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Author: W. P. Ker

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SIR WALTER SCOTT: A LECTURE AT THE SORBONNE ***

SIR WALTER SCOTT

A Lecture at the Sorbonne,
May 22, 1919, in the series of
Conférences Louis Liard

BY
WILLIAM PATON KER, LL.D.

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NOTE

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W. P. K.

Sir Walter Scott

When I was asked to choose a subject for a lecture at the Sorbonne, there came into my mind somehow or other the incident of Scott's visit to Paris when he went to see *Ivanhoe* at the Odéon, and was amused to think how the story had travelled and made its fortune:—

'It was an opera, and, of course, the story sadly mangled and the dialogue in

great part nonsense. Yet it was strange to hear anything like the words which (then in an agony of pain with spasms in my stomach) I dictated to William Laidlaw at Abbotsford, now recited in a foreign tongue, and for the amusement of a strange people. I little thought to have survived the completing of this novel.'

It seemed to me that here I had a text for my sermon. The cruel circumstances of the composition of *Ivanhoe* might be neglected. The interesting point was in the contrast between the original home of Scott's imagination and the widespread triumph of his works abroad—on the one hand, Edinburgh and Ashestiel, the traditions of the Scottish border and the Highlands, the humours of Edinburgh lawyers and Glasgow citizens, country lairds, farmers and ploughmen, the Presbyterian eloquence of the Covenanters and their descendants, the dialect hardly intelligible out of its own region, and not always clear even to natives of Scotland; on the other hand, the competition for Scott's novels in all the markets of Europe, as to which I take leave to quote the evidence of Stendhal:—

'Lord Byron, auteur de quelques héroïdes sublimes, mais toujours les mêmes, et de beaucoup de tragédies mortellement ennuyeuses, n'est point du tout le chef des romantiques.

'S'il se trouvait un homme que les traducteurs à la toise se disputassent également à Madrid, à Stuttgart, à Paris et à Vienne, l'on pourrait avancer que cet homme a deviné les tendances morales de son époque.'

If Stendhal proceeds to remark in a footnote that 'l'homme lui-même est peu digne d'enthousiasme,' it is pleasant to remember that Lord Byron wrote to M. Henri Beyle to correct his low opinion of the character of Scott. This is by the way, though not, I hope, an irrelevant remark. For Scott is best revealed in his friendships; and the mutual regard of Scott and Byron is as pleasant to think of as the friendship between Scott and Wordsworth.

As to the truth of Stendhal's opinion about the vogue of Scott's novels and his place as chief of the romantics, there is no end to the list of witnesses who might be summoned. Perhaps it may be enough to remember how the young Balzac was carried away by the novels as they came fresh from the translator, almost immediately after their first appearance at home.

One distinguishes easily enough, at home in Scotland, between the novels, or the passages in the novels, that are idiomatic, native, homegrown, intended for his own people, and the novels not so limited, the romances of English or foreign history—*Ivanhoe*, *Kenilworth*, *Quentin Durward*. But as a matter of fact these latter, though possibly easier to understand and better suited to the general public, were not invariably preferred. The novels were 'the Scotch novels.' Although Thackeray, when he praises Scott, takes most of his examples from the less characteristic, what we may call the English group, on the other hand, Hazlitt dwells most willingly on the Scotch novels, though he did not like Scotsmen, and shared some of the prejudice of Stendhal—'my friend Mr. Beyle,' as he calls him in one place—with regard to Scott himself. And Balzac has no invidious preferences: he recommends an English romance, *Kenilworth*, to his sister, and he also remembers David Deans, a person most intensely and peculiarly Scots.

One may distinguish the Scotch novels, which only their author could have written, from novels like *Pevekil of the Peak* or *Anne of Geierstein*, which may be thought to resemble rather too closely the imitations of Scott, the ordinary historical novel as it was written by Scott's successors. But though the formula of the conventional historical novel may have been drawn from the less idiomatic group, it was not this that chiefly made Scott's reputation. His fame and influence were achieved through the whole mass of his immense and varied work; and the Scots dialect and humours, which make so large a part of his resources when he is putting out all his power, though they have their difficulties for readers outside of Scotland, were no real hindrances in the way of the Scotch novels: Dandie Dinmont and Bailie Nicol Jarvie, Cuddie Headrigg and Andrew Fairservice were not ignored or forgotten, even where *Ivanhoe* or *The Talisman* might have the preference as being more conformable to the general mind of novel readers.

The paradox remains: that the most successful novelist of the whole world should have had his home and found his strength in a country with a language of its own, barely intelligible, frequently repulsive to its nearest neighbours, a language none the more likely to win favour when the manners or ideas of the country were taken into consideration as well.

The critics who refuse to see much good in Scott, for the most part ignore the foundations of his work. Thus Stendhal, who acknowledges Scott's position as representative of his age, the one really great, universally popular, author of his day, does not recognise in Scott's imagination much more than trappings and tournaments, the furniture of the regular historical novel. He compares Scott's novels with *La Princesse de Clèves*, and asks which is more to be praised, the author who understands and reveals the human heart, or the descriptive historian who can fill pages with unessential details but is afraid of the passions.

In which it seems to be assumed that Scott, when he gave his attention to the background and the appropriate dresses, was neglecting the dramatic truth of his characters and their expression. Scott, it may be observed, had, in his own reflexions on the art of novel-writing, taken

notice of different kinds of policy in dealing with the historical setting. In his lives of the novelists, reviewing *The Old English Baron*, he describes the earlier type of historical novel in which little or nothing is done for antiquarian decoration or for local colour; while in his criticism of Mrs. Radcliffe he uses the very term—'melodrama'—and the very distinction—melodrama as opposed to tragedy—which is the touchstone of the novelist. Whatever his success might be, there can be no doubt as to his intentions. He meant his novels, with their richer background and their larger measure of detail, to sacrifice nothing of dramatic truth. *La Princesse de Clèves*, a professedly historical novel with little 'local colour', may be in essentials finer and more sincere than Scott. This is a question which I ask leave to pass over. But it is not Scott's intention to put off the reader with details and decoration as a substitute for truth of character and sentiment. Here most obviously, with all their differences, Balzac and Scott are agreed: expensive both of them in description, but neither of them inclined to let mere description (in Pope's phrase) take the place of sense—i.e. of the life which it is the business of the novelist to interpret. There is danger, no doubt, of overdoing it, but description in Balzac, however full and long, is never inanimate. He has explained his theory in a notice of Scott, or rather in a comparison of Scott and Fenimore Cooper (*Revue Parisienne*, 1840), where the emptiness of Cooper's novels is compared with the variety of Scott's, the solitude of the American lakes and forests with the crowd of life commanded by the author of *Waverley*. Allowing Cooper one great success in the character of Leather-stocking and some merit in a few other personages, Balzac finds beyond these nothing like Scott's multitude of characters; their place is taken by the beauties of nature. But description cannot make up for want of life in a story.

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Balzac shows clearly that he understood the danger of description, and how impossible, how unreasonable, it is to make scenery do instead of story and characters. He does not seem to think that Scott has failed in this respect, while in his remarks on Scott's humour he proves how far he is from the critics who found in Scott nothing but scenery and accoutrements and the rubbish of old chronicles. Scott's chivalry and romance are not what Balzac is thinking about. Balzac is considering Scott's imagination in general, his faculty in narrative and dialogue, wherever his scene may be, from whatever period the facts of his story may be drawn.

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Scott's superiority to his American rival comes out, says Balzac, chiefly in his secondary personages and in his talent for comedy. The American makes careful mechanical provision for laughter: Balzac takes this all to pieces, and leaves Scott unchallenged and inexhaustible.

Scott's reputation has suffered a little through suspicion of his politics, and, strangely enough, of his religion. He has been made responsible for movements in Churches about which opinions naturally differ, but of which it is certain Scott never dreamed. Those who suspect and blame his work because it is reactionary, illiberal, and offensive to modern ideas of progress, are, of course, mainly such persons as believe in 'the march of intellect,' and think meanly of each successive stage as soon as it is left behind. The spokesman of this party is Mark Twain, who wrote a burlesque of the Holy Grail, and who in his *Life on the Mississippi* makes Scott responsible for the vanities and superstitions of the Southern States of America:—

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'The South has not yet recovered from the debilitating influence of his books. Admiration of his fantastic heroes and their grotesque "chivalry" doings and romantic juvenilities still survives here, in an atmosphere in which is already perceptible the wholesome and practical nineteenth century smell of cotton-factories and locomotives.'

It is useless to moralise on this, and the purport and significance of it may be left for private meditation to enucleate and enjoy. But it cannot be fully appreciated, unless one remembers that the author of this and other charges against chivalry is also the historian of the feud between the Shepherdsons and the Grangerfords, equal in tragedy to the themes of the *chansons de geste*: of *Raoul de Cambrai* or *Garin le Loherain*. Mark Twain in the person of Huckleberry Finn is committed to the ideas of chivalry neither more nor less than Walter Scott in *Ivanhoe* or *The Talisman*. I am told further—though this is perhaps unimportant—that Gothic ornament in America is not peculiarly the taste of the South, that even at Chicago there are imitations of Gothic towers and halls.

Hazlitt, an unbeliever in most of Scott's political principles, is also the most fervent and expressive admirer of the novels, quite beyond the danger of modern progress, his judgment not corrupted at all by the incense of the cotton-factory or the charm of the locomotive. Hazlitt's praise of Scott is an immortal proof of Hazlitt's sincerity in criticism. Scott's friends were not Hazlitt's, and Scott and Hazlitt differed both in personal and public affairs as much as any men of their time. But Hazlitt has too much sense not to be taken with the Scotch novels, and too much honesty not to say so, and too much spirit not to put all his strength into praising, when once he begins. Hazlitt's critical theory of Scott's novels is curiously like his opinion about Scott's old friend, the poet Crabbe: whose name I cannot leave without a salute to the laborious and eloquent work of M. Huchon, his scholarly French interpreter.

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Hazlitt on Crabbe and Scott is a very interesting witness on account of the principles and presuppositions employed by him. In the last hundred years or so the problems of realism and naturalism have been canvassed almost too thoroughly between disputants who seem not always to know when they are wandering from the point or wearying their audience with verbiage and platitudes. But out of all the controversy there has emerged at least one plain probability—that there is no such thing as simple transference of external reality into artistic form. This is what

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Hazlitt seems to ignore very strangely in his judgment of Crabbe and Scott, and this is, I think, an interesting point in the history of criticism, especially when it is remembered that Hazlitt was a critic of painting, and himself a painter. He speaks almost as if realities passed direct into the verse of Crabbe; as if Scott's imagination in the novels were merely recollection and transcription of experience. Speaking of the difference between the genius of Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott, he says:

'It is the difference between *originality* and the want of it, between writing and transcribing. Almost all the finest scenes and touches, the great master-strokes in Shakespeare, are such as must have belonged to the class of invention, where the secret lay between him and his own heart, and the power exerted is in adding to the given materials and working something out of them: in the author of *Waverley*, not all, but the principal and characteristic beauties are such as may and do belong to the class of compilation—that is, consist in bringing the materials together and leaving them to produce their own effect....

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'No one admires or delights in the Scotch Novels more than I do, but at the same time, when I hear it asserted that his mind is of the same class with Shakespeare, or that he imitates nature in the same way, I confess I cannot assent to it. No two things appear to me more different. Sir Walter is an imitator of nature and nothing more; but I think Shakespeare is infinitely more than this.... Sir Walter's mind is full of information, but the "*o'er informing power*" is not there. Shakespeare's spirit, like fire, shines through him; Sir Walter's, like a stream, reflects surrounding objects.'

I may not at this time quote much more of Hazlitt's criticism, but the point of it would be misunderstood if it were construed as depreciation of Scott. What may be considered merely memory in contrast to Shakespeare's imagination is regarded by Hazlitt as a limitless source of visionary life when compared with the ideas of self-centred authors like Byron. This is what Hazlitt says in another essay of the same series:—

'Scott "does not 'spin his brains' but something much better." He "has got hold of another clue—that of Nature and history—and long may he spin it, 'even to the crack of doom!'" Scott's success lies in not thinking of himself. "And then again the catch that blind Willie and his wife and the boy sing in the hollow of the heath—there is more mirth and heart's ease in it than in all Lord Byron's *Don Juan* or Mr. Moore's *Lyrics*. And why? Because the author is thinking of beggars and a beggar's brat, and not of himself, while he writes it. He looks at Nature, sees it, hears it, feels it, and believes that it exists before it is printed, hotpressed, and labelled on the back *By the Author of 'Waverley'*." He does not fancy, nor would he for one moment have it supposed, that his name and fame compose all that is worth a moment's consideration in the universe. This is the great secret of his writings—a perfect indifference to self.'

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Hazlitt appears to allow too little to the mind of the Author of *Waverley*—as though the author had nothing to do but let the contents of his mind arrange themselves on his pages. What this exactly may mean is doubtful. We are not disposed to accept the theory of the passive mind as a sufficient philosophical explanation of the Scotch novels. But Hazlitt is certainly right to make much of the store of reading and reminiscence they imply, and it is not erroneous or fallacious to think of all Scott's writings in verse or prose as peculiarly the fruits of his life and experience. His various modes of writing are suggested to him by the way, and he finds his art with no long practice when the proper time comes to use it. After all, is this not what was meant by Horace when he said that the subject rightly chosen will provide what is wanted in art and style?

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Cui lecta potenter erit res
Nec facundia deseret hunc nec lucidus ordo.

It was chosen by Corneille as a motto for *Cinna*; it would do as a summary of all the writings of Scott.

The *Waverley Novels* may be reckoned among the works of fiction that have had their origin in chance, and have turned out something different from what the author intended. Reading the life of Scott, we seem to be following a pilgrimage where the traveller meets with different temptations and escapes various dangers, and takes up a number of duties, and is led to do a number of fine things which he had not thought of till the time came for attempting them. The poet and the novelist are revealed in the historian and the collector of antiquities. Scott before *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* looked like a young adventurer in the study of history and legend, who had it in him to do solid work on a large scale (like his edition of Dryden) if he chose to take it up. He is not a poet from the beginning like Wordsworth and Keats, devoted to that one service; he turns novelist late in life when the success of his poetry seems to be over. His early experiments in verse are queerly suggested and full of hazard. It needs a foreign language—German—to encourage him to rhyme. The fascination of Bürger's *Lenore* is a reflection from

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English ballad poetry; the reflected image brought out what had been less remarkable in the original. The German devices of terror and wonder are a temptation to Scott; they hang about his path with their monotonous and mechanical jugglery, their horrors made all the more intolerable through the degraded verse of Lewis—a bad example which Scott instinctively refused to follow, though he most unaccountably praised Lewis's sense of rhythm. The close of the eighteenth century cannot be fully understood, nor the progress of poetry in the nineteenth, without some study of the plague of ghosts and skeletons which has left its mark on *The Ancient Mariner*, from which Goethe and Scott did not escape, which imposed on Shelley in his youth, to which Byron yielded his tribute of *The Vampire*. A tempting subject for expatiation, especially when one remembers—and who that has once read it can forget?—the most glorious passage in the *Memoirs* of Alexandre Dumas describing his first conversation with the unknown gentleman who afterwards turned out to be Charles Nodier, in the theatre of the Porte Saint-Martin where the play was the *Vampire*: from which theatre Charles Nodier was expelled for hissing the *Vampire*, himself being part-author of the marvellous drama. I hope it is not impertinent in a stranger to express his unbounded gratitude for that delightful and most humorous dialogue, in which the history of the Elzevir Press (starting from *Le Pastissier françois*) and the tragedy of the rotifer are so adroitly interwoven with the theatrical scene of Fingal's Cave and its unusual visitors, the whole adventure ending in the happiest laughter over the expulsion of the dramatist. I may not have any right to say so, but I throw myself on the mercy of my hearers: I remember nothing in any chronicle so mercurial or jovial in its high spirits as this story of the first encounter and the beginning of friendship between Charles Nodier and Alexandre Dumas.

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The Vampire of Staffa may seem rather far from the range of Scott's imagination; but his contributions to Lewis's *Tales of Wonder* show the risk that he ran, while the White Lady of Avenel in *The Monastery* proves that even in his best years he was exposed to the hazards of conventional magic.

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Lockhart has given the history of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, how the story developed and took shape. It is not so much an example of Scott's mode of writing poetry as an explanation of his whole literary life. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was his first original piece of any length and his first great popular success. And, as Lockhart has sufficiently shown, it was impossible for Scott to get to it except through the years of exploration and editing, the collection of the Border ballads, the study of the old metrical romance of *Sir Tristrem*. The story of the Goblin Page was at first reckoned enough simply for one of the additions to the Border Minstrelsy on the scale of a ballad. Scott had tried another sort of imitation in the stanzas composed in old English and in the metre of the original to supply the missing conclusion of *Sir Tristrem*. It was not within his scope to write an original romance in the old language, but Coleridge's *Christabel* was recited to him, and gave him a modern rhythm fit for a long story. So the intended ballad became the *Lay*, taking in, with the legend of Gilpin Horner for a foundation, all the spirit of Scott's knowledge of his own country.

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Here I must pause to express my admiration for Lockhart's criticism of Scott, and particularly for his description of the way in which the *Lay* came to be written. It is really wonderful, Lockhart's sensible, unpretentious, thorough interpretation of the half-unconscious processes by which Scott's reading and recollections were turned into his poems and novels. Of course, it is all founded on Scott's own notes and introductions.

What happened with the *Lay* is repeated a few years afterwards in *Waverley*. The *Lay*, a rhyming romance; *Waverley* an historical novel; what, it may be asked, is so very remarkable about their origins? Was it not open to any one to write romances in verse or prose? Perhaps; but the singularity of Scott's first romances in verse and prose is that they do not begin as literary experiments, but as means of expressing their author's knowledge, memory and treasured sentiment. Hazlitt is right; Scott's experience is shaped into the *Waverley Novels*, though one can distinguish later between those stories that belong properly to Scott's life and those that are invented in repetition of a pattern.

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Scott's own alleged reason for giving up the writing of tales in verse was that Byron beat him. But there must have been something besides this: it is plain that the pattern of rhyming romance was growing stale. The *Lay* needs no apology; *Marmion* includes the great tragedy of Scotland in the Battle of Flodden:—

The stubborn spearmen still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight;
Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded king.

And *The Lady of the Lake* is all that the Highlands meant for Scott at that time. But *Rokeby* has little substance, though it includes more than one of Scott's finest songs. *The Lord of the Isles*, though its battle is not too far below *Marmion*, and though its hero is Robert the Bruce, yet wants the original force of the earlier romances. When Scott changed his hand from verse to prose for

story-telling and wrote *Waverley*, he not only gained in freedom and got room for a kind of dialogue that was impossible in rhyme, but he came back to the same sort of experience and the same strength of tradition as had given life to the *Lay*. The time of *Waverley* was no more than sixty years since, when Scott began to write it and mislaid and forgot the opening chapters in 1805; he got his ideas of the Forty-five from an old Highland gentleman who had been out with the Highland clans, following the lead of Prince Charles Edward, the Young Chevalier. The clans in that adventure belonged to a world more ancient than that of *Ivanhoe* or *The Talisman*; they also belonged so nearly to Scott's own time that he heard their story from one of themselves. He had spoken and listened to another gentleman who had known Rob Roy. *The Bride of Lammermoor* came to him as the Icelandic family histories came to the historians of Gunnar or Kjartan Olafsson. He had known the story all his life, and he wrote it from tradition. The time of *The Heart of Midlothian* is earlier than *Waverley*, but it is more of a modern novel than an historical romance, and even *Old Mortality*, which is earlier still, is modern also; Cuddie Headrigg is no more antique than Dandie Dinmont or the Ettrick Shepherd himself, and even his mother and her Covenanting friends are not far from the fashion of some enthusiasts of Scott's own time—e.g. Hogg's religious uncle who could not be brought to repeat his old ballads for thinking of 'covenanters broken, burned and buried.' *Guy Mannering* and *The Antiquary* are both modern stories: it is not till *Ivanhoe* that Scott definitely starts on the regular historical novel in the manner that was found so easy to imitate.

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If *Rob Roy* is not the very best of them all—and on problems of that sort perhaps the right word may be the Irish phrase *Nabocliah!* ('don't trouble about that!') which Scott picked up when he was visiting Miss Edgeworth in Ireland—*Rob Roy* shows well enough what Scott could do, in romance of adventure and in humorous dialogue. The plots of his novels are sometimes thought to be loose and ill-defined, and he tells us himself that he seldom knew where his story was carrying him. His young heroes are sometimes reckoned rather feeble and featureless. Francis Osbaldistone, like Edward Waverley and Henry Morton, drifts into trouble and has his destiny shaped for him by other people and accidents. But is this anything of a reproach to the author of the story? Then it must tell against some novelists who seem to work more conscientiously and carefully than Scott on the frame of their story—against George Meredith in Evan Harrington and Richard Feverel and Harry Richmond, all of whom are driven by circumstances and see their way no more clearly than Scott's young men. Is it not really the strength, not the weakness, of Scott's imagination that engages us in the perplexities of Waverley and Henry Morton even to the verge of tragedy—keeping out of tragedy because it is not his business, and would spoil his looser, larger, more varied web of a story? Francis Osbaldistone is less severely tried. His story sets him travelling, and may we not admire the skill of the author who uses the old device of a wandering hero with such good effect? The story is not a mere string of adventures—it is adventures with a bearing on the main issue, with complications that all tell in the end; chief among them, of course, the successive appearances of Mr. Campbell and the counsels of Diana Vernon. The scenes that bring out Scott's genius most completely—so they have always seemed to me—are those of Francis Osbaldistone's stay in Glasgow. Seldom has any novelist managed so easily so many different modes of interest. There is the place—in different lights—the streets, the river, the bridge, the Cathedral, the prison, seen through the suspense of the hero's mind, rendered in the talk of Bailie Nicol Jarvie and Andrew Fairservice; made alive, as the saying is, through successive anxieties and dangers; thrilling with romance, yet at the same time never beyond the range of ordinary common sense. Is it not a triumph, at the very lowest reckoning, of dexterous narrative to bring together in a vivid dramatic scene the humorous character of the Glasgow citizen and the equal and opposite humour of his cousin, the cateran, the Highland loon, Mr. Campbell disclosed as Rob Roy—with the Dougal creature helping him?

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Scott's comedy is like that of Cervantes in *Don Quixote*—humorous dialogue independent of any definite comic plot and mixed up with all sorts of other business. Might not Falstaff himself be taken into comparison too? Scott's humorous characters are nowhere and never characters in a comedy—and Falstaff, the greatest comic character in Shakespeare, is not great in comedy.

Some of the rich idiomatic Scottish dialogue in the novels might be possibly disparaged (like Ben Jonson) as 'mere humours and observation.' Novelists of lower rank than Scott—Galt in *The Ayrshire Legatees* and *Annals of the Parish* and *The Entail*—have nearly rivalled Scott in reporting conversation. But the Bailie at any rate has his part to play in the story of *Rob Roy*—and so has Andrew Fairservice. Scott never did anything more ingenious than his contrast of those two characters—so much alike in language, and to some extent in cast of mind, with the same conceit and self-confidence, the same garrulous Westland security in their own judgment, both attentive to their own interests, yet clearly and absolutely distinct in spirit, the Bailie a match in courage for Rob Roy himself.

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Give me leave, before I end, to read one example of Scott's language: from the scene in *Guy Mannering* where Dandie Dinmont explains his case to Mr. Pleydell the advocate. It is true to life: memory and imagination here indistinguishable:—

Dinmont, who had pushed after Mannering into the room, began with a scrape of his foot and a scratch of his head in unison. 'I am Dandie Dinmont, sir, of the Charlies-hope—the Liddesdale lad—ye'll mind me? It was for me you won yon grand plea.'

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'What plea, you loggerhead?' said the lawyer; 'd'ye think I can remember all the fools that come to plague me?'

'Lord, sir, it was the grand plea about the grazing o' the Langtae-head,' said the farmer.

'Well, curse thee, never mind;—give me the memorial, and come to me on Monday at ten,' replied the learned counsel.

'But, sir, I haena got ony distinct memorial.'

'No memorial, man?' said Pleydell.

'Na, sir, nae memorial,' answered Dandie; 'for your honour said before, Mr. Pleydell, ye'll mind, that ye liked best to hear us hill-folk tell our ane tale by word o' mouth.'

'Beshrew my tongue that said so!' answered the counsellor; 'it will cost my ears a dinning.—Well, say in two words what you've got to say—you see the gentleman waits.'

'Ou, sir, if the gentleman likes he may play his ain spring first; it's a' ane to Dandie.'

'Now, you looby,' said the lawyer, 'cannot you conceive that your business can be nothing to Colonel Mannering, but that he may not choose to have these great ears of thine regaled with his matters?'

'Aweel, sir, just as you and he like, so ye see to my business,' said Dandie, not a whit disconcerted by the roughness of this reception. 'We're at the auld wark o' the marches again, Jock o' Dawston Cleugh and me. Ye see we march on the tap o' Touthoprigg after we pass the Pomoragrains; for the Pomoragrains, and Slackenspool, and Bloodylaws, they come in there, and they belong to the Peel; but after ye pass Pomoragrains at a muckle great saucer-headed cutlugged stane, that they ca' Charlie's Chuckie, there Dawston Cleugh and Charlies-hope they march. Now, I say, the march rins on the tap o' the hill where the wind and water shears; but Jock o' Dawston Cleugh again, he contravenes that, and says that it hauds down by the auld drove-road that gaes awa by the Knot o' the Gate ower to Keeldar-ward—and that makes an unco difference.'

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'And what difference does it make, friend?' said Pleydell. 'How many sheep will it feed?'

'Ou, no mony,' said Dandie, scratching his head; 'it's lying high and exposed—it may feed a hog, or aiblins twa in a good year.'

'And for this grazing, which may be worth about five shillings a-year, you are willing to throw away a hundred pound or two?'

'Na, sir, it's no for the value of the grass,' replied Dinmont; 'it's for justice.'

Do we at home in Scotland make too much of Scott's life and associations when we think of his poetry and his novels? Possibly few Scotsmen are impartial here. As Dr. Johnson said, they are not a fair people, and when they think of the Waverley Novels they perhaps do not always see quite clearly. Edinburgh and the Eildon Hills, Aberfoyle and Stirling, come between their minds and the printed page:—

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A mist of memory broods and floats,
The Border waters flow,
The air is full of ballad notes
Borne out of long ago.

It might be prudent and more critical to take each book on its own merits in a dry light. But it is not easy to think of a great writer thus discreetly. Is Balzac often judged accurately and coldly, piece by piece, here a line and there a line? Are not the best judges those who think of his whole achievement altogether—the whole amazing world of his creation—*La Comédie Humaine*? By the same sort of rule Scott may be judged, and the whole of his work, his vast industry, and all that made the fabric of his life, be allowed to tell on the mind of the reader.

I wish this discourse had been more worthy of its theme, and of this audience, and of this year of heroic memories and lofty hopes. But if, later in the summer, I should find my way back to Ettrick and Yarrow and the Eildon Hills, it will be a pleasure to remember there the honour you have done me in allowing me to speak in Paris, however unworthily, of the greatness of Sir Walter Scott.

[28]

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