sovereign."² In this same vein Jeffrey continues to give his opinion of the Scott method of combining fiction and history.


The consequence of thus blending the historical and fictitious parts of the fable into one, is not only to produce a feeling of incongruity, but of disappointment; for as the poem begins with imaginary persons, and takes its title from them, we continue to look for the resumption of that wilder legend, long after the Bruce has filled the scene with his own real presence; and, of course, lend but a careless ear to the first exploits of him whom we do not immediately recognize as its proper hero.¹

A later critic complains of Scott's use of the battle of Flodden Field in Marmion, remarking, "We are witnesses of the possible ruin of a great nation, and at every turn the fiction wounds us."² Yet the modern reader has become so accustomed to this confusion of history and fiction that his ears are deaf to the niceties of pure patriotism. Undoubtedly it was Scott who set this precedent in writing historical fiction and, according to Wilmon Brewer, he was following the example of Shakespeare, particularly Shakespeare's chronicle plays.³

As Shakespeare's example has a tendency to crop up in a detailed examination of Scott's work, it may be well to digress momentarily from the immediate limitations

¹Ibid.
²"The Lay," Living Age, CCLXXIX (December 20, 1913), 744.
³Brewer, op. cit., p. 185.
of the present topic to point out that Shakespeare had a tremendous influence on Scott and on most of the principal characters of the nineteenth-century Romantic Movement as well. To attempt a brief recapitulation, in Scott's early work of translation, Goetz of Berlichingen, Goethe had borrowed heavily from Shakespeare.\textsuperscript{1} Professor Smith remarks that the literary sources of eighteenth-century interest in Gothicism are traceable to Shakespeare, and cites Macbeth, Hamlet, Richard II, Julius Caesar, and Titus Andronicus to support his contention that "most of Shakespeare's tragedies and histories were supposed to take place in a medieval setting."\textsuperscript{2}

Aside from these indirect heritages from Shakespeare, Scott felt his influence more directly. He avoided direct emulation of Shakespeare in his earlier pieces, maintaining the typical romantic's reluctance to borrow directly from literary sources. But his later metrical romances reveal both references to Shakespeare and an appropriation of his dramatic devices. The most pointed evidence of Scott's high regard for Shakespeare occurs in Rokeby, a tale of the struggle between

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 20.
\textsuperscript{2}Smith, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 50-1.
Cavaliers and Roundheads, where his tribute to the great dramatist through the character, Wilfrid, has been taken as an autobiographical allusion.

Nought of his sire's ungenerous part
Polluted Wilfrid's gentle heart;
A heart too soft from early life
To hold with fortune needful strife.

His sire, while yet a hardier race
Of numerous sons were Wycliffe's grace,
On Wilfrid set contemptuous brand,
For feeble heart and forceless hand;
But a fond mother's care and joy
Were centred in her sickly boy.

No touch of childhood's frolic mood
Show'd the elastic spring of blood;
Hour after hour he loved to pore
On Shakespeare's rich and varied lore,

But turn'd from martial scenes and light,
From Falstaff's feast and Percy's fight,
To ponder Jaques' moral strain,
And muse with Hamlet, wise in vain;
And weep himself to soft repose
O'er gentle Desdemona's woes.1

Brewer also points out Scott's employment of Shakespearean devices in disguising his heroines as pages in The Lord of the Isles and Harold the Dauntless,2 and his use of the Shakespearean soliloquy in Rokeby and The Lord of the Isles.3 But to return to the more historical aspects, the devices employed by Shakespeare in the second tetralogy and his handling of the character

1 Scott, op. cit., IX, 61-2. Canto I, Stanza XXIV.


3 Ibid., p. 196.
of Falstaff could certainly have provided Scott's hint for the development of his historical method of writing romance. All he needed do for even greater freedom of composition was to relegate his historical principal to an undeniably second place, as was done in *The Lord of the Isles*, and he succeeded in securing both authenticity and freedom of treatment.

History becomes for few people what it meant to Sir Walter Scott. To him history was a matter of local attachment, of men whose families he knew, and his great poetry was produced under the spell of the familiar past known through the present.

His romanticism is a synthesis of all the elements which two generations have set free: imaginative emotion, the lure of the past, the taste for chivalry, a sentimental respect for warlike and religious customs, the love of Nature, all of which with Scott are strongly individualized through his close familiarity with the Scottish landscape and social life.

It is this love of Scotland which surpasses all other romantic tendencies in Scott: "The key to Scott's romanticism is his intense local feeling. That attachment to place which, in most men, is a sort of animal instinct,

---

was with him a passion."¹ His poems, with the exception of those two absolute failures, *The Field of Waterloo* and *The Vision of Don Roderick*, were all written on subjects which touched Scottish history or background more or less directly. True, *Harold the Dauntless* concerns a Norse pirate, but Harold's attachments are Scottish and he eventually follows his father's example in accepting Christianity and Scotch nationality. Whether writing of Lowlands or Highlands or the Border, Scott sees man "as a product of his local environment and his historic past" and "paints him in relation to the circumstances and traditions—poetical, social, religious, natural—of the society in which he lives."² He is a highly national poet and "displays the past in a romantic light, awakening love for it and thus indirectly for the people and the nation as a whole; he gave consequently a powerful impetus to the national spirit and the dawning strivings for liberty."³ Perhaps in his portrayal of typical Scottish heroes Scott partook of


literary fashions not essentially his own. Professor Hoxie Neale Fairchild in his book *The Noble Savage* calls Scott's Highlanders "an adaptation of the Noble Savage idea to the writer's own surroundings and temperament," and applies this theory to the character of Roderick Dhu in *The Lady of the Lake.* While it is undoubtedly true that Scott is not free from the Rousseauistic ideas of primitive innocence which deluded so many of his contemporaries, his common sense again saves him from over-indulgence.

The wildness of the Highlander, and his rugged good qualities, while they stir Scott's admiration, do not tempt him to philosophize about the blessings of nature. Scott's popularity was largely due to the fact that he combined great enthusiasm for the romantic spirit with an almost total lack of enthusiasm for romantic doctrine. He loved the feudal past, he loved to seek ballads and legends in mountain recesses, and he loved the quaint, brave, hospitable folk he met there. He found them admirable for the limited but real virtue which all savages possess. No writer of the period, however, is less likely to sentimentalize the primitive than Walter Scott.  

Another critic has considered Scott's debt to the romantic, or Byronic, hero. *Marmion* is Scott's most

---

2 Ibid., pp. 317-18.
obvious attempt along this line and criticism early called attention to the unsuitableness in the character of the hero.

Marmion is not only a villain, but a mean and sordid villain; and represented as such, without any visible motive, and at the evident expense of characteristic truth and consistency.¹

Railo also sees traces of this sort of hero in Roderick Dhu of The Lady of the Lake and Bertram of Rokeby. With reference to the latter poem he says that it introduces the pirate into romantic literature.

The whole field of buccaneer-themes, treasures of exotic lands, the merciless struggles enacted there, famous pirates and all that wild life beyond the pale of law and society, is here depicted in sombre flashes of a truly romantic illumination.²

The characters of the metrical romances, however, never escape their environment. Their personality is invariably bound up with local scenery.

Again, the whole romantic age was intensely interested in the individual's reaction to his environment. With Sir Walter this interest was heightened by the fact that Scottish environment was a world in process of change, evolving from medievalism to modernism.³

²Railo, op. cit., p. 228.
³Frederick E. Pierce, op. cit., pp. 143-44.
For Scott individualism was related to locality and locality was inseparable from a certain noble patriotism based upon his desire to foster the individual peculiarities of Scottish culture.

The conflicts on which his plots turn are not . . . between two individual temperaments; but between an individual temperament and a tradition, or sometimes between the representatives of one tradition and of another.¹

To apply this conjecture, The Lay, Marmion, and The Lord of the Isles are concerned with the struggle between the Scotch and the English. The Lady of the Lake is based upon a feud between Highlanders and Lowlanders, Rokeby upon the division between Cavaliers and Roundheads, and Harold the Dauntless on the cleavage between lawless Norse paganism and conformity to Scotch Christian society. The Bridal of Triermain is different from the other metrical romances of Scott and will be discussed at length further. The conflicts in the romances mentioned above are essential to the various plots, but are not pursued to any political or philosophical application. The story is followed for the sake of the story itself.

In his preface to the first edition of *The Bridal of Triermain*, written in 1813 and prefixed to Lockhart's edition of the collected *Poetical Works*, Scott presents his theory of romantic poetry in a sort of apology for his earlier metrical romances.

According to the author's idea of Romantic Poetry, as distinguished from Epic, the former comprehends a fictitious narrative framed and combined at the pleasure of the writer; beginning and ending as he may judge best; which neither exacts nor refuses the use of supernatural machinery; which is free from the technical rules of the *Epee*; and is subject only to those which good sense, good taste, and good morals apply to every species of poetry without exception. The date may be in a remote age, or in the present; the story may detail the adventures of a prince or of a peasant. In a word, the author is absolute master of his country and its inhabitants, and every thing is permitted to him, excepting to be heavy or prosaic, for which, free and unembarrassed as he is, he has no manner of apology.¹

From the romantic point of view, the most significant words in Scott's definition are "framed and combined at the pleasure of the writer," who is "absolute master."

It is in this sense of personal initiative that Scott is most strongly attached to the romantic movement of the nineteenth century.

He exercised the right to work out his own native genius in his own original way, and

became a leader in the new romantic movement and in the creation of a new type of fiction. Romanticism itself, as we have seen again and again, was in this age one of the manifestations of Individualism; and Scott helped on the individualistic movement by helping on that romantic movement which meant at bottom freedom of individual genius.¹

A contemporary reviewer attacked the problem of Scott’s originality in his comments on the anonymously published Bridal of Triermain.

Upon what principle Mr. Scott has adopted the system of his poetry, whether he has selected it from some preconceived opinion of its excellency and probable popularity, or whether, as is more likely, he has been guided by the bent of his own genius and studies, it would be superfluous to inquire; and it seems to us to possess advantages which may in some measure account for the celebrity he at present possesses, and sufficient too, if prudently managed, to secure to this celebrity a permanence proportioned to its extent.²

Coleridge paid tribute to Scott’s originality as well in a letter written in 1811 defending him from the charges of plagiarism from Christabel.

If his poem had been in any sense a borrowed thing, its elements likewise would surely be assumed, not nature. But no insect was ever more like in the color of its skin and juices to the leaf it fed on, than Scott’s muse to Scott himself. Habitually conversant with the


²George Ellis, "The Bridal of Triermain," Quarterly Review, IX (July, 1813), 483.
antiquities of his country, and of all Europe during the ruder periods of society, living, as it were, in whatever is found in them imposing either to the fancy or interesting to the feelings, passionately fond of natural scenery, abundant in local anecdote, and besides learned in "all the antique scrolls of faery land, Processions, tournaments, spells, chivalry," in all languages from Apuleius to "Tam O'Shanter," --how else or what else could he have been expected to write? His poems are evidently the indigenous products of his mind and habits.¹

Scott acknowledged this debt to Coleridge in the 1830 introduction to The Lay of the Last Minstrel.²

Only one more aspect of Scott's romanticism remains to be considered, his treatment of nature. A great part of the value of the metrical romances, the chief value of some, lies in the description of natural scenery with which Scott embellished them. As previously mentioned, this frequent digression to admire the scenery often mars the narrative unity of the poems; yet the descriptions are usually worth the price. Those descriptions in The Lay are less of natural scenery than of architecture and the famous description of Melrose Abbey by moonlight has been previously referred to and


²Scott, op. cit., VI, 25.
partially quoted. *Marmion* is essentially military and description of natural scenery is here neglected for the trappings of chivalry. It is in *The Lady of the Lake* that Scott indulges his love of external nature and the stag hunt of the opening canto is rich in sounds and color as well as sights.

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouth'd bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.  

And we follow the hunting party up the glen as hounds and huntsmen drop off and one lone rider remains to gallop swiftly past the beauties of the highland scenery. The romantic introduction of Ellen and her island also achieves a high mark in Scott's poetic descriptions.

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.

---

The boat had touch'd this silver strand,
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood conceal'd amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.¹

Noticeable, too, in this poem is Scott's mastery over sea poetry, particularly in the Boat Song of Roderick Dhu.² With reason Scott's beautiful descriptions of the Loch Katrine country made the spot a favorite of tourists.

The summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kiss'd the Lake, just stirr'd the trees,
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy;
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice rear'd of silver bright;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemm'd with dewdrops, led her fawn;
The grey mist left the mountain side,
The torrent show'd its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky,
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer coo'd the cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.³

The sunny beauty of The Lady of the Lake country
is far different from the rude grandeur of the Lake

¹Ibid., VIII, 42-3. Canto I, Stanza XVII.
²Ibid., VIII, 88-91. Canto II, Stanzas XIX & XX.
³Ibid., VIII, 115-17. Canto III, Stanza II.
Coruisk district described in *The Lord of the Isles*.

No marvel thus the Monarch spake;  
For rarely human eye has known  
A scene so stern as that dread lake,  
With its dark ledge of barren stone.  
Seems that primeval earthquake's sway  
Hath rent a strange and shatter'd way  
Through the rude bosom of the hill,  
And that each naked precipice,  
Sable ravine, and dark abyss,  
Tells of the outrage still.  
The wildest glen, but this, can show  
Some touch of Nature's genial glow;  
On high Benmore green mosses grow,  
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroe,  
And copse on Cruchan-Ben;  
But here, --above, around, below,  
On mountain or in glen,  
Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,  
Nor aught of vegetative power,  
The weary eye may ken.  
For all is rocks at random thrown,  
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,  
As if were here denied  
The summer sun, the spring's sweet dew,  
That clothe with many a varied hue  
The bleakest mountain-side.

And wilder, forward as they wound,  
Were the proud cliffs and lake profound.  
Huge terraces of granite black  
Afforded rude and cumber'd track;  
For from the mountain hoar,  
Hurl'd headlong in some night of fear,  
When yell'd the wolf and fled the deer,  
Loose crags had toppled o'er;  
And some, chance-poised and balanced, lay,  
So that a stripling-posed arm might sway  
A mass no host could raise,  
In Nature's rage at random thrown,  
Yet trembling like the Druid's stone  
On its precarious base.  
The evening mists, with ceaseless change,  
Now clothed the mountains' lofty range,  
Now left their foreheads bare,  
And round the skirts their mantle furl'd,  
Or on the sable waters curl'd,
Or on the eddying breezes whirl'd,
   Dispersed in middle air.
And oft, condensed, at once they lower,
When, brief and fierce, the mountain shower
   Pours like a torrent down,
And when return the sun's glad beams,
Whiten'd with foam a thousand streams
   Leap from the mountain's crown.¹

Like The Lady of the Lake, The Lord of the Isles presents a delightful sea song, beginning:

Merrily, merrily bounds the bark,
   She bounds before the gale,
The mountain breeze from Ben-na-darch
   Is joyous in her sail.²

The Lord of the Isles is redeemed from the mediocrity to which careless composition might have relegated it by the excellence of its descriptions.

There is a romantic grandeur, however, in the scenery, and a sort of savage greatness and rude antiquity in many of the characters and events, which relieves the insipidity of the narrative, and atones for many defects in the execution.³

Concerning The Lady of the Lake another contemporary critic remarks:

Never, we think, has the analogy between poetry and painting been more strikingly exemplified than in the writings of Mr. Scott. He sees everything with a painter's eye. Whatever he presents has a character of individ-

¹Ibid., X, 109-12. Canto III, Stanzas XIV & XV.
²Ibid., X, 142. Canto IV, Stanza VII.
uality, and is drawn with an accuracy and minuteness of discrimination which we are not accustomed to expect from verbal description.\textsuperscript{1}

Many have tried to define the peculiar characteristic which distinguishes Scott's nature description. All critics are agreed that it is perfectly objective and Ruskin has relegated to it the supreme, if negative, attribute of freedom from the pathetic fallacy.\textsuperscript{2} In fact, it is much easier to define what Scott's nature descriptions are not than what they are. One critic has seen in Scott's "love of nature for its own sake" a peculiarly Scottish trait exhibited some few decades earlier by Thomson.\textsuperscript{3}

The exact scene is so closely given that it reads too much like a catalogue. It wants the spiritual element of the universal Divine that Wordsworth or Coleridge would have added to it.

This is the kind of description of nature which we find in Walter Scott. His descriptions are close to the general aspect of the scene, accurate as far as they go, even minute. Humanity does not intrude upon them. They have

\textsuperscript{1}George Ellis, "Scott's Lady of the Lake," Quarterly Review, III (May, 1810), 512.


no spiritual element. They are clear statements of natural fact. That which makes them delightful is that their lucid vision of the beautiful things the poet has the heart to see reveals his love of them, and of the wild loneliness in which they live. But this natural, unmeditative love is all. Nature to him is not, apart from her forms, in any sense alive.1

It is also true that "the subjectivity which was so prominent an element in the romanticism of Shelley, Keats, and Byron, does not appear in Scott's work,"2 and he does not see in nature a reflection of his own moods.

This mingling of the outward and inward, of eye and soul, is comparatively rare in Scott's descriptions. It does not, indeed, rise to the symbolism of Wordsworth, with whom the epithet is as suggestive of moral quality or feeling as it is accurately descriptive of the outward.3

Another element of the romantic nature poets, imaginative recall or that "inward eye which is the bliss of solitude" and the pith of such poems as Wordsworth's Prelude, is entirely lacking in Scott. "In this" absence of imaginative recall, says one critic, "Scott is a bridge figure, much less advanced in his sensibility

1Ibid., p. 97.

2Margaret Ball, Sir Walter Scott as a Critic of Literature (New York: Columbia University Press, 1907), p. 11.

than Wordsworth, but with enough of the new temper
to understand and like the people on both sides of
him."

By his accidental placement in literary chro-
nology as well as by the deliberate cultivation of
gifts which he knew to be peculiarly his own, Scott
achieved a unique position in literature. To catalogue
him with a number of others seems superficial, as he
partakes wholly of no tradition. Having examined him
from three points of view, --the contemporary, the
eighteenth-century, and the romantic--, there remains,
in conclusion, the problem of ascertaining his own
proper excellences and limitations.

---

\[^1\text{Pottle, op. cit., p. 189.}\]
CHAPTER IV

THE QUINTESSENCE OF SCOTT

From the two chronological points of view at which he can be regarded, Scott is, in either case, an innovator. He carried forth the eighteenth-century romantic tradition, enriching it by his nationalistic regard for Scotland. He remained apart from the body of the nineteenth-century romantics by his lack of introspection and his regard for tradition. The study of Scott creates the impression that the term "romantic" is mainly dependent upon chronology and the relative perspective in which an author is considered. Scott's important achievement was to escape from the confines of any literary "ism" and proceed to the exercise of a highly individual capacity.

Nature descriptions are probably Scott's point of departure from tradition. He looks neither for geometric precision, nor the romantic magnificence of absolute wilderness. His landscapes are not spoiled, as Wordsworth's are, by the presence of human figures. The grandeur of undisturbed scenery is always sacrificed for the more personal concept of the outdoors as the natural habitation of men. Just as his charac-
ters "are not supremely sensitive to their environment," but "accept their castles as a matter of course, regarding them with the casual calmness with which such buildings probably were regarded in the Middle Ages,"¹ so Scott's characters can utilize natural scenery as the proper sphere of their activity, where they are not intruders upon an eighteenth-century prospect nor invaders of the retired solitude of the romantic poet's hermitage. Above all, Scott's treatment of nature is concerned with the reality of the outdoors, "the feeling of open air," which is inseparable from "the free air of romance."²

While taking upon himself the minute presentation of detail even in his descriptions of scenery, Scott, as a romance-writer, felt free to disregard certain other limitations. His regard for chronology, for instance, was slight. Even from the few examples of the poetry herein quoted, one deliberate anachronism may be discovered. As Beers points out, the Castle of Lindisfarne, in which was contained the torture chamber described in Marmion, was in ruins centuries

¹Smith, op. cit., p. 182.
before the battle of Flodden Field. Another point at which Scott stretches the probabilities of chronology is in his attribution of a fondness for Shakespeare to Wilfrid in Rokeby. As the story is concerned with the wars between the Cavaliers and Roundheads and is laid immediately following the battle of Marston Moor in 1644, Scott is presuming to some extent upon the seventeenth-century reputation of Shakespeare. Wilfrid, it may be presumed, had access to the quartos of the second tetralogy, As You Like It, Hamlet, and Othello, or had either the first or second folio. Scott is speaking for himself, or the typical nineteenth-century litterateur in acknowledging this fondness for Shakespeare. However, such anachronisms and near anachronisms are hardly important in the creation of Scott's romances. Professor Pottle has remarked upon Scott's ability to cast a spell and, like a true "Wizard of the North," enchant a country, breaking "the comfortable shackles of time,

---


and the familiar scene."\(^1\) Certainly Scott was supremely gifted in the exercise of a romantic imagination, even while he did not concern himself with the technicalities or psychological distinctions between imagination and fancy.

Perhaps the one outstanding lack in the poetry of Scott, considering the source of his imitation to be medieval romances, is that of allegory. None of Scott's romances are capable of allegorical interpretation. Never does there appear even a glimpse of the shadow of second meaning which permeates *The Ancient Mariner* and many of the poems of Keats and Shelley, or to a lesser extent even those of Wordsworth and Byron. The one poem which would appear at first glance to be capable of further interpretation is *The Bridal of Triermain*; yet this impression is misleading. Whether this romance is different from the others merely in the fact that it was published anonymously and Scott was trying to lead suspicion of its authorship to his friend, William Erskine,\(^2\) is a point which cannot here be determined. At any rate, *The Bridal of Triermain* is a charming fable, remarkable for the complete divorce from

---

\(^1\)Pottle, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

\(^2\)Scott, *op. cit.*, X, 8. Introduction (1830) to *The Lord of the Isles*. 
history with which Scott's romances are usually weighted. Hutton, in his biography, has condemned the poem on this account and compared The Bridal with similarly objectionable tendencies in The Lady of the Lake.\(^1\) Certainly The Bridal exemplifies qualities which are not ordinarily to be expected from Scott. In fact, Scott's entire attitude toward the metrical romance was more than usually concerned when he wrote The Bridal. In the Introduction quoted in Chapter III he attempted a serious definition of his idea of romantic poetry. Noticeable also is the absence of factual notes to bolster the narrative, the appendix being only three pages long. The Bridal of Triermain appears almost to be an abortive attempt by Scott to invade a new poetic genre. Not that this poem is better than those more typical. In fact, Scott's use of a story within a story within a story is undoubtedly a new low in technical carelessness, providing confusion at every turn for the floundering reader. In his Introduction previously referred to, Scott divides poetry by purpose of composition into two kinds, religious and historical,\(^2\) and


\(^2\)Scott, *op. cit.*, XI, 5.
accordingly develops his theory of romantic poetry as distinct from epic.\textsuperscript{1} Although the conclusion of Scott's speculation remains obscure, his immediate effect is the apology that *The Bridal* is a thoroughly romantic poem, free of such pretensions to the epic which later were postulated concerning such works as *Marmion*.

The fashion of later critics of Scott, those to some extent bigoted by the romantic conception of introspective poetry, has been to deny the significance of his metrical romances proportionately as the author's objectivity is demonstrated. Another of the great points of difference is in the question of length of digression. W. D. Howells, speaking primarily of the novels, exhibits the shortsighted, superficial estimation of Scott popular at the end of the nineteenth century among critics of the naturalistic school who found the easiest way to promote a new literary theory was to debunk an old one. Howells' pronouncement "that on the simplest occasions he went about half a mile to express a thought that could be uttered in ten paces across lots\textsuperscript{2} sounds very timely. Howells was mani-

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., XI, 13.

festly engrossed with the idea of literary generations, borrowed from current evolutionary theories, as he wrote patronizingly that "in the beginning of any art even the most gifted worker must be crude in his methods." Neither could his pronouncement that Scott's generation was "slower-witted, aesthetically untrained" have been written had Howells examined the contemporary criticism of Jeffrey. Arthur Symons, writing in 1904, adopted a hostile attitude with regard to Scott's poetic powers, without taking into consideration the limitations of the narrative medium with which Scott was working, and applied the romantic criterions of lyric poetry to Scott's narrative verse.¹

The surpassing merit of Scott lies in his ability to depict action. His poetry echoes in its meter the beat of horses' hoofs and the marching of military forces. Elton, in one of the few serious analyses of Scott's metrical technique to be found in the criticism consulted, describes this highly integrated combination of subject and method as follows:

The octosyllabic rhyme is once, twice, or thrice repeated crescendo, until the note is lowered, but not too much, and the stanza brought to for

a moment, by the line of six which breaks and falls with a never-failing spell. A new set of eights then begin, whose wave is likewise broken by a new line of six, rhyming with that of six which came before. Well delivered, this effect of alternate rush and fall would charm even in an unknown language.\\n
Illustrative both of Scott's ability to portray action and his effective use of the lines of varying length to produce a crescendo is the following passage from The Lord of the Isles.

Not so awoke the King! his hand
Snatch'd from the flame a knotted brand,
The nearest weapon of his wrath;
With this he cross'd the murderer's path,
   And venged young Allan well!
The spatter'd brain and bubbling blood
Hiss'd on the half-extinguish'd wood,
The miscreant gasp'd and fell.\\n
In Harold the Dauntless Scott achieves a similar immediacy of action by the unexpected introduction of the anapestic rhythm in the last two lines of the fourteen-line stanza.

The Prelate was to speech address'd,
Each head sunk reverent on each breast;
But ere his voice was heard—without
Arose a wild tumultuous shout,
Offspring of wonder mix'd with fear,
Such as in crowded streets we hear
Hailing the flames, that, bursting out,
Attract yet scare the rabble rout.

---

1Elton, op. cit., I, 311.

2Scott, op. cit., X, 127. Canto III, Stanza XXIX.
Ere it had ceased, a giant hand
Shook oaken door and iron band,
Till oak and iron both gave way,
Clash'd the long bolts, the hinges bray,
And, ere upon angel or saint they can call,
Stands Harold the Dauntless in midst
of the hall.¹

Sir Gilbert Parker remarks:

His philosophy was not a mere state of mind,
a Nirvana of lassitude and ennui, but an
action of the mind producing a state, the
dominance of will.²

As a sort of framework providing a beginning
and ending for Harold the Dauntless, Scott playfully
alludes to those idle times between hours of action
and makes the following invocation:

Ennui!—or, as our mothers call'd thee, Spleen!
To thee we owe full many a rare device;—
Thine is the sheaf of painted cards, I ween,
The rolling billiard-ball, the rattling dice,
The turning-lathe for framing gimcrack nice;
The amateur's blotch'd pallet thou mayst claim,
Retort, and air-pump threatening frogs and mice,
(Murders disguised by philosophic name,)
And much of trifling grave, and much of buxom game.³

Oft at such season, too, will rhymes unsought
Arrange themselves in some romantic lay;
The which, as things unfitting graver thought,
Are burnt or blotted on some wiser day.—
These few survive—-and proudly let me say,
Court not the critic's smile, nor dread his frown;

¹Ibid., XI, 204. Canto IV, Stanza III.

²Sir Gilbert Parker, "The Genius of Scott,"
Harper's Weekly, LIV (March 5, 1910), 15.

³Scott, op. cit., XI, 146. Introduction.
They well may serve to while an hour away,  
Nor does the volume ask for more renown,  
Than Ennui's yawn ing smile, what time she drops  
it down.1

In a mood similarly careless of the Byronic mal du  
siécle, Scott concludes the poem:

And now, Ennui, what ails thee, weary maid?  
And why these listless looks of yawn ing sorrow?  
No need to turn the page, as if 'twere lead,  
Or fling aside the volume till to-morrow.--  
Be cheer'd;--'tis ended--and I will not borrow,  
To try thy patience more, one anecdote  
From Bartholine, or Perinskiold, or Snorro.  
Then pardon thou thy minstrel, who hath wrote  
A Tale six cantos long, yet scorn'd to add a note.2

And here we may detect as well Scott's purpose  
in writing poetry. His concern was confined to amuse-  
ment and entertainment. He did not wish to proselytize  
the literary world for romanticism, as did Wordsworth;  
and, as an anonymous critic puts it, "he can never  
please people who care only for problems."3 For the  
modern reader Scott's great fault lies in his disregard  
for literary form. While he found it necessary to re-  
work his metrical romances to some extent, his revisions  
were limited and he lacked the sense of form necessary  
for the achievement of integral, artistic unity. In

1Ibid., XI, 147-48. Introduction.

2Ibid., XI, 251. Conclusion.

3"Mr. Dennis's Scott," Saturday Review, LXXIII  
(March 26, 1892), 368.
this sense of the demand for unity, at least, the
modern romance-reader is a dilettante, and he will not
tolerate casual, lengthy digressions which do not fur­
ther the action of the narrative. It is possible to
trace in Scott's admiration for Shakespeare his own
disregard for the niceties of careful composition.¹
Like his model, Scott wished to compose rapidly and
carelessly and his poetry exhibits both the advantages
and frailties of this method.

This failure to achieve technical perfection
has injured the present reputation of Scott, but it is
also true that he has been affected by changing literary
preferences. The reversal of literary taste which took
place in the second half of the nineteenth century,
rejecting romanticism for realism, gave voice to such
critics as Howells and Symons. Undoubtedly it is dif­
ficult to estimate disinterestedly the literary achieve­
ment of an immediate predecessor. Perhaps for this
reason earlier interest in Scott was primarily bio­
ographical. In the eighteen-nineties and the rapid
economic transition of the early nineteen-hundreds his
success story appealed to a society concerned with
vanishing class distinctions. Scott, who overcame the

¹Brewer, op. cit., p. 69.
handicap of lameness to reach literary distinction and knighthood, became for the hack journalist a fairy-tale sort of person, whose personal heroism and spotless morals provided authentic material that needed slight alteration and little retouching, the ideal subject for secular hagiography. Interest in his work was critically indifferent, except that dyed-in-the-wool Scotchmen retained a sentimental attachment for the novels approaching idolatry. This estimation of Scott is still to be found in all its roseate zeal and indicates a peculiar charm of Scott which, while it does not bear close examination, is nevertheless a valid criterion of his genius.

With the critic of the eighteen-eighties we can no longer attribute Scott's diminishing reputation to a change in taste by which "the writer of the historical novel has almost disappeared from the surface of the globe." ¹ And further to depart from this point of view, we can no longer refer to Scott's reputation as a diminishing thing; it has reached the low mark and prospects are looking up. As early as 1901 precedent was set for intelligent criticism of Scott with the

publication of Hudson's excellent critical biography, in which careful estimation was made of the poetry as well as of the novels. Oliver Elton in his Survey of English Literature, published in 1912, followed this example. More recently, in 1938, Sir Herbert J. Griersson produced a biography to accompany his revised edition of Scott's Letters, in the edition of which Lockhart had often been careless. Recent periodical articles reflect equally serious preoccupation with judicial criticism, confirming the rising barometer of Scott's popularity. While the problem of Scott's literary quality has not preoccupied modern scholars and there has been no surge of scholarly work on the subject, indications are that the day of a just revaluation is coming and that the metrical romances, as well as the novels, will not suffer neglect. The modern reader, disheartened by deliberately obscure diction and misapplied metaphysics, can find in Scott's poetry a simple presentation of story for the sake of amusement and a sincere love of natural beauty refreshing to the city dweller.

An examination of Scott's metrical romances from three viewpoints, the contemporary, the eighteenth-century, and the romantic, has revealed their merits heightened
by the literary setting in which they were composed. While many succeed in part rather than total effect, all evidence Scott's rare gift of a romantic imagination which could revivify the past and which, regardless of changing literary fashions, has remained to capture the romancer of present and future.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources


Contemporary Criticism


________. "Scott's Lady of the Lake," Quarterly Review, III (May, 1810), 492-517.


"Scott's Vision of Don Roderick," Quarterly Review, VI (October, 1811), 221-35.


Complete Books


Parts of Books, Essays, Articles, and Unpublished Material


"The Age of Scott's Heroines," *Atlantic Monthly*, LXIX (January, 1892), 139-42.


Fiske, Christabel F. "Scott of Buccleugh Clan," *Poet Lore,* XXXVII (Spring, 1926), 24-62.


Haber, Tom B. "The Chapter Tags in the Waverley Novels," *Publications of the Modern Language Association,* XLV (December, 1930), 1140-49.


________. "Some of Scott's Heroines," Harper's Bazar, XXXIII (July, 1900), 775-80.


Knickerbocker, William S. "Border and Bar," Sewanee Review, XLVIII (October, 1940), 519-32.


Lang, Andrew. "New Work on Scott," Critic, XXXVIII (April, 1901), 338-40.

"The Lay," Living Age, CCLXXIX (December 20, 1913), 742-46.


"Leslie Stephen on Sir Walter Scott," Critic, XIII (September 1, 1888), 107.


"Manners and Customs of the Highlanders," Spectator, LXXIII (August 11, 1892), 178-79.


"Mr. Dennis's Scott," Saturday Review, LXXIII (March 26, 1892), 368.


Pierce, Frederick E. "Humanism, Romance-Coated," *Saturday Review of Literature*, IX (October 1, 1932), 143-44.


"Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott," *Critic*, XXVII (December 14, 1895), 400-1.


"A Quartet of Quarterly Reviewers," *Living Age*, LI (October 25, 1856), 240-49.


"Robbing Sir Walter Scott," *Literary Digest*, LXVI (September 11, 1920), 34-5.


________. "Some Curious Misprints," *Nation*, LXXXVII (October 22, 1908), 382-83.

________. "The Text for Scott's 'Lady of the Lake,'" *Critic*, III (July 28, 1883), 315-16.


________. "Sir Walter Scott on His 'Gabions,'" *Nineteenth Century*, LVIII (October, 1905), 621-33.

"Scott's Methods and Originals," *Quarterly Review*, CLXXVI (July, 1897), 464-91.


"Scott's 'Social Significance','', *Nation*, CXXXV (October 5, 1932), 297-98.


"Sir Walter Scott and Melrose Abbey," *Critic*, XXI (June 13, 1894), 27.


*Was Sir Walter Scott a Poet?*, *Atlantic Monthly*, XCIV (November, 1904), 564-69.


