The Female Portrait Gallery

By

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Taken from
Blanchard's
Life and Literary Remains
1841

Note:

This was the beginning of an ongoing project that was to analyse female characters in fiction, not only from Sir Walter Scott but from other major authors as well. A small number had already been published in The New Monthly Magazine and, prior to her death, Mrs MacLean sent this collection to Mr. Blanchard with a view to their being published by Charles Heath, as 'Essays on the Female Characters in Walter Scott', on a fortnightly basis from January, 1839 (this from the accompanying letter).

THE

FEMALE PORTRAIT GALLERY.

Contents

1	Waverley	Flora Mac Ivor	81
2		Rose Bradwardine	86
3	Guy Mannering	Julia Mannering	90
4		Lucy Bertram	94
5	The Antiquary	Miss Wardour	99
6		Mary Mac Intyre	103
7	Rob Roy	Diana Vernon	108
8	The Black Dwarf	Isabel Vere	114
9	Old Mortality	Edith Bellenden	118
10		Jenny Dennison	122
11	The Heart of Midlothian	Jeannie Deans	127
12		Effie Deans	131
13	The Legend of Montrose	Annot Lyle	136
14	The Bride of Lammermuir	Lucy Ashton	140
15	Ivanhoe	Rebecca	147
16		Rowena	152
17	The Monastery	Mary Avenal	156
18		Mysie Happer	160
19	The Abbot	Mary Queen of Scots	165
20		Catherine Seyton	169
21	Woodstock	Alice Lee	173
22	Marmion	Constance	180

THE

FEMALE PORTRAIT GALLERY.

WAVERLEY.

No. 1.—FLORA MAC IVOR.

The time immediately preceding that of Sir Walter Scott may be likened to the thirty years' drought in Cyprus, during which, as an old historian says, the earth had neither green nor bloom, and the heavens seemed made of brass. The brilliant age of Pope, the wittiest in our language, had left only a cold reflection—poetry was no more, and with it had perished the animating influence it exercises over prose. The fictions put forth were of the lowest order. A castle, a ghost, an improbable villain, an impossible hero, a heroine and a harp, were the joint-stock of romances; while novels of manners were, if they could be so, still less like real life. Nothing could be more insipid than the rakes reformed in the third volume, unless it were the ladies, all loveliness and

ill-luck. Inventions lacked the vivifying principle —truth; and the inevitable consequence was, the copied and the common-place. "Waverley" was the avater of a new era; and established, as it now is, among our English classics, justice cannot be done to its merits without reference to its contemporaries —"the dwindled race of little men"—the hewers of wood, and the drawers of water, where their great forefathers had planted the forest, and sank the "pure well of English undefiled."

"Waverley" was at once a novel of character, like those of Fielding and Richardson; and one of adventure, like those of Defoe; but it had that peculiar stamp of its own which genius alone can give. Founded, like the old ballads, on tradition, it entered the province of poetry, while the time in which it was written gave enlightenment, and the writer's mind its own shrewdness, sharpened by that dry humour which is essentially of Scottish growth. Scott is the founder of a new school—the picturesque, which now, more or less, influences all our writers. "Waverley" was a succession of pictures —both landscape and portrait—indeed all his characters give the idea of portraits rather than of inventions.

Flora Mac Ivor belongs to poetry—poetry which takes the highest order of qualities, to fashion into beauty, and quicken into life. It was the first attempt to give the ideal to female character in

prose, if we except the "Clementina" and "Clarissa" of Richardson. But, despite of his great merits, Richardson had one fault, fatal to the lasting popularity of an author—he was too conventional. The excellent and the beautiful had no wide grasp—to-day was too much with him; he dwelt on "nice observances," and made goodness so dependent on forms and ceremonies, that the spirit was lost while attending to the shape; yet some of his conceptions are singularly fine. I know nothing in all our old drama so fertile in striking situations, so utterly desolate, as Clarissa in her wretched lodging, seated calmly at work on her shroud. She is young, but the grave yawns at her feet; she is beautiful, but the pride of loveliness is gone by for ever: delicately nurtured, she lacks the common necessaries of life, and made to be cherished and beloved, she is deserted by relative and friend. It was a great moral truth that made Richardson feel that it was impossible for such a story to end happily—it would have been to make evil work out its own reward. Clarissa could not marry Lovelace: to marry him had been to swear love and respect; the pure and noble nature must have been perverted before she could have felt either: all Clarissa could do was to forgive, and that only on her death-bed, and in the presence of her God.

But Scott possessed what Richardson lacked,

the general, and the picturesque. "Flora Mac Ivor" has those qualities which we all like to believe belong to human nature; the ideal is but the realization, in a palpable form, of our noblest emotions, of our highest aspirations. Generous and high-spirited as she is, Flora never goes beyond what we wish, and what we feel, a woman might be. Generally speaking, the female character is developed through the medium of affection—till she loves, she has rarely felt, consequently rarely thought much—for thoughts are but the representatives of past feelings—it is the heart that awakens the mind in woman. But Flora Mac Ivor is among the exceptions to this rule. I believe that the imaginative, and the highly-gifted, are the least susceptible; when they do love, it is with the depth and the energy to which themselves give strength; but the imagination rarely at first seeks an object where it must depend; it likes to feel its freedom, and its earliest pursuit is usually unselfish and abstract.

Flora's imagination has an object in its loyalty—and her affection in her brother. If there be one tie on earth, dear even as love, it is that which unites an only brother and sister, left together orphans in their childhood. If "heaven lies around us in our infancy," there is something sacred in the love—an instinct with that earliest time. It grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength;

it has the confidence of marriage without its care; and, cemented by those mutual associations, whose want is so often and so severely felt in married life, it has the tenderness with none of the jealous anxiety of love. The very faults of Fergus, perhaps, did but draw the tie closer between himself and his sister. It is pleasant to excuse, when hope brings the promises of the future to palliate the errors of the past. We can imagine the youthful Highlanders returning to a country, dearer for absence; and under actual disappointment, looking forward as only youth can look. In after life the heart sinks back upon itself—we have not courage to hope.

Nothing, to use the word so peculiarly his own, can be more picturesque than the first introduction of Fergus and his sister; and while the chieftain's animation in his cause carries us along, we cannot but feel that it is Flora who infuses into their loyalty its nobler elements. It is to the credit of our nature that the generous impulse, the unselfish devotion, are never without their influence; but it is a fearful thing to influence others; every thought we have suggested, every action we have stimulated, rise, if their issue be unsuccessful, in terrible array against us. Our own fate we might have borne, but regret becomes remorse when we have urged on that of another. Clarissa might sew the garment of death calmly—it was for herself; but Flora

sits sewing the shroud of her brother—the young, the gifted, the high-spirited Fergus, the last of their ancient line—the prematurely doomed chief of Glennaquoich. I never could read without tears his sister's bitter self-reproaches, that she had been the one to urge him on, and—to the scaffold! It is the cry of the heart-broken, when she so passionately exclaims, "Oh! that I could but remember to have said to him, he that strikes by the sword, shall die by the sword." It is a relief to think of Flora in the silence and the solitude of the cloister. The gates of life are as much closed upon her as if she had passed through those of death. The cause lost on which she had perilled what was dearer than existence, and the house of Stuart again in hopeless exile; her beloved brother in his early and ignominious grave—what remained for Flora but to ask her own tomb from that Heaven, the only light through the black veil of the order of St. Dominick.

No. 2.—ROSE BRADWARDINE.

THERE is one felicity of style which is peculiarly Scott's own; the very happy names which he gives his *dramatis personæ*. Whether of grace or of humour, they are singularly characteristic. Literary godfathers and godmothers, like those in real

life, have much to answer for, on the score of the inappropriate. This complaint cannot be urged against the natural and charming heiress of Tully Vedarose, by name, and rose by nature; neither lover nor poet could have imagined a more fitting emblem for the lovely girl, whose youth and bloom are in exquisite contrast to the various venerable objects by which she is surrounded—from the ancient tower, where she "makes a sunshine in a shady place," to the ancient baillie Mac Wheeble, whose heart, crusted as it is with native and professional selfishness, has yet one warm and soft touch of affection for the child he has seen grow to all but womanhood beneath his eyes. Scott indicates, to use an expressive Irishism, "what a darling she is," by the attachment she inspires in all around. No one makes the heart of a little home circle entirely their own, without some very sweet gifts of nature—we must love to be beloved. That Waverley did not in the first instance yield his heart—"rescue or no rescue"—militates nothing against Rose's attraction. Lord Byron says, "In youth we like something older than ourselves, in age something younger." This is most especially true in a youth of imaginative temperament. He looks for a goddess, and it is rarely till more than one cloud has melted into bodiless air, that he begins to think that the claims of a young and pretty woman are at least equal to his own. What at first he asked from love, were excitement and romance;

as he goes on he discovers, that the real pearl of price is affection. Rose Bradwardine is a simple, unaccomplished, but not uneducated girl. The old baron, in spite of his oddities, is a thorough-bred gentleman. Gentle breeding is Rose's by heritage. Every thing about her indicates native refinement. All her tastes have a delicate touch of poetry—from her little chamber in the turret, overlooking the loveliest point of landscape, down to the flower-beds, which the old domestic forgets his dignity so far as to dig with his own hands for the sake of Miss Rose.

It is the most natural thing in the world that she should love Edward Waverley. He is the first young and accomplished cavalier that she has seen. He treats her with kindness, and immediately she is in a situation to render him service, the most attaching position possible to the generosity of a woman's nature; to succour is with her almost to love. Secluded and simple-minded, the young and warm-hearted Rose could not be without romance; romance born of the purest poetry, and the keenest sensibility. The unconscious awakening of love in such a heart, is one of the loveliest objects in nature. It is the first ruffling of the dove's plumage in the dewy light of morning, warm with the quick pulse that beats beneath the rainbow colours, varying the expanding yet timid wings. Flora Mac Ivor, with her affectionate care for one who is to her like a sweet younger sister, was right in deeming Rose

the fitting bride for the representative of the Waverleys. She would have found her mental superiority very much in the way of domestic felicity. To look up is the natural feminine position. While Rose would have been lost in delighted admiration when her husband showed her a design for a temple to end some newly-cut vista in the woods of Waverley Honour, or read to her his latest translation of a sonnet from "Petrarch," Flora would fain have urged to those more active, if more dangerous pursuits, which gain man place among his fellows. While the one would have exclaimed—

> "Shame to the coward thought that ere betray'd,
> The noon of manhood to a myrtle shade;"

the other would only have felt the happiness of being at his side. Flora was fit to be compeer and companion to one who allowed her superiority because he knew his own. She would have been "worthy to be the bride of Pericles;" while Rose was just suited to the quiet, unpretending gentleman, who looked to his landed property for his ambition, and to his hearth for his enjoyments. Rose was right in her answer, when Flora spoke of Edward Waverley wandering along his park by moonlight, with his beautiful wife hanging on his arm—"and she will be a very happy woman." The prophecy brought its own fulfilment.

GUY MANNERING.

No. 3.—JULIA MANNERING.

There is one point of view in which the Waverley novels may be considered peculiarly suited to our age, which piques itself on its utilitarism, viz. the capital which they have been the means of circulating; in paper, printing, bookbinding, and conveyance of the volumes, which amount to an immense sum; and there is no country civilized enough for literature where they are not to be found. But one benefit they have conferred has been expressly for Scotland, and the head of Walter Scott would be the fittest sign for every inn in the land of cakes. He originated the taste for travelling there, now so universal. Sixty years ago a tour through the Highlands was much about what a tour through Crim Tartary would be considered at present. Now, how few there are among those who travel at all, but have sailed on—

> "Lovely Loch Achray.
> Where shall they find in foreign land,
> So lone a lake—so sweet a strand."

Few but have passed the Trossachs ; and though I plead guilty to the weakness of feeling it a shock to hear of a steam-boat on Loch Katrine, yet, considering that a steam-boat makes that a pleasure for the many, which would otherwise be confined to the few, the dark chimney may smoke through

> " Every vale,
> Rent from the Saxon and the Gael."

In nothing more than in travelling are the picturesque and the useful blended together, and Scotland is now, thanks to the author of the " Lay of the Last Minstrel," classic ground ; it is filled with associations—it is peopled with the past.

It is no paradox to say, that the country is never so much enjoyed as by the dwellers in cities. How many are there who live eleven months on the hope of the twelfth given to some brief but delightful wandering. Even in the dull and mindless routine of a watering-place, where shrimps and rabbles are the Alpha and Omega of the day, there is refreshment and relief ; and how much are these increased, when the perceptions, as well as the sensations, are called into play ? How much poetical feeling, how much enthusiasm, has the perusal of some favourite work excited in the minds of those about to visit the scenes depicted. How much was the actual enjoyment heightened by the various remembrances called up ; what a store of pleasant reminiscences must be carried home to the fire-side, and what

a new pleasure to open some page of glowing description, now familiar to the eye as well as to the fancy. It is impossible for even the most common-place mind not to gain something of the refined and the ideal in such a process; and in the mutual intercourse thus established between two countries, separated by old hostilities, numberless prejudices, and some unkindness must have been swept away in a manner unusually conciliating to both parties. "Waverley," and "Guy Mannering," are international links.

"Guy Mannering" is a novel of modern manners, or rather of modern date; for with one or two exceptions, the district is so remote, that the customs are of the olden time. In the admirably drawn character of Colonel Mannering, ample reason is found for its locale—he is the very man to whom the seclusion of a wild country would be its chief attraction. The habits of a man accustomed to command—especially on a foreign station, would necessarily be reserved and secluded. Not only accustomed to implicit obedience, but aware of its imperative necessity under the circumstances in which they have been placed, such are apt to expect it from all. Now, what is but the necessary authority in official life, and with man over man, seems harshness when extended to woman. How often, perhaps, must Colonel Mannering's decision have seemed sternness, his reserve coldness, his ab-

straction indifference, and his authority tyranny, to a young, spoilt, and pretty woman. Her attachment would not be diminished, for his high qualities ensured that respect needful for the duration of affection; but he had also those which keep the imagination alive, and of that, feminine love is "all compact." We can also believe that Colonel Mannering was very fond of his wife, though shy of showing it, even to herself; above all, his pride would revolt from any of that display before others in which she would take an excusable vanity. Pride on the one hand—petulance on the other, would soon lead to misunderstanding, the weaker party would soon be forced to yield, and the yielding would be less palatable from the consciousness of having been wrong. Colonel Mannering is a strictly just man, but not one to make allowances; a weakness would irritate him as much as a fault. Deceit is the offspring of fear, especially with woman; and the sophistry of—

> "It is such a trifle it cannot matter,"

is too easy not to be tempting in practice. We have dwelt on Colonel Mannering's character—for the whole story grows out of it; and, moreover, it formed both that of his wife and daughter. But while Julia's habits and opinions were from her mother, she inherited some of the qualities of her father—the high spirit, the quick feeling, and the

intelligence, are of paternal origin—she would understand and justify any confidence that might be placed in her. There is something singularly natural in her letters: gay, ignorant of reality, yet with a native quick perception, they are just what a clever, spoilt, self-witted girl, quite unacquainted with the world, would write. The inherent good feeling and sense of propriety soon show themselves, and it is a relief that the clandestine correspondence in which we find her engaged has so many extenuating circumstances; for in spite of moonlight, rope-ladders, and a chaise-and-four, the love affair, carried on in opposition and secrecy, will mostly end ill. Deception is always an evil, but in youth—youth, whose very faults should be open-hearted and impetuous, it lays the foundation of the worst possible faults of character. Moreover, unromantic as it may sound, the objections of the elder party are often more wisely founded than their juniors are tempted to admit, and life has no wretchedness equal to an ill-assorted marriage—it is the sepulchre of the heart, haunted by the ghosts of past affections, and hopes gone by for ever.

No. 4.—LUCY BERTRAM.

Lucy Bertram's story is that of many others where nature and fortune are at variance—the one

as slavish as the other is niggard. Nature gave Lucy Bertram the lovely face and the sweet disposition, but fortune surrounded her with difficulties and sorrows. From her cradle, whose companion was the coffin of her mother, her young life must have been one of anxiety and of struggle. Her natural good sense would soon show the embarrassments which were daily thickening around her ruined father, while she must see the fruitlessness of her own efforts to retrieve or assist. From the time that she could think at all her thoughts must have been sad and careful ones; and what strength, yet sweetness of character, they gradually developed! A quick perception of propriety is the chief characteristic of her mind, while warm, but timid affection, is that of her heart. I know no circumstances so melancholy as those of a decayed family: the very fact of having known better days only aggravates the privations of the present—and pride inflicts—

> " Tortures the poor alone can know,
> The proud alone can feel."

Scott has skilfully surrounded the falling house of Ellangowan with every possible circumstance that could excite interest in its fortunes. There is the long descent, coupled with stirring traditions of love and war; and call it prejudice or fantasy, the pride of birth has a hold on our respect, linked

half by habit, half by that subtle influence which the past has over the mind. Truly, as Schiller beautifully says—

> "Time consecrates;
> And what is grey with age, becomes religion."

Then there is the pity for the kind-hearted master turned from his homestead in his old age—a man, too, who has been "nobody's enemy but his own," though certainly he had better have been an enemy to some one else. Next our justice is enlisted on his behalf—his own imprudence is merged in generous indignation against the ungrateful dependant who has thus requited confidence. Last, is the interest felt for youth and loveliness left alone in this bleak and bitter world. "Guy Mannering" is, like its companions, filled with pictures. What a picture is that of the old man, seated for the last time in his arm-chair, removed from its accustomed place by the fireside, to the sunny bank, waiting to leave the home of his forefathers, though all see that "a darker departure is near," while his child, his patient, affectionate child, watches at his side. Almost every appearence, too, of Meg Merrilies is a stage effect, as dramatic in situation as it is in language. There are some exquisite touches of poetry. In her well-known denunciation, what can be finer than the—"This day have ye quenched seven smoking hearths—see if the fire in your ain parlour burn the brighter for that:"—or, again,

what can be more pathetic than her lament over the Cairn of Dernclough.

"Do you see that blackit and broken end of a sheeling? there my kettle boiled for forty years—there I bore twelve buirdly sons and daughters—where are they now?—where are the leaves that were on that auld ash tree at Martinmas? the west wind has laid it bare, and I am stripped too. . . . It will ne'er be green again, and Meg Merrilies will never sing sangs mair, be they blithe or sad. But ye'll no forget her, and ye'll gar build up the old wa's for her sake!!" . . . Mixed with the romantic and the pathetic, how much too there is in "Guy Mannering" of the amusing and the humorous. Pleydell is a comedy in himself, and now a relic of the olden time. Strange how manners change, and how to-morrow alters all it can of yesterday; but an acute and kind-hearted lawyer with peculiarities which, like a touch of sharp sauce, give flavour to the viand, might and will be longer found than the sturdy and honest farmer of Charlie's Hope. When civilization comes to a certain point, the changes in the higher classes are little more than those of fancies and of fashions; but those operating on the classes below are changes of character.

Never did book end more satisfactorily than "Guy Mannering." We are glad of Julia's marriage, but we have even a kindlier interest in that

of the sweet and timid Lucy. The work has only one sin of omission. Mr. Pleydell declares that Mrs. Allan's sauce to the wild duck, of lemon, claret, and cayenne, was beyond all praise. Truly, for the benefit of future generations, Mrs. Allan's receipt ought to have been given.

THE ANTIQUARY.

No. 5.—MISS WARDOUR.

The history of credulity would be the most singular page in the great history of mankind. From those vast beliefs which have founded religions and empires, down to the inventions that garnish the last new murder, there has always been a tendency in the human mind to believe with as little expense of the reasoning faculty as possible. A few useful doubters have certainly existed, and we cannot but agree with a late periodical writer, who says, "a doubt is a benefit to the truth;" generally speaking, however, doubt requires to be sharpened by vanity or by interest before it becomes an effective agent—the original leaning is the other way. When I left England the wondrous effects of animal magnetism usually came in to be discussed with the fish and soup; and if Sir Walter could have heard the miracles recorded, and the miracles credited and accredited by "the most respectable witnesses," he might not have thought it necessary to apologize for making his German charlatan an instrument in

his plot. It is a curious fact, that the true has always been more opposed at the outset than the false; the circulation of the blood and vaccination nearly lost their discoverers credit and practice, while some vender of quack medicines makes a rapid fortune. This may perhaps be accounted for, simply, that the impostor addresses the multitude, while the scientific discoverer appeals to his brethren in knowledge, all of whom are inclined to deny, what, if admitted, must show, that a great part of their own research and acquirement has been in vain; still he who trades on human credulity will have a good stock on hand, especially when the lure held forth is that of gain.

Sir Arthur Wardour, involved in embarrassments from which he lacked skill, resolution, and means to extricate himself, was the very man to hope improbabilities—and from the improbable to the impossible is but a step. It is very remarkable the skill with which Sir Walter works out his second-rate characters—we should ascribe this to their being taken from real life—his *dramatis personæ* are remembrances rather than inventions, he required straw for his bricks, and his imagination did not begin to work till his memory had garnered up material: hence his Scottish novels are unquestionably the best, for there his impressions are the most vivid. He needed a clue to the labyrinth of human nature—and that clue was observation. He

rarely creates a character; he is not given to subtle analysis, and we never come upon those remarks which seem like a window suddenly thrown open, that we had never seen unclosed before; but he is the great master of the outward and the actual. Every observation that he makes is rational and rightminded, but they never come like new discoveries; the reader applauds them as the echo of what he has already known to be right, but they never startle him into thinking. All Scott's qualities were opposed to the metaphysical; he and his cotemporary, Goëthe, were the antipodes of each other. The German looked within, the Scotchman looked without: to the one was assigned the province of thought—to the other that of action. The genius of the one stands as much alone as the genius of the other.

As a story teller, Scott is unrivalled; he would have made the fortune of a café at Damascus. The common conversation of every day may show how rare such a talent is; one person will give you a little narrative of some recent event, and politeness alone will compel attention; while, perhaps, one in a hundred will keep you amused while recounting a seemingly trivial accident. In the present novel there is a situation—a great favourite with our author, it is that of a father and daughter left dependant on each other's mutual affection. Rose Bradwardine, Julia Mannering, Lucy Ber-

tram, Isabel Wardour, and Diana Vernon, are all the only daughters of a widowed father. It would be difficult, though interesting, to trace in what this predilection of Scott's originated. Such a tie is one of nature's most sacred and most touching. How deep must be the feeling of the bereaved parent who cannot look on the fair face of his child without recalling a face, once the fairest and the dearest in the world: the shadow of the grave hangs around the infant playfulness of the orphan, and even the hopes of the present must come tinged with something of sadness from the past. How soon too, with the quick feelings of her sex, would the orphan-girl learn that consolation needed to be mixed with her affection; a vague pity would mingle with her caresses, and each party would think there required so much allowance to be made for the other —and allowances are the golden links of domestic happiness. The memory of the departed would be a perpetual bond of union—the father would think how sad for his child was the loss of a mother's care; while the daughter would feel a more anxious tenderness from knowing that it was hers to supply a tenderness even more anxious than her own. The affection of his daughter throws a respectability around Sir Arthur; she loves him, she humours his little foibles, and, for her sake, others also bear with him.

Isabella Wardour's kindness of heart is indicated

in all those slight things which throw such sweetness on the common air of life. The old beggar, the inimitable Edie Ochiltre, at the risk of his life, meets them on the beach, because " he could na bide to think o' the dainty young lady's peril, that has aye been kind to ilka forlorn heart that cam' near her." Even the Antiquary, with all his contempt for his " womankind," has an involuntary respect for her. If any further proof of her attraction be needed, she is the object of a romantic and devoted attachment, which if eye and manner requite less kindly than the conscious heart—it is for her father's sake. However, neither she nor Lovel need regret her earlier discouragement; for what man ever valued an object whose pursuit was unattended by trouble? Difficulty is as needful to appreciation as labour is to existence.

No. 6.—MARY MAC INTYRE.

THE preface of this work mentions, that it was less favourably received on its first appearance than its predecessors, though in the long run it has quite equalled their success. This may be reckoned among Scott's triumphs. The character of the Antiquary was less familiar to the generality of readers than it is now, when his own writings have originated a taste for the study of antiquities among

the many; he has himself shown to what such a study might lead, when it has not been made a mania for collecting "toys and trifles," whose chief value was their age. He set no undue value on relics, perhaps as valid as "the two tears of Queen Niobe kept in a glass bottle" of the Xavre. But the spirit in which Scott collected was that of the historian, and of the poet. The spur, the drinking-cup, the inscription on the mouldering stone, and the black-lettered manuscript, served to illustrate those daily manners, without whose knowledge any attempt to depict national character must be incomplete. The information thus gathered was the material of the historian, and the inspiration of the poet. The sword might be broken, the spur rusted, and the marble grey and defaced, yet not the less would the days hover round them, when the sword was that of some noble baron, and the graven letters told of honour cut short in some brief and bright career, or of loveliness laid low, even in the hour of summer.

Monkbarns is an antiquarian of another kind; he dreams no dreams, he sees no visions; his pursuits are those of an active mind, which from some chance circumstance has received its bent—a mind active yet narrow, and circumscribed by bodily indolence, while the possession of knowledge, though of a kind generally denominated "learned lumber," is sufficient to keep alive a sufficient stock of

self-love. Secluded, pursuing studies of a dry and abstract sort; kind-hearted, yet needing some strong impulse to draw such kindness forth; and, excepting in the cases of Roman pavements, plain, shrewd and practical; yet he is the rallying point for the romance of the story. Scott well understood the force of contrast. Attached, as the shy and silent are apt to be, to one whose frank gaiety is perhaps a relief to their sombre temperament, the Antiquary has undergone the common fate of seeing a more gifted rival win the young beauty, who thought little of the awkward student. Her fate is a melancholy one—suicide, or a dark suspicion of violence, and a dishonoured name; these are the remains of the lovely Eveline Neville. Every bitterness that could aggravate the misery of an unhappy attachment is here. The thought must have been for ever recurring that the heart was broken which would have reposed in safety beside his own—broken for another who proved less worthy of such trust than himself. Disappointment and regret close all the avenues of warmer affections: he has suffered too much to risk such suffering again; still the kindness peeps out in spite of indulged humours, oddities, and a system of callousness—and this is a true picture. How often, among our acquaintance, have we met some individual whose crabbed temper has provoked our irritability, or whose

peculiarities have awakened our mirth; could we look into the early history of that individual, and trace the causes that have led sorrow to mask itself with eccentricity, we should feel only wonder and pity; but the waters of life are for ever flowing onwards, and little trace do they bear of what clouds have darkened or reddened the waves below as they floated by. In despite of his affected contempt of the fairer half of the creation, his niece, Mary Mac Intyre, has a hold upon his heart; witness his instant anxiety when he fancies that she is exposed to the storm—though he avenges its betrayal by the contempt he at once throws on the truly feminine remedy of a basin of gruel, with a glass of white wine in it. We see, however, but very little of her, she only speaks in a few affectionate sentences of remonstrance to her hot-headed brother; still we wish to see more of her—a true novel reader will feel defrauded of his just rights, when at the close there is only a rumour of her marriage with Captain Wardour, which rumour wants confirmation. We will, however, hope for the best—and that best is to suppose her married in her uncle's neighbourhood. We like to imagine the old man, with age gradually smoothing down all asperities, as the shadows of twilight soften the landscape while the night approaches, and surrounded by those whose affection grows nearer and

dearer every hour. We are fain to believe the later years of his life the happiest; but, and this is the great charm of all Scott's works, we feel as if we had known the various actors in his varied scenes—and we bid the Antiquary farewell with the same good wishes that we should bestow on an old and favourite friend.

ROB ROY.

No. 7.—DIANA VERNON.

Many and opposite are the lots in life, and unequal are the portions which they measure out to the children of earth. We cannot agree with those who contend that the difference after all is but in outward seeming. Such an assertion is often the result of thoughtlessness—sometimes the result of selfishness. It is one of the good points of human nature, that it revolts against human suffering. Few there are who can witness pain, whether of mind or of body, without pity, and the desire to alleviate; but such is our infirmity of purpose, that a little suffices to turn us aside from assistance. Indolence, difficulties, and contrary interests come in the way of sympathy, and then we desire to excuse our apathy to ourselves. It is a comfortable doctrine to suppose that the evil is made up by some mysterious allotment of good; it is an excuse for non-interference, and we let conscience sleep over our own enjoyments, taking it for granted others have them also—though how we know not. It was much this

spirit that made the young French queen exclaim, when she heard that the people were perishing for want of bread, "why do they not eat buns!"

But there is a vast difference in the paths of humanity; some have their lines cast in pleasant places, while others are doomed to troubled waters. Of one person, that question might well be asked, which Johnstone, the old Scotch secretary, put to Sir Robert Walpole, "What have you done, sir, to make God Almighty so much your friend?" while another would seem "the very scoff and mockery of fortune." It must, however, be admitted, that the hard circumstances form the strong character, as the cold climes of the north nurture a race of men, whose activity and energies leave those of the south far behind. Hence it is that the characters of women are more uniform than men; they are rarely placed in circumstances to call forth the latent powers of the mind. Diana Vernon's character would never have grown out of a regular education of geography, history, and the use of the globes, to say nothing of extras, such as Poonah work, or oriental tinting. Miss Vernon is the most original of Scott's heroines, especially so, when we consider the period to which she herself belongs, or that at which such a spirited sketch was drawn. The manners of Scott's own earlier days were formal and restrained. An amusing story is told in his life of Lord Napier, which will admirably illus-

trate the importance attached to minutiæ. His lordship suddenly quitted a friend's house, where he was to have paid a visit, without any cause satisfactory to a host being assigned. But much ingenuity might have been exerted without the right cause being discovered; it was, that his valet had not packed up the set of neckcloths marked the same as the shirts.

Within the last few years what alterations have taken place in "the glass of fashion, and the mould of forms." The Duchess of Gordon brought in a style—bold, dashing, and reckless, like herself. The Duchess of Devonshire took the opposite—soft, languid, and flattering: the exclusives established a stoical school—cold, haughty, and *impayable*. The reform era has brought a more popular manner. There has been so much canvassing going on, that conciliation has become a habit, and the hustings has remodelled the drawing-room.

But Diana Vernon is a creature formed by no conventional rules; she has been educated by her own heart amid hardships and difficulties; and if nature has but given the original good impulse, and the strength of mind to work it out, hardships and difficulties will only serve to form a character of the loftiest order. Again, there is that tender relationship between the widowed father and the only girl, in which Scott so much delights. But, if the cradle be lonely which lacks a mother at its

side, still more lonely is the hour when girlhood is on the eve of womanhood.

> "On the horizon like a dewy star,
> That trembles into lustre."

No man ever enters into the feelings of a woman, let his kindness be what it may; they are too subtle and too delicate for a hand whose grasp is on "life's rougher things." They require that sorrow should find a voice; now the most soothing sympathy is that which guesses the suffering without a question. But Diana Vernon has been brought up by a father, who, whatever might be his affection, has had no time for minute and tender cares. Engaged in dark intrigues, surrounded by dangers, he has been forced to leave his child in situations as dangerous as his own, nay, a thousand times worse—what is an outward to an inward danger? The young and beautiful girl is left to herself—in a wild solitude, like Osbaldistone-hall—with a tutor like Rashleigh.

Take the life of girls in general; how are they cared for from their youth upwards. The nurse, the school, the home circle, environ their early years; they know nothing of real difficulties, or of real cares; and there is an old saying, that a woman's education begins after she is married. Truly, it does, if education be meant to apply to the actual

purposes of life. How different is the lot of a girl condemned from childhood upwards to struggle in this wide and weary world! Bitter, indeed, is the fruit of the tree of knowledge to her; at the expense of how many kind and beautiful feelings must that knowledge be obtained; how often will the confidence be betrayed, and the affection misplaced; how often will the aching heart turn on itself for comfort, and in vain; for, under its first eager disappointment, youth wonders why its kindliness and its generous emotions have been given, if falsehood and ingratitude be their requital. How often will the right and the expedient contend together, while the faults of others seem to justify our own, and the low, but distinct voice within us, be half lost, while listening to the sophistry of temptation justifying itself by example; yet how many nobly support the trial, while they have learned of difficulties to use the mental strength which overcomes them, and have been taught by errors to rely more decidedly on the instinctive sense of right which at once shrinks from their admission.

What to Diana Vernon was the craft and crime of one like Rashleigh, which her own native purity would at once detect and shun—as the dove feels and flies from the hawk before the shadow of his dark wings be seen on the air? What the desolate loneliness of the old hall, and the doubts and fears

around her difficult path—what but so many steps towards forming a character high-minded, steadfast, generous and true ; a lovely and lonely flower over which the rough winds have past, leaving behind only the strength taught by resistance, and keeping fresh the fairness—blessing even the rock with its sweet and healthy presence.

THE BLACK DWARF.

No. 8.—ISABEL VERE.

After all, though beauty be deceitful, and favour be vain, yet beauty is the most exquisite gift ever lavished by fairies around an infant cradle. Its charm is nameless; it wins us, we know not why—and lingers on our memory, we know not wherefore. Whether in the animate or the inanimate world, it is the cause of our most delicious sensations; it belongs to the imagination, for it calls up within us whatever of poetry may be lurking in the "hidden mines of thought." It is the attribute of all that is most glorious in existence—it is on the azure sky—it clothes the earth as with a garment—it rides triumphant over the purple bosom of the sea. Look within our hearts, it has originated all that is ideal in our nature. Beauty is the shadow flung from heaven on earth—it is the type of a lovelier and more spiritual existence, and the broken and transitory lights that it flings on this our sad and heavy pilgrimage, do but indicate another

and a better sphere, where the beautiful will also be the everlasting. The homage involuntarily paid to its mysterious influence is but an unconscious acknowledgment of its divine origin, and its eternal future. Here we see it, but through a glass darkly.

The presence of beauty has been perpetual in our fictions, but Scott was the first novelist who made its absence the ground-work for the character of a hero. His example has been followed in more than one illustrious instance, though whether it gave the hint for Byron's "Deformed Transformed," admits of a question. Full of animation, breaking new ground, and dramatic in action, if not in construction, it is to be regretted that it should only be a fragment: I doubt whether it could ever have been finished, it came too home. A sensitive person feels, and an imaginative one exaggerates any defect—and Lord Byron was both. His lameness originating, as it did, in an unsightly malconformation, was a perpetual source of bitterness to him. What was its effect on Scott it would be more difficult to discover; naturally reserved and cautious, his own feelings are rarely allowed to peep out in the course of his narratives; but it is remarkable that in two instances he has made the personal deficiences of his heroes lead to the formation of their characters, each character exercising a paramount influence on the conduct of the story.

In Rashleigh Osbaldistone the effect has been

evil; in the ill-fated Black Dwarf, the kind warm heart remains the same—under the pang of disappointment, and the disguise of misanthropy. The woman that he loved is gone down to her early grave, and her death breaks the only tie that binds him to his kind; but "we have all of us one human heart," and the lonely and forgotten misanthrope still feels that he is accessible to emotion. Isabel Vere is the daughter of the beloved one—her whose happiness he bought at the price of his own; her sorrow has yet power on a heart that strives to harden itself in vain. The Black Dwarf is not among my favourites; the pity felt for the poor recluse is too painful—too painful, because hopeless. There is a mark upon him which parts him from his kind; and we never feel that more than when he is in the very act of serving them. Take the interview between him and Isabel Vere, which is among Scott's most dramatic situations. In spite of his assumed harshness, his heart is beating with warm and human emotions; the remembrance of his ill-fated, but long-enduring attachment, pity, and the resolve to assist, are all struggling together; yet what is the involuntary effect on his visitor? fear, distrust, and aversion. Every kindness conferred by the Dwarf must have brought with it the "late remorse of love."

Owing independence, security, and domestic happiness to her strange protector, it must have been

a perpetual regret to Isabel Vere that her gratitude could not cheer his gloom, nor her care soothe his declining years. Sheridan Knowles has here the truer and nobler insight into human nature. It makes his "Hunchback" sensitive and suspicious; but even in his case the mental predominates over the physical; the generous loving heart, the high acquirement, the kind and gentle manner, have their rightful ascendancy; he has been happy in the love of his wife, and he is happy in the love of his child, won for him by years of care and affection, ere she knew aught of his parental claim. We follow the recluse to the gloomy cell of La Trappe with not only pity, but resentment against a fate so unjust; but it is a satisfaction to bring before the mind's eye the happy and honoured old age of Master Walter.

OLD MORTALITY.

No. 9.—EDITH BELLENDEN.

DESPITE of the loyalist aunt, and the Presbyterian uncle,

> "How happily the days of Thalaba went by,"

when Henry Morton met Edith Bellenden in the green woods, nigh to the ancient and honoured tower, where his Majesty breakfasted. Marmontel says, somewhat irreverently, while speaking of love-making, "*le bonheur lui même n'est pas grande chose, mais les avenues sont delicieuses*," and he is so far right, that the earliest is the happiest time of that love, which is everywhere but on the lip. The cheek burns, the eye kindles, the step is lighter, and the voice softer, in that sweet time, when the conscious feelings have never ventured into words; it is like the feeling with which we listen to distant, yet exquisite, music; to speak were to break the lovely enchantment. Scott for once writes, not as if he had keenly observed, but

as if he had deeply felt the charm to which he lends language. He had himself wandered beneath the shade of—

> "The weeping birch, the lady of the woods,"

with some fair companion, on whose face he only gazed by stealth—whole mornings had past by the side of some early idol,

> "The only place he coveted,
> In all a world so wide."

They too, perhaps, had interchanged volumes; and here we cannot but say a word in favour of books as the best pioneers in these kind of campaigns. The favourite volume whose reading we commend, is inevitably connected with ourselves—it must bring to our image those lonely hours when the recurrence of an image has such influence—it invests that image with the associations of poetry and fiction, and thus redeems it from the common-place of ordinary life. There is also the sympathy of taste—and how much may be inferred from a passage pencilled originally for no other eyes but our own. Then, too, a book is the prettiest stepping stone to a correspondence; it seems such a simple thing to write a note of thanks, and so natural to add some slight remark on the author; and how often is the criticism of an author's sentiments but the expression of our own! Were we to choose the

scene for love, it should certainly be in the country—a city casts its own care and anxieties on all who tread its busy streets. I have all my life been an indweller of the town, and I frankly confess, for a constant residence, I like it better than all the pastoral charms that ever made the morality of an essay, or gave grace to poetry; still there is that about the country to which the heart always turns with a feeling of freshness and renovation. The moonlight walk through the green wood, would come back upon the memory with a spell which would not belong to a lamp-lighted ramble. The green-leaf would give its freshness, the wild-flower its sweetness; on the ear would arise the murmur of the wind in the boughs—or the song of the brook singing like a child for very gladness. No wonder that Henry Morton was constant to Edith Bellenden. It may be doubted whether absence and distance be half such trials to love, as presence and possession. The remembrance of Edith Bellenden brought to the Scottish exile the scenes of his youth. Hopes long since departed, and some cherished to the last, were linked with her: she was the sweet tie that held him to his country—and his country is all-in-all to a Scotchman. It is a fact, that though a Scotchman be the most locomotive of individuals—there is scarcely a habitable part of the globe where he is not to be found—yet nothing ever weakens his attachment to his country. It is not the pride

of the English, which mostly takes a "comfortable form," a grow-your-own mutton sort of complacency, silent, and reserved, as if there were a domestic decorum in it—warm and quiet as his own fireside; still less is it the vanity of the Frenchman, who looks upon the victories of the nation as matters of personal triumph, the grandeur of the Tuilleries as his own, and the great qualities of all the great men of France as reflected upon himself The Scotchman's is a feeling altogether different; it is at once a deep steady friendship, and a blind enthusiastic love. He is little ready to admit those merits in another land, in which his own is deficient; he undervalues them, if he cannot altogether deny their existence; he holds them as superfluities. Something of the harsh, yet fine, outline of his native mountains, belongs to his moral structure; he makes few allowances, and though cautious of expressing his opinion, he has a calm rooted disdain for all customs and ideas which have not upon them the broad arrow of Scottish origin. His sense of right is strong within him; more based upon principle than impulse, it is usually an adhering guide through life. His religion is a stern reckoning with the frailties of mortality, and what he has of excitement belongs to his national poetry and music; it has but one *fête* in the year, and that is St. Andrew's Day. In no one narrative has Scott more forcibly embodied the peculiarities of his

countrymen than in Old Mortality. The Covenanters could only have existed in Scotland, where enthusiasm takes the shape of obstinacy, not of excitement. We read with wonder what men in those days endured for conscience sake—hardships, suffering, loss of worldly goods, and even death, yet we wonder more when we find on what small things this rigid conscience turned—some worthless ceremony, some question of surplice and cassock, and men have given up life and living, rather than allow the hundredth psalm to peal from an organ within the walls of their church ; still this severe discipline may have led to good, for we believe that in no religious establishment are the pure doctrines of our faith more visible than in the church of Scotland.

No. 10.—JENNY DENNISON.

In nothing does Sir Walter Scott show his great skill in the delineation of human nature more than in the characters taken from low life. These had been generally confined to a valet, half knave, half fool; a lady's maid, who took her mistress's airs like cast-off dresses, a little the worse for the wear ; and now and then a virtuous peasant. But his lower range of *dramatis personæ* are as varied and as striking as the most important performers—they are at once

individuals and national specimens. Day by day the strong ties of feudal bondage are loosening before the high-pressure of steam-engines, the progress of wealth, and the scattering of power; soon there will be little remaining but what is preserved in these graphic pages. The advantages of general independence are too obvious for dispute; but it may be regretted that the rich and poor now-a-days live so far apart: they have no amusements in common, and it is the cheerful hours of life past together that most knit the social ties. The hunt in his forest, and the Christmas by his hearth, drew the baron and his people together, each in their most lightsome mood—the gain was mutual. There is a beautiful, though more modern touch of this in the "Antiquary," when Monkbarns carries the head of the young fisherman to the grave; it was the acknowledgment of human nature's equality in the hour of suffering—it was the practical admission that

"We have all of us one human heart."

Partly from being a more scattered population, which leads to self-dependence—partly to their religious struggles having given an historical character to their ordinary remembrances, nourished by that family pride which loves to look back—there is more individuality among the Scotch than

among any other peasantry. It loses none of its raciness in the hands of their great painter.

The female character is always a softened reflection of the male; whatever are the peculiarities of the one, are, as Moore says of his lover and mistress—

> "The changes of his face
> In her's reflected with still lovelier grace,
> Like echo sending back sweet music, fraught
> With twice the aerial sweetness it had wrought."

Scott's female portraits are as life-like as those of his men. Take the fisherman's wife—why you can in fancy hear the "flyting" between her and Miss Grizzy, the maiden lady—starch, grave, but "weel respeckit;" or, again, Alison Wilson, the housekeeper in this very tale: there is the lofty generosity! It does not even appear to cross her imagination that she may retain house and lands when the rightful heir appears; she at once talks of them as his own; and in her anxiety to conform even to the prodigal habits which he may have acquired in foreign parts, she allows that he may "eat meat three times a week." I know few passages that affect me so much as the meeting between the faithful creature and her youthful, nay, no longer youthful, master—

> "But when return'd the boy, the boy no more
> Return'd exulting to his native shore,"

he returned as many return, who left their country with far higher hopes than Henry Morton—changed, subdued, and grey at heart before their time.

But we are keeping Jenny Dennison waiting—a fault she would not have pardoned in any one of her followers at trysting time. In this pearl of *soubrettes* Scott has most ingeniously blended the general cast of her kind, and the peculiar cast of her country. She has a natural gift of coquetry, which is as much a talent as a taste for music, drawing, or any other female accomplishment; she not only, like Will Honeycombe, "laughs easily," (a most popular facility), but what is of infinitely more consequence to a woman, cries easily too. Her coquetry is also combined with calculation—she never forgets that though there is certainly no hurry in the matter, one or other of these lovers is some day to be her husband; and to do Jenny Dennison justice, she does not seem very particular which, though there is a sort of a preference for Cuddie. But the lovers of her mistress are of more importance to her than her own, and not so easily managed. She pities Morton, but her preference is for Lord Evandale. The dialogue between her and Cuddie, when she protests against any recognition of the former, as likely to militate against the interests of the latter with Edith, is a most exquisite piece of conjugal diplomacy. I remember pay-

ing a visit of condolence to a poor woman who had just lost her child; I could not help thinking while gazing on the abject poverty around, that the poor infant might have been congratulated on the early escape from the hardships which appeared its daily portion. My companion tenderly soothed the mother, and told of that other and better world, to which the grave is but the portal; but it was too soon—the truth was admitted, but the consolation was unfelt. An old woman who came in, understood the matter better. "True," said she, "you have lost your child, but you have still got a good and obedient husband." A good, that is, an obedient husband, was also Jenny Dennison's idea of a helpmate; and, allowing for a little obstinacy, there appears no doubt but that Mrs. Hedrigg was perfectly satisfied with her bargain.

THE HEART OF MID LOTHIAN.

No. 11.—JEANNIE DEANS.

Sir Walter, in his happiest moment, when memory furnished materials that genius worked out in invention, was never more fortunate than in the character of "Jeannie Deans." She is a heroine, in the highest and best sense of the word, though without one of the ordinary characteristics—she is neither romantic, picturesque, nor beautiful. Scott seems to have delighted in scorning the usual accessories of interest—and yet how strong is the interest excited!—it is the very triumph of common sense and of rigid principle.

> "We recognise
> A grandeur in the beatings of the heart,"

though that hearts beat neither for love, fame, nor ambition; whose echo is like the sound of a trumpet, startling men into pleased sympathy with the triumph its stately music proclaims. Nothing can be more quiet than what seems likely to be the

tenor of the Scottish maiden's path; she belongs to that humble class, which, if it has neither the quick sensibilities, nor the graceful pleasures of a higher lot, is usually freed from its fever, its sorrows, and its great reverses; her very lover seems to ensure her against the troubles of that troubled time,

> "——— whose spring resembles
> The uncertain glory of an April day."

For

> "Somewhat pensively he wooed,
> And spake of love with quiet blending,
> Slow to begin, and never ending,
> Of serious faith, and gentle glee."

She dwells among her own people, with the prospect of no greater grief than to see, in the fullness of years, her father's grey head go down in honour to the grave. Patience and saving will, sooner or later, enable Reuben or herself to marry, when

> "Contented wi' little,
> But canty wi' mair,"

they would be heads of a house as grave, calm, and well-ordered as those wherein their own childhood learnt its sedate and serious lessons. Yet this girl becomes the centre of one of those domestic tragedies which are the more terrible from their rare occurrence, and from the regular and pious habits which would seem to preclude their possibility. Disgrace darkens upon the humble roof tree, over-

coming it with "special wonder," and those to whom sin was a horrible thing afar, have it in their constant thoughts; it has been committed by one among themselves. We all know that there is evil in the world—we read of it—we hear of it—but we never think of its entering our own charmed circle. Look round our circle of acquaintance; how it would startle us to be asked to name one whom we thought capable of crime; how much more so to find that crime had been committed by one near and dear to our inmost heart. What a moral revulsion would such a discovery produce—how weak we should find ourselves under such a trial—how soon we should begin to disconnect the offender and the offence; then, for the first time, we should begin to understand the full force of temptation, and to allow for its fearful strength; and should we not begin to excuse what had never before seemed capable of palliation? Jeannie Deans' refusal to save her sister—so young, so beloved, so helpless—at the expense of perjury, has always seemed to me the noblest effort in which principle was ever sustained by religion. How well I remember (at such a distance from England, I may perhaps be pardoned for clinging to every recollection of the past) a discussion between some friends and myself, as to whether Jeannie Deans should have saved her sister's life—even with a lie I am afraid I rather argued—" and for a great

right, do a little wrong"—that to save one whom I loved, I must have committed the sin of perjury, and said on my soul be the guilt; that if even to refuse a slight favour was painful, who could bear to say no! when on that no! hung a fellow-creature's life—that fellow-creature most tenderly beloved. But I was in error—that worst error which cloaks itself in a good intention, and would fain appear only an amiable weakness. Jeannie Deans could not have laid the sin of perjury upon her soul: she had been brought up with the fear of the Lord before her eyes—she could not—dared not—take his name in vain. Many a still and solemn Sabbath, by the lingering light of the sunset sky, or with the shadow of the lamp falling around his gray hairs, must she have heard her father read the tale of how Annanias, and Sapphira his wife, were struck dead with a lie upon their lips;—dared she go, and do likewise? To her the court of justice, with its solemnities, and the awful appeal of its oath, must have seemed like a mighty temple. It was impossible that she could call upon that Book, which from the earliest infancy had been the object of her deepest reverence, to witness to the untruth. Yet with what more than Roman fortitude she prepares herself for suffering, toil, danger—anything so that she may but save her young sister. With what perfect simplicity she perseveres even unto the end; the kindness

she meets with takes her by surprise, and worldly fortune leaves her the same kind, affectionate, and right-minded creature. Her marriage—the quiet manse, and years of happiness, unnoted save by the daily thanksgiving—come upon the reader with the same sense of enjoyment and relief, that a shady and fragrant nook does the traveller, overwearied with the heat and tumult of the highway. We have no fear that the fanaticism of her father, or the earnest warning of her husband, will ever come into over rough collision, with such a tie between them—with such a sweet and womanly peace-maker.

No. 12.—EFFIE DEANS.

It is singular what an impression of perfect loveliness Scott gives us of the "Lily of St. Leonards;" he never describes her, and yet we never doubt that

> "A lovelier flower
> On earth was never seen."

We can fancy, to continue the application of Wordsworth's exquisite lines, that nature in her case said—

> "This child I to myself will take;
> She shall be mine, and I will make
> A lady of my own;
>
> . . . . . .

> She shall be sportive as the fawn,
> That wild with glee across the lawn,
> Or up the mountain springs."

The changes and contrasts in Effie's character, too, are given with more of metaphysical working than Scott often interfuses into his creations; "like, yet unlike, is each." We differ widely from each other; do we not, as circumstances change around us, moulding us like slaves to their will—do we not differ yet more from ourselves? We see Effie first of all, the lively and lovely girl—her step is as light as her heart

> "E'en the blue harebell raised its head,
> Elastic from her airy tread."

Her songs lead the way rejoicing before her; it is as if

> "The beauty born of murmuring sound,
> Had passed into her face."

No marvel that she is beloved—and no marvel that she loves. Those gay spirits need the softening of tender affection; that warm heart is full of passionate emotions—of quick yet deep sensations—of generous impulse, and ready confidence—all that so soon kindles into love. To such a temperament love rarely brings happiness: it is too eager—too trusting and too sensitive—its end is too often in tears. But for poor Effie's one hour of Eden, "a darker departure is near;" she is now shame-struck

and broken-hearted; the cheek is pale—the heart once gave it colour; but it is now as monumental marble; the desperation of the wretched is with her; she replies to the proposal of escape by a refusal, "Better tint life, since tint is guid fame;" yet she trembled before the death which she has staid to meet—she is too young to die. Nothing can be more pathetic than the meeting of the sisters. Can we not fancy how the poor prisoner's heart sank within her, when she heard her sister's step recede, slowly and sadly, day after day, from the pitiless door! What a change from the "Lily of St. Leonard's," shaking down the golden blossom of the broom as some chance branch caught her more golden hair. But the change is, when the "Lily of St. Leonard's," and the pale prisoner of the Tolbooth has become Lady Staunton—the received wit—the admitted beauty—the courted and the flattered. I have heard this transition called unnatural; it is not so. How many are the mysteries of society! I do not agree with Goethe, who says that every man has that hidden in the secret recesses of his bosom, which, if known, would cause his fellow men to turn from him with hatred; on the contrary, I firmly believe that were the workings of the heart known, they would rather win for us favour and affection. It is not so much that our natural impulses are not good, as that we allow temptation to turn them aside; or,

"Custom to lie upon them with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life."

Still, how many go through life with the arrow in their side of which no one dreams—with some secret it were worse than death to divulge. Lady Staunton lives in that most wretched of restraints—perpetual reserve. I can conceive no punishment so dreadful as keeping perpetual watch on our words, lest they betray what they mean to conceal; to know no unguarded moment—no careless gaiety—to pine for the confidence which yet we dare not bestow—to tremble, lest that some hidden meaning lurk in a phrase which only our own sickly fancy could torture into bearing such—to have suspicion become a second nature—and to shrink every morning from the glad sunshine, for we know not what a day may bring forth: the wheel of Ixion were a tender mercy compared to such a state. Lady Staunton, too, fears her husband; and that says everything of misery that can fall to a woman's lot. It is dreadful to tremble at the step which was once earth's sweetest music—to start at a voice once so sweet in our ear, and watch if its tone be that of anger, even before we gather the import, and to hesitate before we meet eyes, now only too apt to look reproach and resentment. There is one touch of character full of knowledge in the human heart. Lady Staunton is glad to leave her sister's quiet parlour and garden, for the

wild heath spreading its purple harvest for the bees; and the rock side, where the step can scarce find uneasy footing amid the lichen and groundsel. How often is bodily weariness resorted to, to subdue the weariness within; and fortunate, indeed, are those who have never known that feverish unrest, which change of place mocks with the hope of change of suffering. Moreover, for few are the sorrows which know no respite, an imaginative taste must have seen enjoyment in

> "The grace of forest woods decayed,
> And pastoral melancholy;"

while the wilder scenes elevate us into forgetfulness of those human troubles which sink into nothingness before their mighty and eternal presence. Equally natural, too, is Lady Staunton's retirement to a convent; penance and seclusion were framed for such minds whose very penitence would be excitement. It was an extreme; and the "Lily of St. Leonard's" had led a life of extremes.

THE LEGEND OF MONTROSE.

No. 13.—ANNOT LYLE.

WHAT is the world that lies around our own? Shadowy, unsubstantial, and wonderful are the viewless elements, peopled with spirits powerful and viewless as the air which is their home. From the earth's earliest hour, the belief in the supernatural has been universal. At first the faith was full of poetry; for, in those days, the imagination walked the earth even as did the angels, shedding their glory around the children of men. The Chaldeans watched from their lofty towers the silent beauty of night—they saw the stars go forth on their appointed way, and deemed that they bore with them the mighty records of eternity. Each separate planet shone on some mortal birth, and as its aspect was for good or for evil, such was the aspect of the fortunes that began beneath its light. Those giant watch-towers, with their grey sages, asked of the midnight its mystery, and held its starry roll to be the chronicle of this breathing world. Time past on, angels visited the earth no more,

and the divine beliefs of young imagination grew earthlier. Yet poetry lingered in the mournful murmur of the oaks of Dodona, and in the fierce war song of the flying vultures, of whom the Romans demanded tidings of conquest. But prophecy gradually sank into divination, and it is a singular proof of the extent both of human credulity and of curiosity, to note the various methods that have had the credit of forestalling the future. From the stars to a tea-cup is a fall indeed—

> "Ah, who would soar the starry height,
> To settle in the tea at night."

To this day many a pretty face in a housemaid's cap grows serious, while some ancient crone reverses the cup, and from the grounds anticipates the course of events; there is, however, much similarity in their course, for the prediction always announces a present, a journey, and a ring. Telling fortunes by cards is a more scientific process. The sybil avers that Friday is the more propitious day—one or two lucky guesses rivet the attention—and though afterwards it is to be hoped that the listener will have the grace to blush, yet the attention often bestowed says much for the love of the unknown, inherent both in men and women. I believe that the grand secret of attraction is, that the details always turn on what is present to our fears, or gratifying to our vanity. The fair man,

as fair as hearts, who is with us in daylight and in dreams, usually takes a "local habitation and a name" from some secret hope;—it is pleasant to think that another as dark as spades is exceedingly "vexed in his mind" on our account; while self-love confirms the warning, to be on our guard against some envious woman as fair as diamonds.

But the most dignified shape that prophecy has taken in modern times is, unquestionably, the second sight. It takes its seeming from the wild country which gave it birth, where the grey mists clothing forest and mountain, so often delude the eye with unreal shapes. Without positive insanity, we know how the imagination may be worked upon to hold each strange tale devoutly true; and could a person once be sufficiently excited to believe that he possessed such a power, it would not long want confirmation strong as holy writ. Could such a gift be given, what a dreadful one to the possessor. To look on the face of youth, and see in it the writing of death, the shroud up to the throat; to stand beside your chosen friend, and watch the grave yawning at his feet!—better, a thousand times better, our brief span of knowledge, which knoweth little even of the present, than thus to look on a future whose sorrows are more than we can bear. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. The Legend of Montrose is not one of Scott's best narratives. Anderson, as the gallant and accom-

plished Montrose, fails to embody him whom Cardinal de Retz allows, realised his *beau ideal* of the heroes of chivalry. Dugald Dalgetty has, however, the stamp of the master; and Annot Lyle glides through the whole like a sunbeam. Her fair face, and sweet voice, are the light of the picture; the one dream of the poet amid the tumult of faction, and the harsh realities of civil war.

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMUIR.

No. 14.—LUCY ASHTON,

I shall never forget the first reading of the "Bride of Lammermuir." I was staying in the country in one of those large rambling houses, which ought to please a taste for architecture, as they combine every variety. There was enough remaining of hoar antiquity, to contrast strongly with the comforts of modern life. There was a large old hall and spiral staircase of black oak, hung round with family portraits, grim and faded. There were long corridors, suites of rooms which were shut up, and the reputation of the library was far from good. The house had been uninhabited for years, and its present possessor was just come into possession and from the continent, while a few of the rooms had been hastily fitted up for the reception of himself and his wife. It was an odd contrast to go from the drawing-room, crowded with sofas, ottomans, looking-glass, hot-house

plants, and tables covered with books and toys, into any of the other apartments. Mine was peculiarly dreary—the bed was of green velvet, black with time, and with those old-fashioned plumes at the corner, which resemble the decorations of a hearse. The chimney-piece was of dark wood, carved with grotesque faces, and an enormous press of the same material might have contained two or three skeletons, or manuscripts enough to have recorded every murder in the country. A large cedar grew so near to the window, that some of the small boughs touched the glass—and when the wind was high, a cry almost like that of human suffering came from the branches. The candles on my table did little more than cast a charmed circle of light around myself; but an enormous wood-fire sent occasional gleams around the gloomy room, giving to every object it touched that fantastic seeming peculiar to fire-light. I had left the drawing-room early—

> " E'en in the sunniest climes,
> Light breezes will ruffle the flowers sometimes,"

and my host and his lady had disagreed about a dinner in the neighbourhood—the lady wished to go, the gentlemen did not. Retreat in such cases is the only plan for a prudent third party, before either thinks of appealing to you. If you give an

opinion in favour of one, you still offend both; for it is a physological quality in quarrels conjugal, that though each considers the other to blame, they will not allow you to think so too; moreover, the chances are, that, in your own private opinion, they are both wrong—a most unpopular verdict to pronounce. I, therefore, complained of fatigue, caught up a book, and went to my own room. That book was the "Bride of Lammermuir."

I had only, a few evenings before, read the "Mysteries of Udolpho," but cannot say that their much-talked-of terrors had the least effect upon my nerves. I was tired, but if their pages gave me sleep, they did not add dreams. But I read the volume of to-night, till the most absolute terror took possession of me. I felt myself cold and pale. I involuntarily drew nearer to the candles with a sense of security. I avoided looking towards the darker parts of the room; and I remember putting out one light, lest they should not last till morning. If I had sat up all night, I could not have gone to bed in the dark. Yet, in spite of the protection of the candle, I started from my sleep twenty times, so vividly were the scenes impressed upon my mind. It haunted me for days and days. It is even now on my memory like a terrific dream.

The "Bride of Lammermuir" is one of the

finest of Scott's conceptions—it belongs to the highest order of poetry—it combines the terrible and the beautiful. That Fate, so powerful and so grand an element in the Greek drama, pervades the Scottish tragedy. Few are the beliefs, still fewer the superstitions of to-day. We pretend to account for everything, till we do not believe enough for that humility so essential to moral discipline. But the dark creed of the fatalist still holds its ground—there is that within us, which dares not deny what, in the still depths of the soul, we feel to have a mysterious predominance. To a certain degree we controul our own actions—we have the choice of right or wrong; but the consequences, the fearful consequences, lie not with us. Let any one look upon the most important epochs of his life; how little have they been of his own making—how one slight thing has led on to another, till the result has been the very reverse of our calculations. Our emotions, how little are they under our own controul! how often has the blanched lip, or the flushed cheek, betrayed what the will was strong to conceal! Of all our sensations, love is the one which has most the stamp of Fate. What a mere chance usually leads to our meeting the person destined to alter the whole current of our life. What a mystery even to ourselves the influence which they exercise over us. Why should we feel so differently towards them, to what we ever felt

before? An attachment is an epoch in existence—it leads to casting off old ties, that, till then, had seemed our dearest; it begins new duties; often, in a woman especially, changes the whole character; and yet, whether in its beginning, its continuance or its end, love is as little within our power as the wind that passes, of which no man knows whither it goeth or whence it comes. All that mortal resolve can effect, is to do the best under the circumstances in which we are placed, to keep alive the sweet voice of approval in our hearts, and trust that the grave will be but the bright gate opening on all that we now see through a glass darkly.

The ancients believed that the dark ministry of fate was on many a kingly line even to its close—a belief confirmed by the judaical ritual. "I will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, even unto the third and fourth generation." The house of Ravenswood is doomed to destruction. Its chiefs have been men strong and evil in the land—the blood of the victim has not sunk into the earth—and the cry of the oppressed has not risen on the morning in vain. The dark sand has run to the appointed hour, and the proud and stately race will soon be a desolation whose place no man knoweth. But it is one of the mysteries of mortality that the wicked fall, and with them perish the innocent. Is it that remorse may be added to

the bitterness of punishment! The fated house falls, and with it the lovely and fragile flower that had rashly clung to the decaying wall. There is something so gentle, so touching in Lucy Ashton, that we marvel how human being could be found to visit one so soft, too roughly. But that wonder ceases in the presence of those human demons, hatred, pride, and revenge. Lucy is but one of these tender blossoms crushed without care on our daily path. Though, from her vivid imagination, likely to love a man like Ravensworth, she was unfit to be his wife; still more unfit to struggle with the difficulties attendant on an engagement which the heart kept but too truly. The moral change is exquisitely developed. First, there is the pensive girl, pensive because—

"In youth sad fancies we affect;"

then comes a brief season of love whose very happiness

"Might make the heart afraid;"

then regret, restraint, and unkindliness. Visionary terrors heighten the doubts, that he, for whose sake she endures all this, holds the sacrifice light. The domestic persecution—persecution the hardest to bear—goes on, eyes that once looked love, now turn on her in anger or disdain. The temper gives way, then the mind. Echo

answers "where?" when too late, the repentant father asks for his gentle, his affectionate child! Well might Henry Ashton remember to the day of his death, that the last time his sister's arm pressed him, it was damp and cold as sepulchral marble.

IVANHOE.

No. 15.—REBECCA.

The character of Rebecca stands pre-eminent amid Scott's finest conceptions. Its nobility was at once acknowledged. If there be one thing which redeems our fallen nature, which attests that its origin was from heaven and its early home in paradise, it is the generous sympathy that, even in the most hardened and worldly, warms in the presence of the good and of the beautiful. There must have been, even in those whose course has darkened into crime, an innocent and hopeful time, and the light of that hour, however perverted and shadowed, is never quite extinguished. Enough remains to kindle, if but for a moment, the electric admiration whose flash, like the lightning, is from above. Fiction is but moulding together the materials collected by every day, in real as well as imagined life; the highest order of excellence carries the impulse along with it. Nature and fortune have this earth for their place of contention, and the victory is too often with the latter. We are tempted and we fall—

we lack resolution to act upon the promptings of our better and inward self; the iron enters into the soul, the wings of our nobler aspirations melt in the heat of exertion, the dust of the highway choaks our finer breathing, and if at any time we are fain to pause and commune with ourselves, alas! what do we find ourselves to be? low, weak, selfish, and old—how different from what we once hoped to be. But nature is never quite subdued to what she works in; the divine essence will at times re-assert its divinity, and hence the homage that is of love rises to that which is above us—to Beauty and to Truth.

The characteristic of Rebecca is high-mindedness, born of self reliance. From a very infant she must have been "a being drawing thoughtful breath;" As is the case with all Scott's favourite delineations, she is the only child of a widower, and the death of her mother must have flung an early shadow over her path; from her infancy she must have learnt to be alone—solitude which enervates the weak, feeds and invigorates the strong mind. Her studies, too, were well calculated to develop her powers; skilled in the art of healing she knew the delight of usefulness, and she learnt to pity because familiar with suffering. No one, not even the most careless, can stand beside the bed of sickness and of death without learning their sad and solemn lessons. Within her home she was

surrounded by luxury and that refinement which is the poetry of riches; but she knew that Danger stood at the threshold, and that Fear was the unbidden guest who peered through their silken hangings. The timid temper lives in perpetual terror, the nobler one braces itself to endure whenever the appointed time shall come. History offers no picture more extraordinary than the condition of the Jews during the middle ages. Their torture and their destruction was deemed an acceptable sacrifice to that Saviour who was born of their race, and whose sermon on the Mount taught no lessons save those of peace and love. When Madame Roland went to execution, she turned towards the statue of that power, then adored with such false worship, and exclaimed, "Oh, liberty! what crimes are wrought in thy name!" The christian might say the same of his faith; but different indeed is the religion which is of God, and that which is of man.

In that criticism, now so often the staple of conversation, I have often heard it objected, that Rebecca could not have fallen in love with Ivanhoe—that her high-toned mind would have been attracted towards the Templar. This is a curious proof of the want of interest in Scott's heroes—we feel as if their good fortune were a moral injustice. The fact is, that respect for good old rules was an inherent part of Scott's mind; whatever was "gray

with age," to him "became religion." His rich and fertile mind poured the materials of a new world into literature—but he insisted that it should take a conventional shape, and be bound by given rules. It had long been a rule that vice was to be punished and virtue rewarded in fiction, whatever it might be in real life. It is one of the many mysteries of our moral nature, that there is something in high and striking qualities that seems as it were a temptation of fate. The ancients knew this well. Moreover there are faults which almost wear virtue's seeming, and to our weakness there is a wild attraction in these very faults—but as, according to Scott's code, such faults must be duly visited in the concluding chapters, he could not invest his hero with them. The said hero is usually a brave, handsome and well conducted young man, who gives his parents and readers as little anxiety as possible. Still the circumstances under which Rebecca sees Ivanhoe are managed with Scott's utmost skill—she knows him first as the benefactor of her father—she sees him first as the victor of the tournament, and she first comes in contact with him under the tenderest relations of kindness and service. But the "why did she love him?" may in a woman's case always be answered by Byron's vindication of "Kaled's" attachment to his own gloomy hero—

——— "Curious fool, be still,
Is human love the growth of human will?"

A woman's lover is always the idol of her imagination; he is far more indebted to her for good qualities than his vanity would like to acknowledge. Rochefoucauld says, "*L'amour cessé des qu'on voit l'objet comme il est.*" But if the illusion has its own sorrow, the cure is bitterer still, "as charm by charm unwinds." I believe that more women are disappointed in marriage than men; a woman gives the whole of her heart—the man only gives the remains of his, and very often there is only a little left. Besides his idol is rarely so much the work of his own hands as her's; at the end of the first year she may ask, where are the picturesque and ennobling qualities with which she invested her lover? in nine cases out of ten echo will indeed answer "where." Why an unhappy passion is often so lasting is that it never encounters that "Ithuriel of the common-place," Reality. I like to think of Rebecca amid the olive groves of Granada. Care for her father's old age, kindliness to the poor and the suffering, and the workings of a mind strong in endurance, would bring tranquillity if not happiness, till the hand might be pressed to the subdued heart without crying "peace, peace, where is no peace!"

No. 16.—ROWENA.

Rowena is an ingenious blending of the natural and the artificial, so generally at war with each other in society. Born timid, sweet, and yielding, she is brought up to pride, reserve, and authority. The will which had originally the pliancy of the flower spray, has become a power accustomed to dominion, and the lovely Saxon encounters opposition with astonishment "that each soft wish should not be held for law." The moment difficulties come, she has nothing to meet them with but tears, and this is what we see every day—the mask and the features are not cast in the same mould, yet the mask is worn so long that the features take its likeness. That "e'en in our ashes live our wonted fires," is not true of those sifted embers which constitute what is called society. We become things of habits and forms, "the breathing pulse of the machine" is modulated into set beatings. Donne says;—

> "Who makes the last a pattern for next year,
> Turns no new leaf, but still the same thing reads;
> Seen things he sees again, and heard things hears,
> And makes his life but like a pair of beads."

And yet this is the common routine of existence, and best that it should be so it is for those who feel too keenly, and who turn the eye on the in-

ward world and think that fate keeps her deadliest arrow in store. It is the Rebeccas not the Rowenas who go forth in the solitude of the heart. How often amid those who seem in our masquerade world to be clothed with smiles, and who hold no discourse save on "familiar matter of to-day," should we find one whose suffering might startle us—

> " ——— Could we put aside
> The mask and mantle that is worn by pride."

How different too would the real character be from that which is assumed; how little often do the most intimate know of each other. But the difference that the stranger might discover is nothing to that which we trace in ourselves. The burning climate of the south leaves its darkness on the cheek—the trying air of the world leaves a yet deeper darkness on the heart. To the generous, the affectionate, and the high-minded these lessons are taught more bitterly than to the calmer, colder, and more selfish temperament. But to those who sprang forth into life—love in the heart, and that heart on the lips, harsh is the teaching of experience. How has the eager kindness been repaid by ingratitude; affection has been bestowed and neglected—trust repaid by treachery, and last and worst complained, by whom have we been beloved, even as we have loved!

Ivanhoe is the first historical novel—Scott was the magician who took up the old ballad, the forgotten chronicle, and the dim tradition, saying, "Can these bones live?" He gave them breathing, brilliant, active life. No historian ever did for his country what he has done—no one ever made the past so palpably familiar to the present. Till he drew attention towards it, it is singular how little people in general knew of the English history. He has acted as master of the ceremonies between us and our forefathers, and made popular the entertainment he originated. It has been deemed an objection to the historical novel, that its coloured pages are likely to divert attention from the graver page of history. We might answer, that a reader so indolent and so unenquiring would have been likely, without such attraction, not to have read at all; but we must also draw attention to the fact of how many severely antiquarian works date their origin from the interest excited in the Waverley novels. Moreover, we must add that Ivanhoe is perfect merely as an historical picture; it gives the most accurate idea of the manners of the time. Scott has also been accused of too great a leaning towards chivalry. There was, we admit, in his own temperament, a keen sympathy with that stirring and picturesque time; but if he lost none of the brilliant colour, he also gave the reverse. Not one in ten thousand ever considered the hard and uncertain

nature of feudal tenure, till he painted the oppressions of Front de Bœuf, and the arbitrary rule supported by the Free Companies. But while a young and ardent spirit may well be permitted to kindle at the exploits of the "good knight and true," and to think highly of "marvels wrought by single hand;" yet the bane and antidote are both before us, and no one would seriously wish for that troubled and uncertain time again. No one who saw the evils, as depicted in Ivanhoe, attendant on the sway of sword and spear, would wish even their most brilliant hours back—no, not to be the victor of the tilted field, and lay his trophies at the feet of the Queen of Love and Beauty—his own chosen and fancied Rowena.

THE MONASTERY.

No. 17.—MARY AVENEL.

I HAVE lately been reading* these novels over again, with a pleasure which only those who have been placed in similar circumstances can understand. They have had the advantage of association and contrast. It has been a perpetual delight to dwell on their descriptions, and then look around and see scenes so completely their opposite, instead of the winding river, the green field, and the familiar oak and elm. I look upon the vast sea, whose dash against the rock never ceases—and on a land whose heights are covered with a wilderness of wood—and where the single trees scattered in the foreground are the cocoa nut and palm. Every page, too, has a charm almost beyond its first eager perusal—how much do they recall of the days when they were read before—how many conversations

* I began to write these papers from memory, but the kindness of Mr. Hutton, a gentleman of Cape Coast, has since supplied me with the "Works of Sir Walter Scott."

for which they furnished the material—how each different character gave its cast to its opinion, while every different volume seems to bring back the friend with whom it was the favourite. No book is fairly judged till it is read twice, and at distant periods. It is curious to note the variation of taste in ourselves. I can remember I devoured the story keenly, dwelt on all that partook of sentiment, and never questioned the depth of any remark. I now find that I take chief interest in what brings out character. I enter more into the humourous, and am every now and then tempted to analyse the truth of a deduction. I think more over what I am reading, and delight more in connecting the world of fiction with that of reality.

In the "Monastery," Scott has gone back upon that more fanciful and legendary vein, which originated the "Lay of the Last Minstrel." He admits frankly the failure in the introduction of supernatural agency—on, however, what scarcely appears to me the true ground. The supernatural has even now hold on human imagination, if it be linked with its fears, or its sentiments. Look at the effect produced in the "Bride of Lammermuir," where the agency is that of the terrible, and Scott himself points out the charm of the exquisite story of "Undine," where the fancy is awakened through the affections. But the supernatural has its keeping as well as the real. Now the White

Lady of Avenel does nothing that might not have been better effected by mere mortal agency, and the ludicrous destroys the poetical. It does not harmonize with the fanciful conception to employ it in ducking a monk, and producing a bodkin to shew that a knight was descended from a tailor's daughter; and, after all, this magic intercourse does not affect Halbert's character—he is but what the magic of circumstances alone would make of a high-spirited, brave, and intelligent youth. The same may be said of Mary Avenel—she is born on all Hallows eve—she sees her father's ghost, and the spirit linked to the fortunes of her house, but all this has no result—she is but what a maiden might well be whose birth and fortunes were so much at variance—quiet, meek and subdued, yet with that simple dignity which self-respect and early association usually give. The respect for gentle birth is a characteristic of the Scottish nation, and this if a prejudice grows out of our noblest illusions. It is a disinterested pride, taking something solemn from the dead among whom it must originate. Its chief distinctions are the guerdon of high qualities, of skill in the council, and courage in the field. The good fame of those who have gone before, seems at once the gage and incentive of our own. The common-place of to-day is coloured by the picturesque of yesterday. Never will there be poetry, generous endeavour,

or lofty standard of excellence, but among a people who take pride in the past. It is the past that redeems and elevates the present. The good worked from this feeling is beautifully shown, as calling out the kindly sense with us. In Elspeth Glendinning it takes the shape of enduring hospitality, and affectionate respect to the unfortunate. In Tibb Tackets, the bower-woman, by increased devotion to the fortunes of a family fallen from its high estate. By the by, how perfect are these two, each in her way. What can be more natural than the good dame's ejaculation, when her maternal pride and anxiety are awakened to the utmost by her son's summons, to appear before the "Abbot"—"His will be done; but an' he had but on his Sunday hose!" What more true to life than the way in which the bower-woman takes art and part in all the former glories of the family. It is the same spirit that animates Constant in his preface to the memoirs of Napoleon. His valet has some share in his victories, or as he himself most poetically intimates, "*si je ne suis pas la rose j'ai reçu pres d'elle.*" The episode, too, of Katharine, the ill-fated mistress of Julian Avenel, is the most deeply pathetic incident that ever turned on "trusting affection ill-requited." The remorse subdued by love, the painful timidity, the desire to please, constantly checked by the dread that its power is over, the sense of shame and degradation,

were never more exquisite in their truth than in this slight sketch. Another great beauty in the "Monastery," are the poetical fragments sung by the White Lady. Fanciful, full of imagery and melody—they would bear comparison with Scott's earliest and happiest efforts. Though the word effort is mistaken as applied to poetry, "it comes unbidden if it come at all." Its very writers might themselves wonder why at times harmony and imagery crowd upon the mind which, at another time, would seek them, and in vain. The presence of poetry is as mysterious and uncertain in its loveliness as the shadowy beauty of the White Lady of Avenel.

No. 18.—MYSIE HAPPER.

Scott seldom chooses a heroine from any but the upper ranks. He rarely urges that this is "the loveliest low-born lass;" he likes the lady of his choice to be unexceptionable in her quarterings, and I believe that the blot in Sir Percie Shafton's escutcheon originated in the desire to excuse the *mes-alliance*. Still the miller has a sort of poetical aristocracy—he belongs to the realm of tradition and ballad—the picturesque which the mill gives to the landscape, with its gigantic wings, and its rushing stream is, in some kind, commu-

nicated to the owner. He is connected with all that is loveliest in pastoral life, the golden corn-field, the glad harvest-home; and, if there be a beautiful bit in the country, it is where the mill rears its dusky sails. Neither has it lost its fair predominance even in our own day. The most exquisite ballad of modern production flings a new charm around the mill-dam. Need we name Mr. Tennyson's "Miller's Daughter." Now, as antiquity was the chief charm of rank with Scott, we can imagine it almost supplying its place—poetry in the case of the 'Miller's Daughter' was nearly equivalent to the peerage.

Mysie Happer's great charm is the perfect nature in the delineation; she is just a lively good-humoured girl, who has known no care, but whose naturally ready wit has been quickened by constant activity, as in Dame Glendinning's kitchen she has always been accustomed to make herself useful. Love gives the one touch of elevation to the warm and beating heart, which knew not its own sensibilities and its own powers. The depth of a woman's character is to be tested by her choice in affection; according to that preference must be her standard of perfection. Now, Sir Percie is but a feather-brained coxcomb—still Mysie's liking may well stand excused. In nine cases out of ten, the lover owes half his qualities to the imagination of his mistress; and, it must be admitted, that a proper

outside, and fair apparel, are not a bad foundation for fancy. Sir Percie's discourse, garnished with its pearls of rhetoric, seems to us marvellous nonsense, but we must remember that the miller's daughter had the great advantage of not understanding it. Now, the generality of people are very much in the situation of the courtiers in the story of Princess Sable, over whose cradle an old fairy pronounced some mysterious prediction. "The courtiers and nurses did not comprehend one word that she said; they, therefore, concluded it was something very fine, or very terrible." After all, the instinct of the heart did not deceive her—the knight of the three-piled velvet and the embroidered satin, proves brave, generous, and true. We cannot hold the delineation of Sir Percie, to be the complete failure which even its author admits it to be. This candour is one of Scott's most remarkable qualities; but, like a rich merchant, his general ventures are successful enough to admit of occasional failure. He can afford a loss. The view that he takes of the fruitlessness of an attempt to make a delineation popular, founded solely on gone-by affectation, is to a great degree true; but we must also add that the light airy cavalier required a degree of playfulness which is not one of Scott's qualities. He is, too, entirely Scotch, and wit is not a Scottish characteristic; they want the brightness, the *abandon*, the ready repartee so pe-

culiarly to both French and Irish. The Scotch are too cautious to be witty—they take thought beforehand of their answers; they are not people of impulse, and wit is an impulse. "It springs spontaneous if it spring." But then they have humour, rich, racy, sly humour, full of national character, and nearly allied to pathos. This humour Scott has in perfection. Wit belongs to the head, and humour to the heart—there is always somewhat of *inconsequence* in the character of a witty people.

What a strange page in human history is that of social distinction; no people so savage but they have a sort of fashion. Even among the wild people in whose country I am now writing, there are all the small distinctions of small gentility—for example, it is not "*comme il faut* to wear silk."

Yet, as if to vindicate the humanity of Scott's creations, we are insensibly interested in the Euphuist. I would almost accuse the reader of hard-heartedness, who does not sympathise with the knight's mortification, when the rough English soldier so remorsely reveals the ignoble parentage of his mother. We do not know a prettier scene, yet "touching withal," than where Sir Percie leaves the planner and companion of his escape to return, as he supposes, to her father. He looks back and sees her standing desolate and hopeless, with the gold chain neglected in her hand. With one deli-

cate touch is revealed the deep world of love and joy beating in her heart. When Sir Percie comes back to question of her state, look in his face she dare not; speak to him she cannot; but her feelings find expression in a timid caress, bestowed on the neck of his horse. Whatever may be Sir Percie's fortunes in the foreign land whither he is bound, at the conclusion of the story, they can never be utterly forlorn, with such a fair and faithful companion.

THE ABBOT.

No. 19.—MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

"Her name is a note of the nightingale." What the troubadour minstrel said of his mistress may be also said of Mary Stuart. Beauty, and all the prestige that birth gives to beauty, the far deeper interest that attends misfortune, and the abiding terror of a violent death; all these invest the memory of the ill-fated queen with a sad charm, felt to the present hour. "No man," says Brantome, "ever beheld her without love and admiration, or thought of her fate without sorrow and pity." From the cradle an evil fortune attended upon her. The birth of a first and royal child, which should have awakened joy and hope, only added keener anxiety to the death-bed of her father. "The kingdom came with a woman," said the dying monarch, dying beneath the pressure of defeat and despair, "and it will go with a woman." He knew the strong hand that was needed to curb the turbulent spirit of the time; if it had been too much for himself, who wore spur and sword, what

would it be to one made for the lute and distaff. "Let not," says the young Indian mother, in the 'Prairie,' "let not my child be a girl, for very sorrowful is the lot of woman." If this be true, and few will deny it, it is more than true in the lot of the royal orphan. The chronicles of the house of Stuart would almost justify the Grecian belief in fatality. Their doom was with them: the state —the scaffold—imprisonment and exile, crowd the annals of their race; on each high brow of their fated house is the shadow of the coming evil—the deep melancholy eyes are dark with the hours to come. It would seem as if inanity and worthlessness were their sole exemptions; the only kings whom destiny rejected as unworthy victims, were the weak James, and the profligate Charles; but in Mary, the rarest qualities and the worst fortunes of her house were united. A child, she became an exile from her native soil. In the very lowest class it is well to be bred up amid those scenes wherein our future is cast; nothing ever supplies the place of those early associations—nothing ever knits the heart to the place of its birth like the remembrances of childhood—nothing can give the entire knowledge of a people, but having been brought up among them. This is no place to enter into the long disputed question of Mary's guilt or innocence. If, as Wordsworth says,

"——— It is a joy
To think the best we can of human kind."

it must be one to think the "best we can" of a creature so gifted. Where we cannot excuse, we may at least extenuate; palliating the faults of others is a different thing from palliating our own. Mary was brought up in a bad school. History has no darker period than the annals of the era over which Catherine presided; it combined the fiercer crimes with the meaner vices; craft and cruelty went hand in hand. From her cradle, Mary was taught to dissemble, and taught it as a science wherein superiority was matter of mental triumph. As the author of "Devereux" truly says, "it is through our weaknesses that our vices punish us." Now the great evil of Mary's life was her choice of Darnley as a husband—a choice solely dictated by his personal appearance. Had she chosen more wisely, how different might her career have been! She was too clever herself not to have felt superiority, and she had too much of the yielding natural to woman, not to have been influenced by one who had possessed that moral strength which is the secret of supremacy. Scott's picture is but a fragment—yet how finished—how excellently in keeping with our previous historical conception! We are taken in the "strong toil of grace"—we feel how surpassingly lovely was the ill-fated queen—we do not wonder at the fascina-

tion that she exercised over all that came within her "charmed circle." How well, too, the thoughtlessness, the impetuosity, and the imprudence are indicated, rather than expressed. She encourages the attachment between Catherine Seyton and Roland Græme, without one moment's consideration of what the consequent unhappiness may be from the difference in their station: she cannot repress the biting sarcasm, though next to madness in her position; and the tendency to dissemble is shown in those slight things which are the stepping-stones to more important acts. The scene where Mary signs the papers of her abdication is among Scott's very finest. The relenting of the rough old earl is full of humanity; it shows also, most strikingly, the influence of Mary's fascination. But the authority, dependent on such fascination, builds its tower of strength on the sand; favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; such an empire calls forth too much passion, and too many weaknesses; false hopes are entertained, jealousies arise, and envyings and bitterness remain—a foe is more easily made than a friend; and how difficult, or rather how impossible, so to apportion smile and word as to please rivals stimulated by every variety of vanity! It was with Mary Stuart as with Marie Antoinette, the loveliness became a snare, and hatred grew more envenomed, because made personal, from the mortification of unreasonable expectation. When

the Scottish queen said "*Adieu, plaissant pays de la France*," she knew not that she bade adieu to her youth, and all youth's careless gladness: she knew not that she went to dwell among a people for whose habits her education had entirely unfitted her. We can imagine how unpopular the manner of her French attendants would be, with all their gaiety and light gallantry, among the stern and staid people of Scotland; how much of that unpopularity would reflect upon their mistress. Moreover, there is no difference so bitter as religious difference. Mary's catholic faith was then an object of positive horror; much, therefore, that has been alleged against her may well be set down to the violent exaggeration of party spirit; but, even were it otherwise, pity, even to pain, is the only feeling with which we can think of the melancholy prisoner, the best of whose years passed under watch and ward in the gloomy castles of Lochlevin and Fotheringham.

No. 20.—CATHERINE SEYTON.

It is not in the calm and measured paths of today that we see the more bold and pronounced characters, whose outlines have been rough-hewn by the strong hand of necessity; yet to such troubled times often belong the development of our

noblest and best qualities—the stormy gulf of Ormus throws up the finest pearls. It is not in the season of tranquility that we know aught of the generous devotion, the fertility of resource, and the forgetfulness of self often shown in the hour of trial. When the French revolution broke out, how many, only accustomed to indolence, luxury, and custom, showed that "there was iron in the rose;" and, whether at the call of duty or of affection, were prepared to bear even to the uttermost, and to exert a fortitude till then undreamed of. In such a mould is cast the character of Catherine. She has been destined for the cloister, a vocation utterly at variance with that warm heart and ready wit with which nature had gifted her: she has worked at the embroidery frame: she has told her beads, and dwelt in quiet and seclusion. The destruction of her monastery opens before her a wide and troubled world; her spirits rise as she needs their support; she finds in herself strength to endure, and courage to resist again. This time, however, of her own free will she goes into seclusion; but it is solitude animated by the consciousness of a generous devotion, and invigorated by the performance of duty. There is that which at once arrests our sympathy in Catherine Seyton's attachment to her royal mistress—it is the result of enthusiasm acting upon the most generous feelings. In those days loyalty was a creed—the right divine had its religion. To this

abstract belief, Catherine brought that personal earnestness with which the high-toned and sensitive temperament enters into all that it undertakes. This was soon heightened by that affection Mary knew so well how to inspire. It is coloured in the loveliest and loftiest light of humanity: the picture of Catherine Seyton, cheering the solitude of her imprisoned mistress with the playful gaiety of a spirit, as yet unbroken, as it is unspotted by the world. What "high resolve and constancy" is in the courage with with she plans and looks forward to escape! How true to the more generous impulses of her age is the utter disbelief of all the charges brought against the queen! Suspicion and youth are no comrades for each other. Youth is frank, eager, and prone to believe in the good; it looks round, and it sees flowers; it looks up and sees stars; evil appears impossible, because it does not seem to be in ourselves. It remains for after and weary years to teach us, that even the young and the innocent may be led into crime by the strong influence of temptation. Passion first, and interest afterwards, lures the feet of men into dark and crooked paths, which none in earlier and holier hours deemed they could tread. We may have been often deceived, but it is not until we ourselves begin to deceive that we dread deceit. There is an arch playfulness about Catherine Seyton with which Scott delights to invest his creations—they

may be less heroines, but they are more women. There is not a more delightful temper in the daily relations of life than this sweet gaiety—it brings its own sunshine—" making that beautiful which was not so," relieving the monotonous, and inspiring the sad. A gay temper is like a bright day; true, it may have its faults—a little petulance, a little wilfulness—the flush may be too ready in the cheek, and the flash too prompt in the eye; still these are only trifles to be pardoned, and we like that all the better in which we have something to forgive. The Lady Fleming says of Catherine, " Heaven pity him who shall have, one day, a creature so beautiful to delight him, and a thing so mischievious to torment him." He would be very well off—the meteor light would be softened and subdued when it came to burn on one only hearth. The light step, though more measured, would shed music through the house; and, somewhat sobered by time, and touched by grief, which is knowledge, the riper years of Catherine Seyton would be of those that show

> " ——— how divine a thing,
> A woman may be made."

WOODSTOCK.

No. 22.—ALICE LEE.

The history of most fictions would be far stranger than the fictions themselves; but it would be a dark and sad chronicle. Half the works that constitute the charm of our leisure, that give their own interest to the long November evening, or add to the charm of a summer noon beneath the greenwood tree, are the offspring of poverty and of pain. Dr. Johnson wrote "Rasselas" to pay the last decent respect of the living to the dead—his mother's funeral expenses. How often is the writer obliged to put his own trouble, his suffering, or his sorrow aside, to finish the task! The hand may tremble, the eyes fill with unbidden tears, and the temples throb with feverish pain, yet how often is there some hard and harsh necessity, which says, "the work must be done." Readers, in general, think little of this: they will say, "Dear! how delightful to be able to write such charming things! how it must amuse you!" I believe if there were only the author's amuse-

ment in the case it would fall very short of their own; not but that composition has its moments of keen and rapid delight when the scene rises vividly before you, and the mind is warm with the consciousness of its own powers; but these are only "angel visits," they do not form the staple of any work. Literature soon becomes a power, not, what it once was, a passion; but literary success, like all others, is only to be obtained and retained, by labour—and labour and inclination do not always go together. Take all our most eminent writers, and the quantity of work, hard work, they have got through, will be found enormous and perpetual. Literature, as a profession, allows little leisure, and less indulgence. The readers are the gainers: to them how little difference does it make that "Marmion" was written in youth, health, and prosperity; while "Woodstock" was the weary task of breaking health, and broken fortunes—their amusement is the same! But even to the most careless, a deeper interest is thrown around these volumes, and every little touch of individuality seems like the familiar intercourse of a friend. Lockhart says in the Memoir, "I know not how others interpreted various passages in 'Woodstock,' but there were not a few that carried deep meaning, for such of Scott's own friends as were acquainted with, not his pecuniary misfortunes alone, but the drooping health

of his wife, and the consolation afforded him by the dutiful devotion of his daughter Anne, in whose character and demeanour a change had occurred exactly similar to that painted in poor Alice Lee —'a light joyous air, with something of a humorous expression, which seemed to be looking for amusement, had vanished before the touch of affection, and a calm melancholy had supplied its place, which seemed on the watch to administer comfort to others.'"

There is a very touching allusion to Miss Scott's anxiety about her father's enjoyments, in the Diary :—"Anne is practising Scottish songs, which I take as a kind of compliment to my own taste, as her's leads her chiefly to foreign music. I think the good girl sees that I want and must miss her sister's peculiar talent in singing the airs of our native country, which, imperfect as my musical ear is, make, and have always made, the most pleasing impression on me; and so, if she puts a constraint on herself for my sake, I can only say in requital, 'God bless her!'" There is sunshine in a shady place, and it is soothing to imagine the pleasure that Scott must have had while investing the creature of his imagination with the love and devotion which had been his own solace. There is a striking reality about the character of Alice Lee. They are indeed unfortunate who can recall no likeness, who are not reminded of some

actual instance of affection lightening adversity, and shedding its own sweetness over the sorrow which it could at least share. Alice Lee is among the most lovable of Scott's feminine creations. No writer possessed to a greater degree, that faculty which Coleridge so prettily describes in one line—

> "My eyes make pictures when they're shut."

And every appearance of Alice Lee is a picture. We see her first in the shadowy twilight, the light step of youth subdued to the heavier tread of age; and in the dialogue that follows, with what force, and yet what delicacy, we are made acquainted with the innermost recesses of the maiden's heart! Alice is at the most interesting period of a woman's existence—when the character is gradually forming under circumstances that develop all the latent qualities. The rose has opened to the summer—the girl has suddenly become a woman.

Alice Lee's predominate feeling is attachment to her father: her love for her cousin is a gentle and quiet love; it belongs to the ease and familiarity of childhood; it is constantly subdued by a rival and holier sentiment. Alice's devotion to her father is not merely the fulfilment of a duty, it is a warmer and keener emotion—there is pity and enthusiasm blended with her filial piety—she sees the kind-hearted old man bowed by adversity, mortified in all those innocent vanities which sit

closely to every heart; his old age is deprived of those comforts with which youth may dispense—but which are hard to lose when they are, and have long been, matters both of right and habit. No wonder that his child clings to him with a deeper sadder, tenderness. Who can avoid bringing the picture home to Scott himself? his difficulties seem peculiarly adapted to awaken the most painful sympathy. They came upon him in his old age, yet were met with the noblest spirit of resistance. From the time that he felt labour to be a duty—with what unflinching earnestness did he set about that labour! Not even when working to achieve the dearest objects of his ambition—to become the master of Abbotsford—to settle an eldest and beloved son in life—did Scott exert himself as he did when the exertion was for his creditors. It seems doubly hard when we think how much others had to do with the burden whose weight was upon him even to the grave.

"Woodstock" belongs to a better time. Scott felt his powers vigorous as ever—and no one could imagine and dwell upon such a creation as Alice Lee, and not be the better and the happier. Every time she appears on the scene she brings with her an atmosphere of purity and beauty. How lovely is the scene conjured up in the little hut, when the evening disturbs, but to make musical, the silence of the forest glades; and the words of faith and

hope, cheering the gentle and maiden heart, which was their worthy temple! Again, in what a noble and high spirit is her rejection of Charles's ungenerous suit. Only one of a school, whose profligacy was the cold result of vanity, could have insulted a purity so simple and so apparent, by dishonourable affection. But it is mockery to use the word affection in such a case. I do not believe that affection can exist with truth, without the ideal, and without blending with itself all that is best and most earnest in our nature. Charles thinks far less of Alice than of the sneer of Buckingham and the jest of Rochester.

As I said before, a series of pictures might be formed of Alice in the various situations of "Woodstock." There are three which have always singularly impressed my imagination. The first is the little turret, with Dr. Rocheliffe in the little turret-chamber, when he proposes to her to make a seeming assignation with the king: there is the dignity that would light her eyes, the timidity that would colour her cheek, and the intuitive sense of right that could not for a moment tamper with its fine sense of maidenly propriety. Then the second, where she stands in the green coppice, looking, as she thinks, her last on the lover who leaves her under the most bitter perversion of her real meaning: her cheek is white as monumental marble, and her long fair curls damp with the heavy dews

—they are the faint outward sign of what is passing in her heart. The third is where, escaped from a danger which had seemed so certain, so imminent, she throws herself half in thankfulness, half in affection, into her father's arms, and then is suddenly recalled into a sweet and timid consciousness of Markham Everard's presence.

None of Sir Walter's novels end more satisfactorily than "Woodstock." There could be but one destiny for Alice—the genial and quiet circle of an English home, whose days are filled with pleasant duties, and whose sphere lies around the hearth. The devoted daughter is what she ought to be—the affectionate mother and the happy wife.

MARMION.

No. 22.—CONSTANCE.

It is a curious thing, after years have elapsed, to go back upon the pages of a favourite author. Nothing shows us more forcibly the change that has taken place in ourselves. The book is a mental mirror—the mind starts from its own face, so much freshness and so much fire has passed away. The colours and the light of youth have gone together. The judgment of the man rarely confirms that of the boy. What was once sweet has become mawkish, and the once exquisite simile appears little more than an ingenious conceit. The sentiment which the heart once beat to applaud has now no answering key-note within, and the real is perpetually militating against the imagined. It is a great triumph to the poet when we return to the volume, and find that our early creed was, after all, the true religion. Few writers stand this test so well as Sir Walter Scott. We read him at first with an eagerness impetuous as his own verse: years elapse. we again take up those living pages,

and we find ourselves carried away as before. Our choice has changed, perhaps, as to favourite passages, but we still find favourites. Scott is the epic poet of England; he does for chivalry what Homer did for the heroic age. He caught it just fading into dim oblivion, living by tradition, veiled by superstition, uncertain and exaggerated; yet not less the chaos from whence sprang the present, which must trace to that morning-checquered darkness the acquisitions and the characteristics of to-day. What constitutes the great epic poet? his power of revifying the past. It is not till a nation has gained a certain point in civilization that it desires to look back; but when action allows a breathing time for thought, and the mechanical and customary has succeeded to the adventurous and unexpected, then we desire to trace the Nile of our moral progress to its far and hidden fountains. It is this desire which is the inspiration of Walter Scott. From the dim waters he evokes the shining spirit, and from scattered fragments constructs the glorious whole. We cannot sympathize with the regret that he expresses in one of the exquisite introductions to "Marmion," when but for want of kingly countenance—

> "Dryden, in immortal strain,
> Had raised the Table Round again."

Dryden lived in an age when the political and

moral standards were set at too low a water-mark for the high tides of poetry. With the most splendid and vigorous versification, with an energy of satire and wit that had the point of the dagger and the weight of the axe, Dryden was deficient in what Scott possessed. He would have lacked the picturesque which calls up yesterday, and the sentiment which links it with to-day. The machinery of guardian angels which he proposed is enough to show that the first design was a failure. It is a great poetical mistake to revive exploded superstition. The gods are effective in Homer, because both the age of which he wrote and that in which he wrote, believed devoutly in the terrors of their thunder. But the guardian angels of England, Ireland, and Scotland—St. George, St. Patrick, and St. Andrew—could never have been more than ingenious human inventions. Scott did as much with superstition as any modern writer could venture. He gave the omen, the prophecy, and the gramarye, without which the picture he drew would have been incomplete. And what a picture he has drawn! how true, how breathing! It is England, exactly as England was: full of tumult and of adventure, but with a rude sense of justice and a dawn of information destined to produce such vast after-growth of knowledge and prosperity. No writer has the art of conveying so much by a slight intimation. Sir Hugh, the Heron bold, urges

his invitation on the English Baron, that he "may breathe his war-horse well," for—

> "The Scots can rein a mettled steed,
> And love to couch a spear.
> St. George! a stirring life they lead
> That have such neighbours near."

Wat Tinlyn gives, in three lines, an equally vivid notion of the consequences of such "pleasant pastime:"—

> "They burn'd my little lonely tower;
> The foul fiend rive their souls therefore!
> It had not been burn'd a year or more."

Not to have your house burned over your head for a twelvemonth seems an unwonted piece of domestic quiet. The metre, too, of these noble poems was admirably chosen. It is entirely English; it belongs to the period it illustrates; and the battle alone in "Marmion" may show what was its spirit and strength. It must, indeed, have rung like a silver trumpet amid the silken inanities of the Hayley and Seward school. It is quite odd now to read the sort of deprecating praise with which these poems were received by the established critical authorities. The expression of popular applause is too strong to be resisted, but while Mr. Scott's talents are universally admitted, he is constantly admonished to choose some loftier theme, as if any theme could have been better suited to a great na-

tional poet, than one belonging to the history of that country whose youth is renewed in his stirring lines.

Never did any one age produce two minds so essentially opposed as those of Byron and Scott. Byron idealised and expressed that bitter spirit of discontent which has at the present moment taken a more material and tangible form. He is the incarnation of November. From time immemorial it has been an Englishman's privilege to grumble, and Byron gave picturesque language to the universal feeling. He embodied in his heroes what is peculiarly our insular character—its shyness, its sensitiveness, and its tendency to morbid despondency. Scott, on the contrary, took the more commercial and fighting side of the character; he embodied its enterprise and resistance. The difference is strongly shown in the delineation of their two most marked heroes—"Lara" and "Marmion." Both are men, brave, unscrupulous, and accustomed to action; but Lara turns disgusted from a world which to him has neither an illusion nor a pleasure. "Marmion," on the contrary, desires to pursue his career of worldly advancement: he looks forward to increased riches and power, and indulges in no misanthropic misgivings as to the worth of the acquisition when once gained. Both are attended by a Page—that favourite creation of the olden dramatists; Byron's is little more

than the shadowy but graceful outline: Scott has worked out his creation truly and severely. The Pages in the old drama are entirely poetical creations; they occupy the debatable ground between the fanciful and the existing; they belong exclusively to the romantic in literature. They could only have been fancied when poetry delighted to hold love a creed as well as a passion. The heart called up the ideal to redeem the real, and an attachment was elevated by disinterestedness and moral beauty. There is none of this high-toned imagination in the classic fictions. Women were then considered as articles of property. The

> " Seven lovely captives of the Lesbian line,
> Skill'd in each art, unmatch'd in form divine"—

with whom Agamemnon seeks to propitiate the wrath of Achilles—hold an inferior place to the "twice ten vases of refulgent gold"—or to the twelve race-horses destined to form part of the offering. Achilles, though he protests that he loves the "beautiful captive of his spear," not only parts with her, but, what would almost have been worse to a woman, parts with her without an adieu, and she is received again in silent indifference. She departs without a farewell, and returns without a welcome. Briseïs, however, loses ground in our sympathy, by her lamentation over the body of Patroclus:—

"The first loved consort of my virgin bed,
Before these eyes in fatal battle bled:
Thy friendly hand uprear'd me from the plain,
And dried my sorrows for a husband slain.
Achilles' care you promised I should prove,
The first, the dearest partner of his love."

Certainly, the promise of a second husband may be very effective consolation for the loss of the first; still it says little for the delicacy or the constancy of the lady who was so consoled. But Christianity brought its own heaven to the things of earth; every passion was refined, and every affection exalted. Only under the purifying influence of that inward world to which it gave light, could sentiment have had its birth—and Sentiment is the tenth Muse and the fourth Grace of modern poetry.

But in the description of Constance there also is that strong perception of the actual, which is Scott's most marked characteristic. He paints her exactly what in all probability she would have been; he works out the severe lesson of retribution and of degradation. What is the current of "Marmion's mind, when

"Constance, late betray'd and scorn'd,
All lovely on his soul return'd:
Lovely, as when, at treacherous call,
She left her convent's peaceful wall;
Crimson'd with shame, with terror mute,
Dreading alike, escape, pursuit;

> Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
> Hid fears and blushes in his arms!

Such is the first picture; what is the second?

> Alas! thought he, how changed that mien,
> How changed those timid looks have been!
> Since years of guilt and of disguise
> Have arm'd the terrors of her eyes.
> No more of virgin terror speaks
> The blood that mantled in her cheeks:
> Fierce and unfeminine are there,
> Frenzy for joy, for grief despair."

It is the strangest problem of humanity—one too, for which the closest investigation can never quite account—to trace the progress by which innocence becomes guilt, and how those who formerly trembled to think of crime, are led on to commit that at which they once shuddered. The man the most steeped in wickedness, must have had his innocent and his happy moments—a child, he must have played in the sunshine with spirits as light as the golden curls that toss on the wind. His little hands must have been clasped in prayer at his mother's knee; he must, during some moment of youth's generous warmth, have pitied human suffering, and wondered how man's blood could ever be shed by man: and if this holds good of man—how much more so of woman! But that it is one of those stern truths which experience forces us to know—we never could believe in murder as a feminine crime; yet, from the days of Clytemnestra,

down to those of Mrs. Johnson, who took her trial for murder, "looking very respectable in a black silk cloak and straw bonnet," woman has been urged on to that last and most desperate wickedness. But the causes of masculine sin are more various than those which act upon the gentler sex. A woman's crime has almost always its origin in that which was given to be the sweetest and best part of her nature—her affections: a man's influence is much greater over a woman than hers over him—almost unconsciously she models her sentiments upon his—she adopts his opinions, she acquires the greater portion of her information through his means. As to her character—by character, I would wish to express that mental bent, which, once taken, always influences, more or less, that character—"Love gave it energy, as love gave it birth." An attachment is a woman's great step in life; for the first time, she is called upon to decide; and on that decision how much of the future will rest! There are, of course, many exceptions to this rule—there are instances in which the wife has been the redeeming angel—but, in nine cases out of ten, the man raises or depresses his companion to his own moral level. I remember once staying with a lady who was robbed of a valuable gold chain. The policeman was sent for, and his first inquiry was, as to who "the maid kept company with?" for the London thieves have a regular set of lovers—and

that is how half the robberies are committed. Constance is worked out in darker colours than Scott often uses for his feminine portraits. Our sex, at least, ought to be grateful to him, for how divine is the faith he holds in all that is good in us! Even with Constance, how much the soul is "subdued by pity!"—how is the horror relieved by beauty! I know no description conveying such an idea of exquisite loveliness, as that of Constance before her judges:—

"Her sex a page's dress belied,
Obscured her charms, but could not hide.
A monk undid the silken band,
  That tied her tresses fair;
And down her slender form they spread,
  In ringlets rich and rare.
When thus her face was given to view,
Although so pallid was her hue,
It did a ghastly contrast bear
To those bright ringlets glistering fair:
Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy;
And there she stood, so calm and pale,
That, but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted
That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
You might have thought a form of wax,
Wrought to the very life, was there,
So still she was, so pale, so fair."

It is wonderful how much Scott contrives to suggest to the imagination. The above picture brings

Constance's previous existence so vividly to mind! The fugitive nun is again beneath the sway from whence she once fled:—she fled, timid, trusting, and hopeful; the beating heart, impatient of restraint, and confident of happiness—the lurking daring shown in the very escape; and the native courage in the resolve that could brave all the terrors of superstition: time passes on—

> " For three long years I bow'd my pride,
> A horse-boy in his train to ride."

Here again the spirit of determination is shown; Constance will not dwell alone, apart—

> " Within some lonely bower."

No; she will keep at her lover's side—in the wide and weary world she has nothing to do but to wait upon " Marmion's steps. But even that haughty spirit has its sad weak moments: Sir Hugh has

> " Often mark'd his cheeks were wet
> With tears he fain would hide."

It is a cruel proof of the want of generosity in human nature, that an affection too utterly self-sacrificing always meets with an evil return. The obligation for which we know there is no requital becomes a burden hard to be borne; we take refuge in ingratitude. Secondly, the conscience is never quite without

> " That shuddering chill
> Which follows fast on deed of ill;"

and we are glad to lay the blame on any rather than ourselves; and lastly—for small misfortunes are harder to bear than great ones—we are impatient under the minor annoyances, inevitable in consequence. Marmion had not so much exhausted his love for Constance as that he was

> " Weary to hear the desperate maid
> Threaten by turn, beseech, upbraid."

Years of misery and mortification had done their work: right and wrong were confounded together in the first instance. Constance could neither look forward nor back; she was forced to exist intensely in the present; and that is one of the worst punishments that guilt can know. Our youth is gone from us with all its kindliness, its innocent fondness, and its graceful amusements; memory can only

> " ——— lead us back
> In mournful mockery o'er the shinking track
> Of our young life, and point out every ray
> Of hope and truth we've lost upon the way."

Our future is obscure and threatening; the eyes involuntarily turn away—they can see nothing but the phantom—more terrible for its indistinctness—of slow, but certain retribution. Remorse, unattended by repentance, always works for evil—it adds bitterness and anger to error.

Such are the dark materials out of which the character of Constance is formed; we can trace its

degradation step by step—we see how the timid has grown hardened—the resolute reckless—and the affectionate only passionate. Constant contact with coarser natures has seared the finer perceptions, and the sense of right and wrong is deadened by hardship, suffering, and evil communion. The character so formed has now to be worked upon by the most fearful passion which can agitate the human heart—that which is strong as death and cruel as the grave—the passion of jealousy. The name of jealousy is often taken in vain—Henry VIII. is called jealous when he was only tyrannical; the mere desire of influence, envy and irritability of temper, are often veiled under the name of jealousy; and many a husband and wife talk of "being jealous," while in reality profoundly indifferent to each other, and only desiring a decent excuse for anger: it is oftener envy than any other feeling. But the passion of jealousy cannot exist without the passion of love, and is, like its parent, creative, impetuous, and credulous. Earth holds no misery so great as that of doubting the affection, which is dearer than life itself—and perhaps it takes its worst shape to a woman. Her attachment is to her more than it ever can be to a man. It enters into her ordinary course of existence—it belongs to the small sweet cares of every day—while it is not less the great aim and end of her being. With her, but "once to doubt" is not

" once to be resolved," but to plunge into a chaos of small distracting fears. How much more must this be the case when the affection has been one of sacrifice and of dishonour! Constance must have watched for weary hours the slightest sign of change—she must have feared before she felt—expected long before it came—yet scarce believed when it did come. At length the fatal hour arrives; she knows that she is "betrayed and scorned." In the fearful solitude of Lindisfarne, how bitterly must she have numbered every sacrifice made to " that false knight and false lover!" Youth, innocence, hours of tender watchfulness, hope on earth, and belief in heaven—all these have been given for his sake, who leaves her to perish by a dreadful death—and, what is the worst sting of that death, leaves her for another. She has attempted the life of her rival, and failed. A darker doom yet remains; she will

> " Give him to the headsman's stroke,
> Although her heart that instant broke."

Marmion shall not live on with a fairer bride—that heart, which had been so unutterably precious to her, shall never be the resting-place of another. The fierce and daring love which has ruled her through life is with her even in death. She gave the fatal packet—

> " But to assure her soul that none
> Shall ever wed with Marmion."

There is here one exquisite touch of knowledge in feminine nature:—the grave yawns beneath her feet, opened by her lover's falsehood—her revenge has pointed the pathway to his scaffold—yet her heart turns to him with an inconsistent reliance—and menaces that dark conclave with fiery visitings if "Marmion's vengeance late should wake:" she has yet a lingering pride in the brave and powerful baron,

> "First amid England's chivalry."

Scott deprecates censure on him, who

> "died a gallant knight—
> With sword in hand for England's right."

Still more might we deprecate it for her "who died in Holy Isle." The morality of pity is deeper and truer than that of censure. The sweetest and best qualities of our nature may be turned to evil, by the strong force of circumstance and of temptation.

Constance is but the general history of those who escape from the convent-cell of restraint, and lose the softest feathers of the dove's wing in the effort; a few feverish years flit by—and then comes the end—despair and death!—For such a grave there is but one inscription—"*Implora pace!*"