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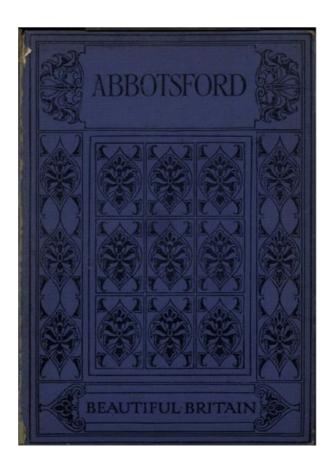
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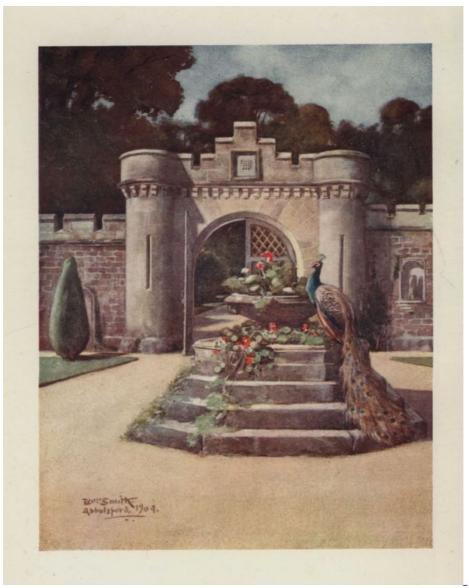
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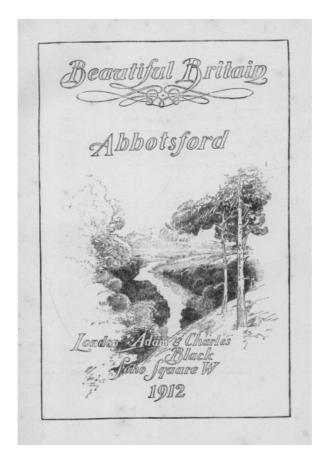
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The Gateway, Abbotsford



Beautiful Britain Abbotsford

London Adam & Charles Black Soho Square W 1912

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CHAPTER I

FROM CARTLEYHOLE TO ABBOTSFORD

Thousands of persons from all parts of the world visit Abbotsford annually. There is no diminution in the pilgrimage to this chief shrine of the Border Country, nor is there likely to be. Scott's name, and that of Abbotsford, are secure enough in the affections of men everywhere.

It is scarcely necessary to recall that Scott on both sides of his house was connected with the Border Country—the 'bold bad Border' of a day happily long dead. He would have been a reiver himself, more than likely, and one of its nameless bards to boot, had he lived before the Border felt the subdued spirit of modern times. A descendant of Wat of Harden, linked to the best blood of the Border, and with every phase of his life redolent of the Border feeling, history has had no difficulty in claiming Sir Walter Scott as the most representative Border man the world has seen. He was not born in the Border Country, but practically all his life was spent there. He came to the Border a sickly, delicate child, between his third and fourth year, and for threescore years and one he seldom left it for any lengthened interval. Edinburgh was the arena of much of his professional career. But he was happiest, even amid the most crushing sorrows of his life, when within earshot of the Tweed. There was not a blither or sunnier boyhood than Scott's at Rosebank, where even then he was 'making' himself, and dreaming of the days that were to be. At Ashestiel, the birthplace of the most popular poetry of the century before Byron blazed upon the literary horizon, his life was singularly untrammelled. Ashestiel, from being off the beaten track perhaps, seems to have lost favour somewhat with the Scott student. At any rate, it is not the shrine it should be, although in several respects it is more interesting to lovers of Scott than even Abbotsford itself. As for Abbotsford, may we not say that it is at once the proudest, and the most stimulating, and the saddest memorial ever associated with a man of letters? All these places, comprising the three periods of Scott's life—Rosebank, Ashestiel, Abbotsford—lie as close to the Tweed as can be—none of them more than a few hundred paces from it at the outside. And when the great Borderer's task was accomplished, where more fitly could he have rested than with the river of his love and of his dreams singing ceaseless requiem around his last low bed?

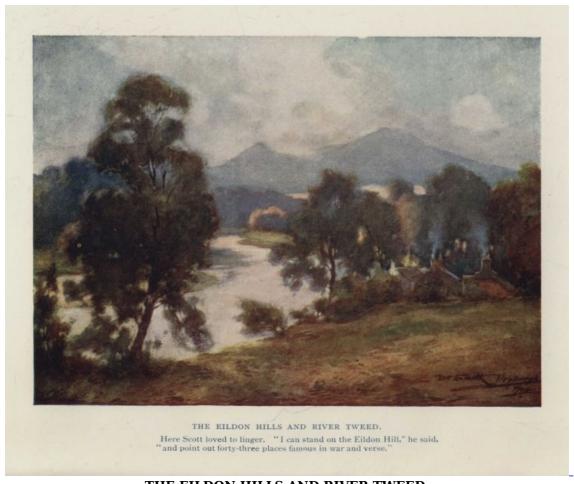
It will be interesting to have a glimpse of Tweedside just as Scott appeared upon the scene. Since his day the valley in many of its aspects has not been without change. Even the remote uplands, long untouched by outside influences, have not escaped the modern spirit. The river must needs remain in statu quo, but the contrast between Sir Walter's Tweedside and ours is considerable. A century of commerce and agriculture has wrought marvels on the once bare and featureless and uncultivated banks of the Tweed. And none would have rejoiced at its present picturesque and prosperous condition more than Scott himself. Of the valley as it was a hundred years since, some early travellers give their impressions. There is the following from a Londoner's point of view, for instance—a somewhat sombre picture, true enough, however, of the upper reaches at the time: 'About four in the afternoon we were obliged to proceed on our journey to Moffat, a market town, where we were informed we should meet with good lodging, which made us ride on the more briskly, but notwithstanding all our speed, we had such terrible stony ways and tedious miles, that when we thought we had been near the place, we met a Scotchman, who told us we were not got half way; this put us almost into the spleen, for we could see nothing about us but barren mountains on the right and the River Tweed on the left, which, running thro' the stones and rocks with a terrible noise, seemed to us like the croaking of a Raven, or the tone of a Screitch Owle to a dying man, so we were forced to ride on by guesse, knowing not a step of the way.'

At Scott's day the Tweed valley, in what are now its most luxuriant reaches, exhibited a markedly naked and treeless character. From Abbotsford to Norham Castle the scenery was of the openest. Here and there 'ancestral oaks' still clumped themselves about the great houses, with perhaps some further attempt at decorating the landscape. But that was rare enough. Landlords had not learned the art, not to speak of the wisdom, of tree-planting. It is only within the past hundred years that planting has become frequent, and the modern beauty of Tweedside emerged into being. It is said that Scott was one of the first to popularize the planting spirit. His operations at Abbotsford certainly induced the neighbouring proprietors to follow suit. Scott of Gala, and the lairds of Ravenswood, Drygrange, Cowdenknowes, Gladswood, Bemersyde, Mertoun, Eildon Hall, and Floors, all took their lead, more or less, from Abbotsford. Arboriculture

was Scott's most passionate hobby. At least two long articles were penned by him on the subject, and he practised the art with extraordinary diligence and foresight. Of botany he knew little, but of trees everything. As we shall see, not the least important part of Abbotsford's creation was planning and perfecting that wondrous wealth of woodland—a very network about the place, on whose full growth his eyes, alas! were not destined to feast. 'Somebody,' he said, 'will look at them, however, though I question that they will have the same pleasure in gazing on the full-grown oaks that I have had in nursing the saplings.'

Another impression of Tweedside comes to us from the pages of Lockhart. We are dealing now with *the site of Abbotsford* as it was about the year 1811. Scott was tenant of Ashestiel. Here he had spent eight of the pleasantest years of his life. But his lease was out, and the laird himself —Scott's cousin, General Russell—was returning from India.

In casting about for a new abode, Scott seems at first to have thought of Broadmeadows, on the Yarrow, then in the market, a compact little domain which would have suited him well. Lockhart's one regret was that Scott did not purchase Broadmeadows. Here, surrounded by large landed proprietors, instead of a few bonnet-lairds, he would certainly have escaped the Abbotsford 'yerd-hunger,' and changed, possibly, the whole of his career. But the Broadmeadows Scott might have been very different from *our Sir Walter*. Of Newark, also, close by, the scene of the 'Lay,' he had some fancy, and would fain have fitted it up as a residence. The ancestral home of Harden itself was proposed to him, and indeed offered, and he would have removed thither but for its inconvenience for shrieval duties. After all, however, there was uppermost in Scott's mind the wish to have a house and land of his own—to be 'laird of the cairn and the scaur,' as in the case of Broadmeadows, or 'a Tweedside laird' at best, and later on, perhaps, to 'play the grand old feudal lord again.' Lockhart assures us that Scott was really aiming at higher game. His ambition was to found a new Border family, and to become head of a new branch of the Scotts, already so dominant. He realized his ambition before he died.



THE EILDON HILLS AND RIVER TWEED.

Here Scott loved to linger. "I can stand on the Eildon Hill," he said, "and point out forty-three places in war and verse."

About to quit Ashestiel, therefore, his attention was directed to a small farm-holding not far distant, on the south bank of the Tweed, some two miles from Galashiels, and about three from Melrose. Scott knew the spot well. It had 'long been one of peculiar interest for him,' from the fact of the near neighbourhood of a Border battlefield, first pointed out to him by his father. By name Newarthaugh, it was also known as Cartleyhole, or Cartlawhole, and Cartlihole, according to the Melrose Session Records, in which parish it was situated. The place was tenanted for a time by Taits and Dicksons. Then it seems to have passed into the family of Walter Turnbull, school-master of Melrose, who disposed of it, in the year 1797, to Dr. Robert Douglas, the enterprising and philanthropic minister of Galashiels. Why Dr. Douglas purchased this property nobody has been able to understand. It lay outside his parish, and was never regarded as a

desirable or dignified possession. A shrewd man of business, however, he may, like Scott, have judged it capable of results, speculating accordingly. He had never lived at Cartleyhole. The place was laid out in parks, and the house, of which, curiously, Scott speaks in a recently recovered letter as 'new and substantial,' was in occupation. The surroundings were certainly in a deplorably neglected condition. The sole attempt at embellishment had been limited to a strip of firs so long and so narrow that Scott likened it to a black hair-comb. 'The farm,' according to Lockhart, 'consisted of a rich meadow or haugh along the banks of the river, and about a hundred acres of undulated ground behind, all in a neglected state, undrained, wretchedly enclosed, much of it covered with nothing better than the native heath. The farmhouse itself was small and poor, with a common kailyard on one flank and a staring barn on the other; while in front appeared a filthy pond covered with ducks and duckweed, from which the whole tenement had derived the unharmonious designation of Clarty Hole.'

Melrose Abbey, the most graceful and picturesque ruin in Scotland, already so celebrated in his verse, was visible from many points in the neighbourhood. Dryburgh was not far distant. Yonder Eildon's triple height, sacred to so much of the supernatural in Border lore, reared his grey crown to the skies. There, the Tweed, 'a beautiful river even here,' flowed in front, broad and bright over a bed of milk-white pebbles. Selkirk, his Sheriff's headquarters, was within easy reach. He was interested in the Catrail, or Picts' Work Ditch, on the opposite hillside, so often alluded to in his letters to Ellis; and on his own ground were fields, and mounds, and standing-stones, whose placenames recalled the struggle of 1526. A Roman road running down from the Eildons to a ford on the Tweed, long used by the Abbots, the erstwhile lords of the locality, furnished a new designation for the acres of hungry haugh-land—'as poor and bare as Sir John Falstaff's regiment'—upon which was destined to be reared the most venerated, and probably the most visited shrine in the kingdom.

On May 12, 1811, we find Scott writing to James Ballantyne: 'I have resolved to purchase a piece of ground sufficient for a cottage and a few fields. There are two pieces, either of which would suit me, but both would make a very desirable property indeed, and could be had for between £7,000 and £8,000—or either separate for about half the sum. I have serious thoughts of one or both, and must have recourse to my pen to make the matter easy.' By the end of June one of the pieces passed into his hands for the sum mentioned—£4,000, half of which, according to Scott's bad and sanguine habit, he borrowed from his brother John, raising the remainder on the security of 'Rokeby,' as yet unwritten. The letter to Dr. Douglas acknowledging his receipt for the last instalment of the purchase-money has been preserved: 'I received the discharged bill safe, which puts an end to our relation of debtor and creditor:

'Now the gowd's thine, And the land's mine.

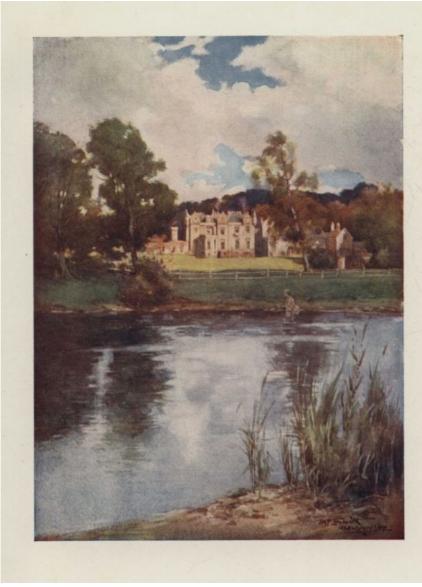
I am glad you have been satisfied with my manner of transacting business, and have equal reason at least to thank you for your kindly accommodation as to time and manner of payment. In short, I hope our temporary connection forms a happy contradiction to the proverb, "I lent my money to my friend; I lost my money and my friend." A figure of note in his day, Dr. Douglas was born at the manse of Kenmore, in 1747, and in his twenty-third year was presented to the parish of Galashiels, where he laboured till his death in 1820. He has been styled the Father of Galashiels.

Galashiels, when Abbotsford came into being, was a mere thatched hamlet. Then it could boast of not more than a dozen slated houses. To-day there is a population of over 13,000.

CHAPTER II

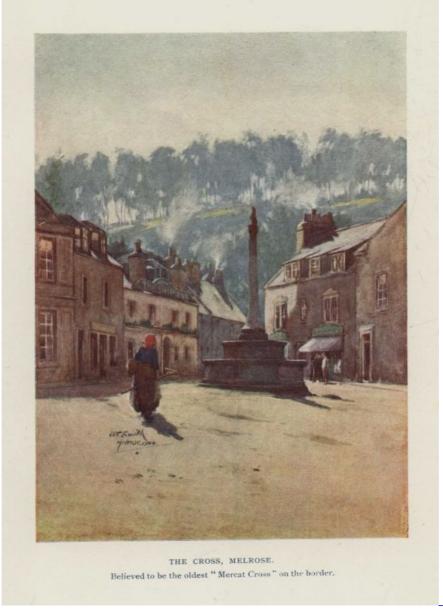
THE CREATION OF ABBOTSFORD

The first purchase of land was close on a hundred and ten acres, half of which were to be planted, and the remainder kept in pasture and tillage. An ornamental cottage with a pillared porch—a print of which is still preserved—after the style of an English vicarage, was agreed upon, and it was here that Scott passed the first years of his Abbotsford life. He had many correspondents during this period. Daniel Terry, an architect turned actor, was probably his chief adviser as to Abbotsford and its furnishings, no end of letters passing between them. Morritt of Rokeby was much in his confidence, and Joanna Baillie, 'our immortal Joanna,' whose 'Family Legend,' had been produced at Edinburgh the previous year under Scott's auspices. The plans for his house were at first of the simplest. He thus describes them to Miss Baillie: 'My dreams about my cottage go on. My present intention is to have only two spare bedrooms, with dressing-rooms, each of which on a pinch will have a couch-bed; but I cannot relinquish my Border principle of accommodating all the cousins and *duniwastles*, who will rather sleep on chairs, and on the floor, and in the hayloft, than be absent when folks are gathered together.'



Abbotsford from the River Tweed

To Morritt we find him writing: 'I have fixed only two points respecting my intended cottage —one is that it shall be in my garden, or rather kailyard; the other, that the little drawing-room shall open into a little conservatory, in which conservatory there shall be a fountain. These are articles of taste which I have long since determined upon; but I hope before a stone of my paradise is begun we shall meet and collogue upon it'; but soon after, as an excuse for beginning 'Rokeby,' his fourth verse romance, he says: 'I want to build my cottage a little better than my limited finances will permit out of my ordinary income.' Later on he tells Lord Byron that 'he is labouring to contradict an old proverb, and make a silk purse out of a sow's ear-namely, to convert a bare haugh and brae into a comfortable farm'; and to Sarah Smith, a London tragic actress, he writes: 'Everybody, after abusing me for buying the ugliest place on Tweedside, begins now to come over to my side. I think it will be pretty six or seven years hence, whoever may come to see and enjoy, for the sweep of the river is a very fine one of almost a mile in length, and the ground is very unequal, and therefore well adapted for showing off trees.' Scott, as was said, took a profound interest in tree-planting. Had he not been able to add by purchase the neighbouring hills to his original lands, it was said that he would have requested permission of the owners to plant the grounds, for the mere pleasure of the occupation, and to beautify the landscape. 'I saunter about,' he said to Lady Abercorn, 'from nine in the morning till five at night with a plaid about my shoulders and an immense bloodhound at my heels, and stick in sprigs which are to become trees when I shall have no eyes to look at them!' He had a painter's as well as a poet's eye for scenery: 'You can have no idea of the exquisite delight of a planter,' he said; 'he is like a painter laying on his colours-at every moment he sees his effects coming out. There is no art or occupation comparable to this; it is full of past, present, and future enjoyment. I look back to the time when there was not a tree here, only bare heath; I look round and see thousands of trees growing up, all of which-I may say almost each of which-have received my personal attention. I remember five years ago looking forward, with the most delighted expectation, to this very hour, and as each year has passed the expectation has gone on increasing. I do the same now; I anticipate what this plantation and that one will presently be, if only taken care of, and there is not a spot of which I do not watch the progress. Unlike building, or even painting, or indeed any other kind of pursuit, this has no end, and is never interrupted, but goes on from day to day and from year to year with a perpetually augmenting interest. Farming I hate; what have I to do with fattening and killing beasts, or raising corn only to cut it down, and to wrangle with farmers about prices, and to be constantly at the mercy of the seasons? There can be no such



THE CROSS, MELROSE.
Believed to be the oldest "Mercat Cross" on the border.

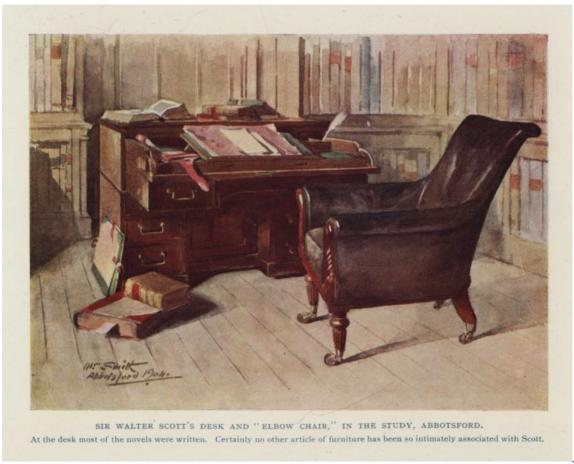
Scott left Ashestiel at Whitsunday, 1812—a rather comical 'flitting,' according to his own account of it. 'The neighbours,' he writes to Lady Alvanley, 'have been much delighted with the procession of my furniture, in which old swords, bows, targets, and lances made a very conspicuous show. A family of turkeys was accommodated within the helmet of some preux chevalier of ancient Border fame; and the very cows, for aught I know, were bearing banners and muskets. I assure your ladyship that this caravan, attended by a dozen of ragged, rosy peasant children, carrying fishing-rods and spears, and leading ponies, greyhounds, and spaniels, would, as it crossed the Tweed, have furnished no bad subject for the pencil, and really reminded me of one of the gypsy groups of Callot upon their march.' The year 1812 was one of his busiest. Five days every week until the middle of July he did Court duty at Edinburgh. Saturday evening saw him at Abbotsford. On Monday he superintended the licking into shape of his new domicile, and at night he was coaching it to the city. During the Court recess he pegged away at 'Rokeby' and other work under circumstances that must have been trying enough. 'As for the house and the poem,' he writes to Morritt, 'there are twelve masons hammering at the one and one poor noddle at the other.' He did not then know the luxury of a private 'den' as at Castle Street. A window corner, curtained off in the one habitable room which served for dining-room, drawing-room, and school-room, constituted his earliest Abbotsford study. There, amid the hammer's incessant fall, and the hum of many voices, and constant interruptions, he plodded on, and got through a fair amount. The letters to Terry commence in September, 1812, and show that some little progress had been made: 'We have got up a good garden-wall, complete stables in the haugh, and the old farm-yard enclosed with a wall, with some little picturesque additions in front. The new plantations have thriven amazingly well, the acorns are coming up fast, and Tom Purdie is the happiest and most consequential person in the world.' To Joanna Baillie he sends this characteristic note, in the beginning of 1813: 'No sooner had I corrected the last sheet of 'Rokeby' than I escaped to this Patmos as blithe as bird on tree, and have been ever since most decidedly idle-that is to say with busy idleness. I have been banking, and securing, and dyking against the river, and planting willows, and aspens, and weeping birches. I have now laid the foundations of a famous background of copse, with pendent trees in front; and I have only to beg

a few years to see how my colours will come out of the canvas. Alas! who can promise that? But somebody will take my place—and enjoy them, whether I do or no'; and in March he adds: 'What I shall finally make of this villa work I don't know, but in the meantime it is very entertaining'; and again: 'This little place comes on as fast as can be reasonably hoped.' To Lady Louisa Stuart he writes: 'We are realizing the nursery tale of the man and his wife who lived in a vinegar bottle, for our only sitting-room is just 12 feet square, and my Eve alleges that I am too big for our paradise.' In October, 1813, Terry is told that 'these are no times for building,' but in the following spring, pressing the Morritts to visit him, he says: 'I am arranging this cottage a little more conveniently, to put off the plague and expense of building another year, and I assure you I expect to spare you and Mrs. Morritt a chamber in the wall, with a dressing-room and everything handsome about you. You will not stipulate, of course, for many square feet.' In a letter to Terry, dated November 10, 1814—the year of 'Waverley'—further progress is reported: 'I wish you saw Abbotsford, which begins this season to look the whimsical, gay, odd cabin that we had chalked out. I have been obliged to relinquish Stark's (the Edinburgh architect, who died before the building was well begun) plan, which was greatly too expensive. So I have made the old farmhouse my corps de logis with some outlying places for kitchen, laundry, and two spare bedrooms, which run along the east wall of the farm-court, not without some picturesque effect. A perforated cross, the spoils of the old kirk of Galashiels, decorates an advanced door, and looks very well.' Not much was done during the next two years, but in November, 1816, a new set of improvements was under consideration. Abbotsford was rapidly losing its cottage character. The 'romance' period was begun. A notable addition-connecting the farm-house with the line of buildings on the right—was then agreed upon, on which Scott communicates with Terry: 'Bullock[1] will show you the plan, which I think is very ingenious, and Blore has drawn me a very handsome elevation, both to the road and to the river. This addition will give me a handsome boudoir opening into the little drawing-room, and on the other side to a handsome dining-parlour of 27 feet by 18, with three windows to the north and one to the south, the last to be Gothic and filled with stained glass. Besides these commodities there is a small conservatory, and a study for myself, which we design to fit up with ornaments from Melrose Abbey.' In the same letter he says: 'I expect to get some decorations from the old Tolbooth of Edinburgh, particularly the copestones of the doorway, and a niche or two. Better get a niche from the Tolbooth than a niche in it to which such building operations are apt to bring the projectors.'

[1] George Bullock and Edward Blore, London architects and furnishers. Atkinson was the artist who arranged the interior of Abbotsford.

By July, 1817, the foundation of the existing house, which extends from the hall westwards to the original courtyard, had been laid, and Scott found a new source of constant occupation in watching the proceedings of his masons. In consequence of a blunder or two during his absence, 'I perceive the necessity,' he said, 'of remaining at the helm.' To Joanna Baillie he writes in September: 'I get on with my labours here; my house is about to be roofed in, and a comical concern it is.' There is some correspondence in October between Scott and Terry relative to the tower, a leading feature of the building. Scott mentions that (Sir) David Wilkie, who had just been his guest, 'admires the whole as a composition, and that is high authority.' 'I agree with you that the tower will look rather rich for the rest of the building, yet you may be assured that, with diagonal chimneys and notched gables, it will have a very fine effect, and is in Scotch architecture by no means incompatible.' In the beginning of 1818, he again writes to Terry: 'I am now anxious to complete Abbotsford. I have reason to be proud of the finishing of my castle, for even of the tower, for which I trembled, not a stone has been shaken by the late terrific gale which blew a roof clean off in the neighbourhood.' Lockhart, who saw Abbotsford for the first time in 1818, confesses that the building presented a somewhat 'fantastic appearance,' the new and old by no means harmonizing. He was there again in 1819, and in February, 1820, he married Scott's daughter. In the same year Scott writes to his wife from London, whither he had gone to receive his baronetcy: 'I have got a delightful plan for the addition at Abbotsford which, I think, will make it quite complete, and furnish me with a handsome library, and you with a drawing-room and better bedroom. It will cost me a little hard work to meet the expense, but I have been a good while idle.' The plans for these new buildings, including the wall and gateway of the courtyard and the graceful stone screen which divides it from the garden, were made by Blore, although the screen—with its carvings taken from details of stone-work at Melrose Abbey -was originally devised by Sir Walter himself. During the winter of 1821 the new operations were commenced. By the spring of 1822 they were in full swing. 'It is worth while to come,' he writes to Lord Montagu, 'were it but to see what a romance of a house I am making'; and to Terry later on: 'The new castle is now roofing, and looks superb—in fact, a little too good for the estate; but we must work the harder to make the land suitable.' That same summer the place was besieged by visitors from the South, who, after witnessing the King's reception at Edinburgh, hastened out to see Abbotsford. In October, 1822, he writes to his son Walter: 'My new house is quite finished as to masonry, and we are now getting on the roof just in time to face the bad weather.' In November, 1822, and January, 1823, there are long letters to Terry: 'The house is completely roofed. I never saw anything handsomer than the grouping of towers, chimneys, etc., when seen at a proper distance.' With Terry all sorts of subjects were discussed-bells, and a projected gas installation, along with a constant enumeration of curios and relics, on which he is urged to spare no expense. 'About July,' Scott writes at the beginning of 1824, 'Abbotsford will, I

think, be finished, when I shall, like the old Duke of Queensberry who built Drumlanrig, fold up the accounts in a sealed parcel, with a label bidding "the deil pike out the een" of any of my successors that shall open it.' By Christmas, it was completed, and with the New Year's festivities a large and gay party celebrated the 'house-warming,' of which Basil Hall's sprightly 'Journal,' incorporated in the 'Life,' supplies a singularly agreeable account. But there is no room to quote. It was a doubly joyous occasion, marking not only the realization of Scott's long-cherished scheme as to his 'castle,' but the engagement of his eldest son, with whom, as he must have felt at the time, were the fortunes of the future Abbotsford. Of the year entered so auspiciously, none dreamt what the end was to be.



SIR WALTER SCOTT'S DESK AND "ELBOW CHAIR," IN THE STUDY, ABBOTSFORD. At the desk most of the novels were written. Certainly no other article of furniture has been so intimately associated with Scott.

In the creation of Abbotsford not only was the cottage of 1812 transformed to the castle of 1824, but the estate itself was continually enlarging. Possession of land was a crowning passion with Scott. He was always driving bargains, as he declared—on the wrong side of his purse, however-with the needy, greedy cock-lairds of the locality. 'It rounds off the property so handsomely,' he says in one of his letters. Once, on his friend Ferguson remarking that he had paid what appeared to be one of his usual fabulous prices for a particular stretch, Scott answered quite good-humouredly, 'Well, well, it is only to me the scribbling of another volume more of nonsense.' The first purchase was, as we have seen, the hundred odd acres of Clarty Hole. In 1813 he made his second purchase, which consisted of the hilly tract stretching from the Roman road near Turn-Again towards Cauldshiels Loch, then a desolate and naked mountain mere. To have this at one end of his property as a contrast to the Tweed at the other 'was a prospect for which hardly any sacrifice would have appeared too much.' It cost him about £4,000. In 1815, Kaeside-Laidlaw's home-on the heights between Abbotsford and Melrose, passed into his hands for another £4,000, and more than doubled the domain. The house has changed considerably since Laidlaw's halcyon days. By 1816 the estate had grown to about 1,000 acres. In 1816 and 1817 he paid £16,000 for the two Toftfields, altering the name of the new and unfinished mansion to Huntlyburn, from a supposed but absolutely erroneous association with the 'Huntlee Bankis'[2] of the Thomas the Rhymer romance. In 1820, Burnfoot, afterwards Chiefswood, and Harleyburn fell to his hands for £2,300, and there were many minor purchases of which Lockhart takes no notice. Scott was very anxious to acquire the estate of Faldonside, [3] adjoining Abbotsford to the west, and actually offered £30,000 for it, but without success. He was similarly unsuccessful with Darnick Tower, which lay into his lands on the east, and which he was extremely desirous of including in Abbotsford. Scott's suggestion rather spurred the owner, John Heiton, to restore the ancient peel-house as a retreat for his own declining days, and it is still in excellent preservation—one of the best-preserved peels on the Border—and a veritable museum, crammed from floor to ceiling with curios, relics, and mementos both of the past and present.

[2] The 'Huntlee Bankis' lie between Melrose and Newtown, on the eastern slope of the Eildons, on the left side of the highway as it bends round to the west, going towards, and within about two miles of, Melrose. The spot is indicated by the famous Eildon Tree Stone.

[3] The place belonged in 1566 to Andrew Ker, one of the murderers of Rizzio. In 1574 Ker married the widow of John Knox, the Reformer. Nicol Milne was proprietor in Scott's day.



JEDBURGH ABBEY.

This grand ruin is of red sandstone, and except that it is roofless is in excellent preservation.

But even 'yerd-hunger' must be satisfied, and in Scott's case there was nothing for it save to steel the flesh against further desire. In November, 1825, there is the following entry in his diary: 'Abbotsford is all I can make it, so I resolve on no more building and no purchases of land till times are quite safe.' But times were never safe again. Abbotsford was all but within sound of the 'muffled drum.' Very soon—December 18, 1825—Scott was to write these words: 'Sad hearts at Darnick and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest! How live a poor, indebted man where I was once the wealthy, the honoured!' And again on January 26, 1826: 'I have walked my last on the domains I have planted, sat the last time in the halls I have built'—reflections happily unrealized, though, as a matter of fact, Scott was then the laird of Abbotsford in name only, and nothing more.

The building and furnishing of Abbotsford are estimated to have cost over £25,000. The contract for the 1824 edifice was in the capable hands of the Smiths of Darnick, with whom Scott was on the most cordial terms. John Smith (the sculptor of the Wallace statue at Bemersyde) was a singularly able craftsman, and his staff of workmen, with Adam Paterson for foreman, were known all over the Border. For the interior decorations—painting, papering, etc., and even for some of the carvings and casts—Scott generally gave employment to local labour. Much of the costlier furniture was shipped from London, but the great bulk of the work was carried through by tradesmen in the district, selected by Scott himself, and in whom he placed implicit confidence. The estate, all told, must have cost at least £60,000. It extended to 1,500 acres, and the annual rental in Scott's day was only about £350.

Such was the creation of Scott's Abbotsford, a real 'romance in stone and lime,' to use the Frenchman's hackneyed phrase. Never had Sir Walter deeper delight than when its walls were rising skywards, and the dream of his youth taking steady shape by the silvery side of the Tweed. 'I have seen much, but nothing like my ain house,' he cried—a broken, dying man returned to Abbotsford, only to be borne forth again. Nor has history been slow to add its Amen.

CHAPTER III

SCOTT AT ABBOTSFORD

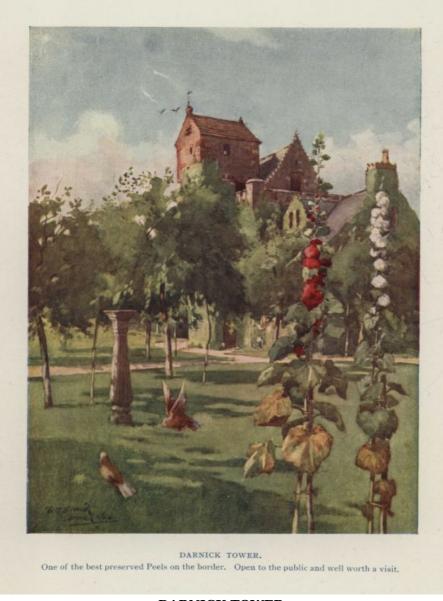
Of the Abbotsford life in the seven or eight brilliant seasons preceding the disaster of 1826 Lockhart's exquisite word-pictures are far the finest things in the Biography. Scott's dream was now fairly realized. He was not only a lord of acres, but a kind of mediæval chieftain as well. His cottage was transformed to a superb mansion, like some creation of the 'Arabian Nights,' and the whole estate, acquired at a cost far exceeding its real value, had grown to one of the trimmest and snuggest on Tweedside. A comparative failure at the Bar, Scott succeeded well otherwise in his professional career. His income from the Court Clerkship and Sheriffdom totalled £1,600, and from other sources he had an additional £400 a year. As the most prosperous book-producer of the period, he was netting an annual profit of no less than £10,000. His family was grown up, and his home life, notwithstanding some harsh things said about Lady Scott, was of the happiest. Unliterary, and Frenchified to a degree, Charlotte Carpenter was not the ideal helpmeet, perhaps, for a man of Scott's calibre and temperament. But that they lived comfortably together, that she made him an excellent wife, and that Scott was much attached to her, must be taken for granted, else Lockhart and the others are equivocating. There is at least one glimpse into Scott's heart which cannot savour of hypocrisy—the occasion of her death. Some of the most touching passages in the Diary belong to that event. As lover, husband, father, there is no question of the acuteness with which he felt her loss who had been his 'thirty years' companion.' Within less than six months the two biggest blows of his life fell upon Scott. Ruined, then widowed, his cup of grief was drained to the utmost. But before the fatal '26 Scott's life was an eminently ideal one. Abbotsford was all he could make it. He had reached the loftiest rung of the ladder. Long had he been the celebrity of the hour, not in Britain only, but throughout Europe itself. Probably no British author of his time was more widely known, and none, it is certain, was surrounded with so many of the material comforts. It was truly a summer fulness for Scott at Abbotsford ere the autumn winds or the biting breath of winter had begun to chill his cheek.



SIR WALTER'S SUNDIAL, ABBOTSFORD.

The dial stone in the flower garden, inscribed with the motto "For the Night Cometh," is an object of suggestive interest.

A glance at the Abbotsford life will bring us nearer Scott as a man—and as the most lovable of men. Treading, as one does to-day, in his very footsteps, we shall want to know how he lived there, and in what manner the pleasant days were spent. Scott's habits at Abbotsford, as at Ashestiel, were delightfully simple. In the country he was a rustic of the rustics. Formality vanished to a considerable extent when he changed his townhouse for the bracing atmosphere of the Tweed. But always methodical in his literary operations, he never allowed the freer life of Abbotsford to interfere with whatever tasks he had on hand. He did not sit late into the night. As a rule, the Abbotsford day ended for Scott by ten o'clock. He rose at five, lit his own fire in the season, shaving and dressing with precision. Attired generally in his green shooting-jacket, he was at his desk by six, and hard at work till nine. About half-past nine, when the family met for breakfast, he would enter the room 'rubbing his hands for glee,' for by that time he had done enough, as he said, 'to break the neck of the day's work.' After breakfast, he allowed his guests to fill in the next couple of hours or so for themselves-fishing, shooting, driving, or riding, with a retinue of keepers and grooms at command. Meantime he was busy with his correspondence, or a chapter for Ballantyne to be dispatched by the 'Blucher,' the Edinburgh and Melrose coach, by which he himself frequently travelled to and from Abbotsford. At noon he was 'his own man,' and among his visitors, or felling trees with the workmen on the estate, laying wagers, and competing with the best of them. When the weather was wet and stormy he kept to his study for several hours during the day, that he might have a reserve fund to draw from on good days. To his visitors he appeared more the man of leisure than the indefatigable author conferring pleasure on thousands. Only a careful husbanding of the moments could have enabled him to give the greater part of afternoon and evening to his guests. 'I know,' said Cadell, the publisher, once to him, 'that you contrive to get a few hours in your own room, and that may do for the mere penwork, but when is it that you think?' 'Oh,' said Scott, 'I lie simmering over things for an hour or so before I get up, and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping, half-waking projet de chapitre, and when I get the paper before me it commonly runs off pretty easily. Besides, I often take a dose in the plantations, and while Tom marks out a dyke or a drain as I have directed, one's fancy may be running its ain riggs in some other world.' His maxim was never to be doing nothing, and in making the most of the opportunities, he served both himself and his friends. Lockhart's reminiscences of the Abbotsford life, so delightfully vivid, convey better than anything else something of the ideal charm of Scott and his circle. But to Lockhart all may go on their own account, since lack of space forbids more than a mere quotation.



DARNICK TOWER.

One of the best preserved Peels on the border. Open to the public and well worth a visit.

The Abbotsford Hunt, one of the enjoyable annual outings—a coursing match on an extensive scale—affords material for Lockhart's best vein, especially the Hunt dinner, which for many of the neighbouring yeomen and farmers was the event of the year. 'The company were seldom under thirty in number, and sometimes they exceeded forty. The feast was such as suited the occasion—a baron of beef, roasted, at the foot of the table, a salted round at the head, while tureens of hare-soup, hotchpotch, and cockieleekie extended down the centre, and such light articles as geese, turkeys, an entire sucking-pig, a singed sheep's head, and the unfailing haggis were set forth by way of side-dishes. Black-cock and moor-fowl, snipe, black and white puddings, and pyramids of pancakes, formed the second course. Ale was the favourite beverage during dinner, but there was plenty of port and sherry for those whose stomachs they suited. The quaighs of Glenlivet were filled brimful, and tossed off as if they held water. The wine decanters made a few rounds of the table, but the hints for hot punch and toddy soon became clamorous. Two or three bowls were introduced and placed under the supervision of experienced manufacturers—one of these being usually the Ettrick Shepherd—and then the business of the evening commenced in good earnest. The faces shone and glowed like those at Camacho's wedding; the chairman told his richest stories of old rural life, Lowland or Highland; Ferguson and humbler heroes fought their Peninsular battles o'er again; the stalwart Dandie Dinmonts lugged out their last winter's snow-storm, the parish scandal, perhaps, or the dexterous bargain of the Northumberland tryst. Every man was knocked down for the song that he sung best, or took most pleasure in singing. Shortreed gave "Dick o' the Cow," or "Now Liddesdale has ridden a raid"; his son Thomas shone without a rival in the "Douglas Tragedy" and the "Twa Corbies"; a weather-beaten, stiff-bearded veteran, "Captain" Ormiston, had the primitive pastoral of "Cowdenknowes" in sweet perfection. Hogg produced the "Women Folk," or "The Kye comes Hame," and, in spite of many grinding notes, contrived to make everybody delighted, whether with the fun or the pathos of his ballad. The Melrose doctor sang in spirited style some of Moore's masterpieces. A couple of retired sailors joined in "Bold Admiral Duncan," and the gallant croupier crowned the last bowl with "Ale, good ale, thou art my darling." And so it proceeded until some worthy, who had fifteen or twenty miles to ride, began to insinuate that his wife and bairns would be getting sorely anxious about the fords, and the Dumpies and Hoddins were at last heard neighing at the gate, and it was voted that the hour had come for doch an

dorrach, the stirrup-cup, a bumper all round of the unmitigated mountain dew. How they all contrived to get home in safety Heaven only knows, but I never heard of any serious accident except upon one occasion, when James Hogg made a bet at starting that he would leap over his wall-eyed pony as she stood, and broke his nose in this experiment of o'ervaulting ambition. One comely good-wife, far off among the hills, amused Sir Walter by telling him the next time he passed her homestead after one of these jolly doings, what her husband's first words were when he alighted at his own door—"Ailie, my woman, I'm ready for my bed; and oh, lass, I wish I could sleep for a towmont, for there's only ae thing in this warld worth living for, and that's the Abbotsford Hunt."

Nor was the good old custom of the Kirn omitted at Abbotsford. Every autumn, before proceeding to Edinburgh, Scott gave a 'Harvest Home,' to which all the tenantry and their friends—as many as the barn could hold—were invited. Sir Walter and his family were present during the first part of the evening, to dispense the good things and say a few words of farewell. Old and young danced from sunset to sunrise, to the skirling of John o' Skye's pipes, or the strains of some 'Wandering Willie's' fiddle, the laird having his private joke for every old wife or 'gausie carle,' his arch compliment for the ear of every bonnie lass, and his hand and his blessing for the head of every little Eppie Daidle from Abbotstown or Broomielees. Hogmanay, and the immemorial customs of the New Year, as celebrated in Scotland—now fast dying out—obtained full respect at Abbotsford. Scott said it was uncanny, and would certainly have felt it very uncomfortable not to welcome the New Year in the midst of his family and a few cronies in the orthodox fashion. But nothing gave him such delight as the visit which he received as laird from all the children on his estate on the last morning of the year, when, as he was fond of quoting:

'The cottage bairns sing blythe and gay At the ha' door for hogmanay.'

The words and form of the drama exist in various versions in every part of the Border Country, almost every parish possessing its own rendering. The *dramatis personæ*, three or four in number, sometimes even five, arrayed in fantastic fashion, proceeded from house to house, generally contenting themselves with the kitchen for an arena, where the performance was carried through in presence of the entire household. 'Galations' (not 'Goloshin') is the title of the play. Some account of it will be found in Chambers' 'Popular Rhymes of Scotland,' and in Maidment's scarce pamphlet on the subject (1835).

From what has been said, it is not difficult to imagine the ideal relationship existing between Scott and his dependents at Abbotsford. They were surely the happiest retainers and domestics in the world. How considerate he was in the matter of dwellings, for instance! He realized that he owed them a distinct duty in diffusing as much comfort and security into their lives as possible. They were not mere goods and chattels, but beings of flesh and blood, with human sympathies like himself. And he treated them as such. Amid the severities of winter, some of his Edinburgh notes to Laidlaw are perfect little gems of their kind: 'This dreadful weather will probably stop Mercer (the weekly carrier). It makes me shiver in the midst of superfluous comforts to think of the distress of others. I wish you to distribute £10 amongst our poorer neighbours so as may best aid them. I mean not only the actually indigent, but those who are, in our phrase, ill off. I am sure Dr. Scott (of Darnlee) will assist you with his advice in this labour of love. I think part of the wood-money, too, should be given among the Abbotstown folks if the storm keeps them off work, as is like.' And again: 'If you can devise any means by which hands can be beneficially employed at Abbotsford, I could turn £50 or £100 extra into service. If it made the poor and industrious people a little easier, I should have more pleasure in it than any money I ever spent in my life.' 'I think of my rooks amongst this snowstorm, also of the birds, and not a little of the poor. For benefit of the former, I hope Peggy throws out the crumbs, and a cornsheaf or two for the game, if placed where poachers could not come at them. For the poor people I wish you to distribute £5 or so among the neighbouring poor who may be in distress, and see that our own folks are tolerably well off.' 'Do not let the poor bodies want for a £5, or even a £10, more or less'—

'We'll get a blessing wi' the lave, And never miss 't.'

Socially, the bond between Scott and his servants was a characteristic object-lesson. 'He speaks to us,' said one, 'as if we were blood relations.' Like Swift, he maintained that an affectionate and faithful servant should always be considered in the character of a humble friend. Even the household domestics 'stayed on' year after year. Some of them grew grey in his service. One or two died. He had always several pensioners beside him. Abbotsford was like a little happy world of its own—the most emphatic exception to the cynic's rule. Scott was 'a hero and a gentleman' to those who knew him most intimately in the common and disillusionizing routine of domestic life.

In reading Lockhart, one feels that, aristocrat as Scott was, familiar with the nobility and literary lions of the time, he was most at home, and happiest, perhaps, in the fellowship of commoner men, such as Laidlaw, and Purdie, and John Usher, and James Hogg, who were knit to him as soul to soul. Of some of these he declared that they had become almost an integral part of his existence. We know how life was inexpressibly changed for Scott minus Tom Purdie, and to dispense with Laidlaw, when that had become absolutely necessary, was as the iron entering his soul. The most perfect pen-portraits in Lockhart are those of Purdie (the Cristal Nixon of

'Redgauntlet'), that faithful factotum and friend for whom he mourned as a brother; and 'dear Willie' Laidlaw, betwixt whom and Scott the most charming of all master and servant correspondence passed; and 'auld Pepe'—Peter Mathieson, his coachman, a wondrously devoted soul, content to set himself in the plough-stilts, and do the most menial duties, rather than quit Abbotsford at its darkest. John Swanston, too, Purdie's successor, and Dalgleish, the butler, occupy exalted niches in the temple of humble and honest worth and sweet sacrificing service for a dear master's sake who was much more than master to them all. Purdie's grave, close to Melrose Abbey, with a modest stone erected by Sir Walter Scott, is probably the most visited of the 'graves of the common people' almost anywhere. It is eighty-three years since, apparently in the fullest enjoyment of health and vigour, he bowed his head one evening on the table, and dropped asleep—for ever. Laidlaw lies at Contin amid the Highland solitudes. But few from Tweedside have beheld the green turf beneath which his loyal heart has been long resting, or read the simple inscription on the white marble that marks a spot so sacred to all lovers of Abbotsford and Sir Walter.

'Here lie the remains of William Laidlaw, Born at Blackhouse in Yarrow, November, 1780. Died at Contin, May 18, 1845.'

No account of the Abbotsford life can fail to take notice of the extraordinary number of visitors, who, even at that early date, flocked to the shrine of Sir Walter. The year 1825, as has been said, must be regarded as the high-water mark in the splendours of Abbotsford. From the dawn of 'Waverley,' but particularly the period immediately preceding the crash, Abbotsford was the most sought-after house in the kingdom. It was seldom without its quota of guests. 'Like a cried fair,' Scott described it on one occasion. 'A hotel widout de pay,' was Lady Scott's more matter-of-fact comparison. What a profoundly interesting and curious record a register of visitors to Abbotsford would have been!



THE DINING-ROOM, ABBOTSFORD.

"His own great parlour" is not open to the public. It was the first room of any pretension that Scott built at Abbotsford.

Scott's first really distinguished visitor from the other side of the Atlantic was Washington Irving. He was there in August, 1817, whilst the building operations were in progress. Following Irving, came Lady Byron for one day only. Though Scott met Byron in London, and they frequently corresponded, Lord Byron was never at Abbotsford. In that same year Sir David Wilkie visited Scott to paint his picture, the 'Abbotsford Family.' Sir Humphry Davy was another visitor. One of the most welcome of all was Miss Edgeworth, who stayed for a fortnight in 1823. Tom Moore came in 1825, and in 1829 Mrs. Hemans, visiting the Hamiltons at Chiefswood, was daily at Abbotsford. Susan Ferrier, author of 'Marriage' and 'Inheritance,' visited Scott twice.

Wordsworth, greatest name of all, was the last. He arrived on September 21, 1831, and two days later Scott, a broken invalid, left for the Continent.

To the list of Scott's intimate friends, based on the Biography, Thomas Faed's picture, 'Scott and his Literary Friends, '[1] offers a good index. The piece is purely imaginary, for the persons represented were never all at Abbotsford at the same time, two of them, indeed-Crabbe and Campbell—never having seen it. Scott is represented as reading the manuscript of a new novel; on his right, Henry Mackenzie, his oldest literary friend, occupies the place of honour. Hogg, the intentest figure in the group, sits at Scott's feet to the left. Kit North's leonine head and shoulders lean across the back of a chair. Next come Crabbe and Lockhart—at the centre of the table—together with Wordsworth and Francis (afterwards Lord) Jeffrey. Sir Adam Ferguson, a bosom cronie, cross-legged, his military boots recalling Peninsular days and the reading of the 'Lady of the Lake' to his comrades in the lines of Torres Vedras, immediately faces Scott. Behind him, Moore and Campbell sit opposite each other. At the end of the table are the printers Constable and Ballantyne, and at their back, standing, the painters Allan and Wilkie. Thomas Thomson, Deputy Clerk Register, is on the extreme left, and Sir Humphry Davy is examining a sword-hilt. A second and smaller copy of Faed's picture (in the Woodlands Park collection, Bradford) substitutes Lord Byron and Washington Irving for Constable and Ballantyne. Allan, Davy, and Thomson are also omitted. The artist might well have introduced Scott's lady literary friends, Joanna Baillie and Maria Edgeworth, and it is a pity that Laidlaw has been left out.

[1] In the possession of Captain Dennistoun of Golfhill. The picture has been frequently on exhibition, and frequently engraved.

Whilst, however, Abbotsford was a kind of ever open door to an unparalleled variety of guests, there was another and a much larger company constantly invading its precincts—the great army of the uninvited. Such interruptions were a constant source of worry to Scott. Some came furnished with letters of introduction from friends for whose sake Scott received them cordially, and treated them kindly. Others had no introduction at all, but, pencil and note-book in hand, took the most impertinent liberties with the place and its occupants. On returning to Abbotsford upon one occasion, Lockhart recalls how Scott and he found Mrs. Scott and her daughters doing penance under the merciless curiosity of a couple of tourists, who had been with her for some hours. It turned out after all that there were no letters of introduction to be produced, as she had supposed, and Scott, signifying that his hour for dinner approached, added that, as he gathered they meant to walk to Melrose, he could not trespass further on their time. The two lion-hunters seemed quite unprepared for this abrupt escape. But there was about Scott, in perfection, when he chose to exert it, the power of civil repulsion. He bowed the overwhelmed originals to the door, and on re-entering the parlour, found Mrs. Scott complaining very indignantly that they had gone so far as to pull out their note-book and beg an exact account, not only of his age, but of her own. Scott, already half relenting, laughed heartily at this misery, afterwards saying, 'Hang the Yahoos, Charlotte, but we should have bid them stay dinner.' 'Devil a bit,' quoth Captain Ferguson, who had come over from Huntlyburn, 'they were quite in a mistake, I could see. The one asked Madame whether she deigned to call her new house Tully Veolan or Tillietudlem, and the other, when Maida happened to lay his head against the window, exclaimed, "Pro-di-gi-ous!" 'Well, well, Skipper,' was the reply, 'for a' that, the loons would hae been nane the waur o' their kail.'



THE GARDEN, ABBOTSFORD.

The Courtyard was (in Mr. Hope Scott's time) planted as a flower garden, with clipped yews at the corners of the ornamental grass-plots, and beds all ablaze with summer Bowers.

Much has been written of Scott and his dogs—not the least important part of the establishment. All true poets, from Homer downwards, have loved dogs. Scott was seldom without a 'tail' at his heels. His special favourites, Camp and Maida (the Bevis of 'Woodstock'), are as well-known as himself. Both were frequently painted by Raeburn and others. When Camp died at Castle Street, Scott excused himself from a dinner-party on account of 'the death of a dear old friend'—a fine compliment to the canine tribe—a finer index to the heart of the man. Scott looked upon his dogs as companions, 'not as the brute, but the mute creation.' He loved them for their marvellously human traits, and we know how they reciprocated his affection. He was always caring for them. 'Be very careful of the dogs,' was his last request to Laidlaw on the eve of setting out for Italy. And when, close on a year afterwards, he returned so deadly stricken, it was his dogs fondling about him which for the most part resuscitated the sense of 'home, sweet home.'

CHAPTER IV

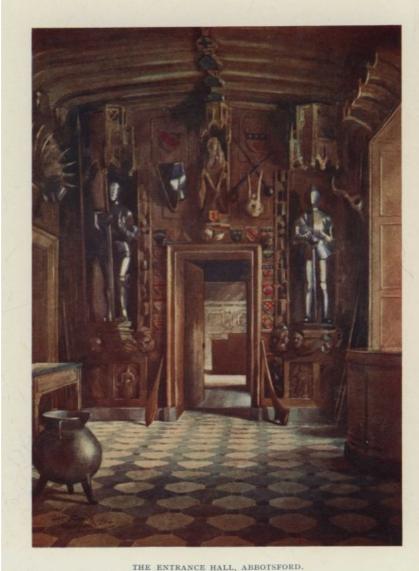
THE WIZARD'S FAREWELL TO ABBOTSFORD

On March 5, 1817, at Castle Street, in the midst of a merry dinner-party, Scott was seized with a sudden illness—the first since his childhood. The illness lasted a week, and was more serious than had been anticipated. It was, indeed, the first of a series of such paroxysms, which for years visited him periodically, and from which he never absolutely recovered.

Lockhart parted on one occasion with 'dark prognostications' that it was for the last time. Scott, too, despaired of himself. Calling his children about his bed, he said: 'For myself, my dears,

I am unconscious of ever having done any man an injury, or omitted any fair opportunity of doing any man a benefit. I well know that no human life can appear otherwise than weak and filthy in the eyes of God; but I rely on the merits and intercession of our Redeemer.' 'God bless you!' he again said to each of them, laying his hand on their heads. 'Live so that you may all hope to meet each other in a better place hereafter.' Presently he fell into a profound slumber, and on awaking, the crisis was seen to be over. A gradual re-establishment of health followed. Of the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' and 'Ivanhoe,' written under the most adverse circumstances, whilst he still suffered acutely, one is surprised to find both romances in the very front rank of his creations. He was under opiates, more or less, when the 'Bride' was on the stocks, dictating nearly the whole of it to Laidlaw and John Ballantyne. It is a most curious fact psychologically, for of its characters, scenes, humour, and all that connected him with the authorship of the story, he recollected nothing. A more extraordinary incident literature has not known.[1] But work which cut him short in the end was the saving of his life in this instance. The mind was a constant conquest over the weaker physical framework. 'It is my conviction,' he declared to Gillies, 'that by a little more hearty application you might forget, and lose altogether, the irritable sensations of an invalid, and I don't, in this instance, preach what I have not endeavoured to practise. Be assured that if pain could have prevented my application to literary labour, not a page of "Ivanhoe" would have been written; for, from beginning to end of that production, which has been a good deal praised, I was never free from suffering. It might have borne a motto somewhat analogous to the inscription which Frederick the Great's predecessor used to affix to his attempts at portraitpainting when he had the gout: "Fredericus I., in tormentis pinxit." Now, if I had given way to mere feelings and ceased to work, it is a question whether the disorder might not have taken deeper root, and become incurable. The best way is, if possible, to triumph over disease by setting it at defiance, somewhat on the same principle as one avoids being stung by boldly grasping a nettle.'

[1] Dickens had a somewhat similar experience, though not, of course, to the like extent.



A spacious apartment, 40 feet by 20 feet, panelled to the height of 7 feet with dark 02k from Dunfermline Abbey.

THE ENTRANCE HALL, ABBOTSFORD.

A spacious apartment, 40 feet by 20 feet, panelled to the height of 7 feet with dark oak from Dunfermline Abbey.

By 1820 he was enjoying tolerably good health, with no cramp recurrences for a time. But in 1823, when busy with 'Peveril,' an arresting hand laid itself upon Scott in the shape of a slight stroke of apoplexy. As a matter of fact, and as Lockhart suspected, this was only one of several such shocks which he had been carefully concealing. ""Peveril" will, I fear, smell of the apoplexy, he afterwards admitted. Hence, no doubt, 'Peveril's' dulness. He rallied, notwithstanding, and up to Christmas, 1825, his health was excellent. But from 1826—the year of his crowning sorrows the record of Scott's life reads like a long martyrdom. Rheumatism, hallucinations, strange memory lapses, began to steal from Scott all the little joy that was left. On February 5, 1830, the blow fell which, like Damocles' sword, had been hanging over him for years. It fell with unmistakable meaning. It was his first real paralytic seizure—long dreaded, long expected. On his return from the Parliament House, in his usual health, he found an old friend waiting to consult him about a memoir of her father which he had promised to revise for the press. Whilst examining the MS. the stroke came, a slight contortion passing over his features. In a minute or two he rose, staggered to the drawing-room, where were Miss Anne Scott and Miss Lockhart, but fell to the floor speechless and insensible. A surgeon quickly at hand cupped him, after the oldfashioned treatment for such complaints. By night, speech had returned, and in a day or two he had resumed his Court duties. But he was never the same again. People in general did not remark any difference. Doctors and patient, however, knew well enough that it was the beginning of the end. Both his parents had succumbed to paralysis, and 'considering the terrible violence and agitation and exertion,' says Lockhart, 'to which he had been subjected during the four preceding years, the only wonder is that this blow was deferred so long; there can be none that it was soon followed by others.'

Still he plodded on. Even with half a brain he should not 'lag superfluous on the stage.' And heedless of innumerable warnings, he was at his desk day after day, writing and dictating by turns. He now resigned his Clerkship, on an £800 a year allowance, surrendered his Edinburgh house, and settled permanently at Abbotsford, lonely and desolate, an old man before his time, but indomitable to the core. There he commenced 'Count Robert of Paris,' the penultimate of his published tales. But the mighty machinery of his mind moved not as of yore. Like Samson, his strength had departed. He was now as other men. By November he suffered from a second stroke, and wrote in his Diary for January: 'Very indifferent, with more awkward feelings than I can well bear up against. My voice sunk, and my head strangely confused.' But a worse shock was coming. Cadell pronounced the 'Count' a complete failure. Yet he struggled to recast it. To crown all, he went to the 'hustings'—a hardened anti-Reform Billite. At Jedburgh, as Lockhart tells, the crowd saluted him with blasphemous shouts of 'Burke Sir Walter!'[2]—the unkindest cut of all, which haunted him to the end. By July he had begun 'Castle Dangerous,' and in the middle of the month, accompanied by Lockhart, he started for Lanarkshire to refresh his memory for the setting of his new story. They ascended the Tweed by Yair, Ashestiel, Elibank, Innerleithen, Peebles, Biggar, places all dear to his heart and celebrated in his writings. Crowds turned out to welcome him. Everywhere he was received with acclamation and the deepest respect. At Douglas the travellers inspected the old Castle, the ruin of St. Bride's, with the monuments and tombs of the 'most heroic and powerful family in Scottish annals.' At Milton-Lockhart, the seat of Lockhart's brother, Scott met his old friend Borthwickbrae. Both were paralytics. Each saw his own case mirrored in the other. They had a joyous—too joyous a meeting, with startling results to the older invalid. On returning to Cleghorn, another shock laid him low, and he was despaired of. When the news reached Scott, he was bent on getting home at once. 'No, William,' he said to his host, urging him to remain, 'this is a sad warning; I must home to work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work. I put that text many years ago on my dial-stone, but it often preached in vain.'

[2] The Burke and Hare murders were recent.

Returned, he finished 'Count Robert' and 'Castle Dangerous.' Both novels were really the fruit of a paralytic brain. The 'Magnum Opus,'[3] too, proposed by Cadell (a huge success), engaged much of his attention. But Sir Walter's work was done. At length, doctors' treatment doing him little good, from his constant determination to be at his desk, it was decided, not without difficulty, that Scott should spend the winter of 1831 in Italy, where his son Charles was attached to the British Legation at Naples. On September 22 all was in readiness. A round of touching adieus, one or two gatherings of old friends, the final instructions to Laidlaw, and Scott quitted Abbotsford practically for ever. He returned, to be sure, but more a dead man than a living one. Of his journey to London (meeting many friends) there is no need to write, nor of the Italian tour—Malta, Naples, Rome, Florence, Venice—for which, no matter the brilliance of their associations, he exhibited but a mere passive interest. His heart was in the homeland.

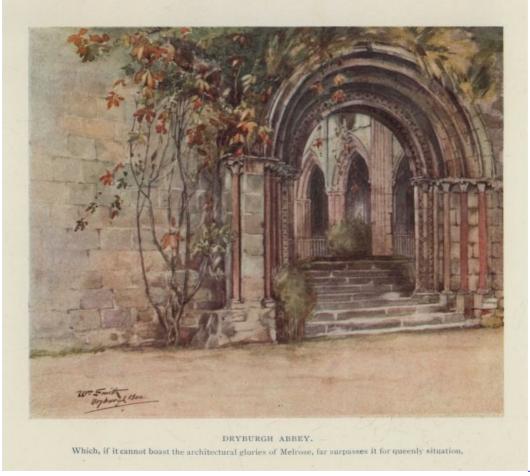
By June 13, London was again reached, and in the St. James's Hotel, Jermyn Street (now demolished), he lay for three weeks in a state of supreme stupor. Allan Cunningham tells of the extraordinary interest and sympathy which Scott's illness evoked. Walking home late one night, he found a number of working men standing at the corner of Jermyn Street, one of whom asked him, as if there had been only one deathbed in London: 'Do you know, sir, if this is the street where he is lying?' 'Abbotsford!' was his cry in the more lucid intervals that came to him. On July 7 he was carried on board the James Watt steamer, accompanied by Lockhart, Cadell, a medical man-Dr. Thomas Watson-and his two daughters. The Forth was reached on the 9th, and the next two days—the last in his 'own romantic town'—were passed, as all the voyage had been, in a condition of absolute unconsciousness. On the 11th, at a very early hour of the morning, Scott was lifted into his carriage for the final journey homewards. During the first part of the drive he remained torpid, until the veil lifted somewhat at Gala Water. Strange that, after oblivion so profound and prolonged, he should open his eyes and regain a measure of consciousness just here, amid landscapes the most familiar to him in the world. Some good angel must have touched him then. A mere coincidence! Perhaps! But there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. 'Gala Water, surely—Buckholm—Torwoodlee,' he murmured. When he saw the Eildons—

> 'Three crests against the saffron sky, Beyond the purple plain, The kind remembered melody Of Tweed once more again'—

he became greatly excited, and in crossing Melrose Bridge, his 'nearest Rialto,' as he called it, he could hardly be kept in the carriage. Abbotsford, a mile ahead, was soon reached. Laidlawa big lump in his throat, we may be sure—was waiting at the door, and assisted to carry his dying master and friend to the dining-room, where his bed had been prepared. He sat bewildered for a moment or two, then, resting his eyes on Laidlaw, as if trying to recollect, said immediately, 'Ha, Willie Laidlaw! O man, how often have I thought of you! By this time his dogs were around his chair, fawning on him, and licking his hands. Then, indeed, he knew where he was. Between sobs and tears he tried to speak to them, and to stroke them as of yore. But the body, no less than the brain, was exhausted, and gentle sleep closed his eyelids, like a tired child, once more in his own Abbotsford. He lingered for some weeks, alternating between cloud and sunshine—mostly cloud. One day the longing for his desk seized him, and he was wheeled studywards, but the palsied fingers refused their office, and he sank back, assured at last that the sceptre had departed. Lockhart and Laidlaw were now his constant attendants. Both read to him from the New Testament. 'There is but one Book,' Scott said, and it 'comforted' him to listen to its soothing and hope-inspiring utterances. Then the cloud became denser. At last delirium and delusion prostrated him, and he grew daily feebler. Now he thought himself administering justice as the Selkirkshire 'Shirra'; anon he was giving Tom Purdie orders anent trees. Sometimes, his fancy was in Jedburgh, and the words, 'Burke Sir Walter,' escaped him in a dolorous tone. Then he would repeat snatches from Isaiah, or the Book of Job, or some grand rugged verse torn off from the Scottish Psalms, or a strain sublimer still from the Romish Litany:

> 'Dies irae, dies ilia, Solvet saeclum in favilla.'

'As I was dressing on the morning of September 17,' says Lockhart, 'Nicolson came into my room and told me that his master had awoke in a state of composure and consciousness, and wished to see me immediately. I found him entirely himself, though in the last extreme of feebleness. His eye was clear and calm—every trace of the wild fire of delirium extinguished. "Lockhart," he said, "I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here." He paused, and I said: "Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?" "No," said he, "don't disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night. God bless you all." With this he sunk into a very tranquil sleep, and, indeed, he scarcely afterwards gave any sign of consciousness, except for an instant on the arrival of his sons. About half-past one p.m., on September 21, Sir Walter Scott breathed his last, in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day—so warm that every window was wide open, and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes.'



DRYBURGH ABBEY.
Which, if it cannot boast the architectural glories of Melrose, far surpasses it for queenly situation.

He died a month after completing his sixty-first year. On December 7, 1825, almost seven years earlier, we find him taking a survey of his own health in relation to the ages reached by his parents and other members of the family, and then setting down in his Diary the result of his calculations, 'Square the odds, and good-night, Sir Walter, about sixty. I care not, if I leave my name unstained and my family property settled. Sat est vixisse.' His prophecy was fulfilled. He lived just a year—but a year of gradual death—beyond his anticipations. His wish, too, was fulfilled; for he died practically free of debt. The sale of his works, the insurance of his life, and a sum advanced by Cadell, completely cleared his engagements. The copyrights purchased by Cadell were afterwards sold to Messrs. Adam and Charles Black, who therefore hold the exact text of the works.

On September 26—a Wednesday—Sir Walter was buried. Services at Abbotsford, after the simple fashion of the Scottish Kirk, were conducted by the Revs. Principal Baird, of Edinburgh University, Dr. Dickson, of St. Cuthbert's, and the minister of Melrose. The courtyard and all the precincts of Abbotsford were crowded with uncovered spectators as the procession (over a mile in length) was arranged. And as it advanced through Darnick and Melrose, and the villages on the route, the whole population appeared at their doors in like manner, almost all in black. From Darnick Tower a broad crape banner waved in the wind, and the Abbey bell at Melrose rang a muffled peel. Thence there is a somewhat steep ascent to Gladswood and Bemersyde. On the crest of the road overlooking the 'beautiful bend' the hearse came to a curious halt, at the very spot where Scott was accustomed to rein up his horses. It was no 'accident,' as Lockhart imagines. For one of the horses was Sir Walter's own, and must have borne him many a time hither. Peter Mathieson, Laidlaw, and others of Scott's servants carried the plain black coffin to the grave within St. Mary's aisle, at Dryburgh, where it was lowered by his two sons, his son-in-law, and six of his cousins. And thus the remains of Sir Walter Scott—our Scottish Shakespeare—were laid by the side of his wife in the sepulchre of his fathers.

CHAPTER V

THE LATER ABBOTSFORD

Sir Walter's Abbotsford, as we saw, was completed in 1824. For the next thirty years there was practically no alteration on the place. At Scott's death the second Sir Walter came into

possession. He does not appear to have lived at Abbotsford after 1832, and indeed for many years previous his time had been spent almost entirely with his regiment, the 15th Hussars, of which, at his father's death, he was Major. He died childless, as his brother did also, and Abbotsford passed to Walter Scott Lockhart, son of Scott's elder daughter, who had married J. G. Lockhart. On his death, in 1853, his only sister Charlotte, married to James Robert Hope, Q.C., came into possession, and she and her husband assumed the name of Scott.

Abbotsford had been sadly neglected since Scott's death in 1832, and everything needed restoration. But Mr. Hope Scott did wonders. Between the years 1855 and 1857 he built a new west wing to the house, consisting of a Chapel, hall, drawing-room, boudoir, and a suite of bedrooms. The old kitchen was turned into a linen-room, and a long range of new kitchen offices facing the Tweed was erected, which materially raised the elevation of Scott's edifice, and improved the appearance of the whole pile as seen from the river. An ingenious tourist access was also arranged, with other internal alterations. Outside, the grounds and gardens were completely overhauled, the overgrown plantations thinned, and the old favourite walks cleaned and kept as Scott himself would have wished. In the lifetime of the Great Magician the ground on which he fixed his abode was nearly on a level with the highway running along the south front, and wayfarers could survey the whole domain by looking over the hedge. A high embankment was now thrown up on the road-front of Abbotsford, the road itself shifted several yards back, the avenue lengthened, a lodge built, and the new mound covered with a choice variety of timber, which has now grown into one of the most pleasing features of the Abbotsford approach. The courtyard was at the same time planted as a flower-garden, with clipped yews at the corners of the ornamental grass-plots, and beds all ablaze with summer flowers. The terraces, on the north, so rich and velvety, date from this period.

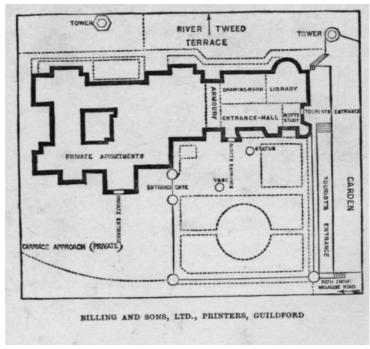
Most visitors to Abbotsford have the impression that Sir Walter was responsible for every part of the present edifice, whereas it is at least a third larger from that of Scott's day.

On the death of Mr. Hope Scott (his wife having pre-deceased him), their only living child, the sole surviving descendant of Sir Walter, Mary Monica Hope Scott, came into possession. In 1874 she married the Hon. Joseph Constable-Maxwell, third son of the eleventh Baron Herries of Terregles. Thus direct descendants of the maker of Abbotsford still reign there in the person of his great-granddaughter and her children.

There are two methods of reaching Abbotsford—by rail to Galashiels, thence to Abbotsford Ferry Station on the Selkirk line, alighting at which and crossing the Tweed, a delightful treeshaded walk of about a mile brings us to the house. But the more popular method is to make the journey from Melrose, three miles distant. The way lies between delicious green fields and bits of woodland-a pleasant country road, exposed somewhat, despite smiling hedgerows on either side. The road teems with reminiscences of the Romancist. Out from the grey town, with its orchards and picturesque gardens, the Waverley Hydropathic is passed on the right. In the grounds a handsome seated statue of Scott may be noticed. Further on, to the left, treeensconced, lie Chiefswood and Huntlyburn on the Abbotsford estate. Then comes Darnick, with its fine peel, now open to the public, and well worth a visit. At the fork of the roads (that to the right leading by Melrose Bridge to Gattonside and Galashiels) we turn leftwards, and are soon at the visitors' entrance (a modest wicket-gate) to the great Scottish Mecca. But nothing is to be seen yet. Mr. Hope Scott's plantations and 'ingenious tourist arrangement' screen the pile with wonderful completeness. And it is only when within a few paces of the building, at a turn in the lane leading from the highway, that all at once one emerges upon it. The public waiting-room is in the basement, whence parties of ten or twelve are conducted through the house.

In point of picturesqueness, Abbotsford is, of course, best seen from the Tweed—the north bank—or the hillside. But we are then looking, let us remember, at the *back* of the edifice. Nearly all the photographs present this view for the sake of the river. At first not unfrequently there is a sense of disappointment, especially if one's ideas have been founded on Turner's somewhat fanciful sketches.

As this is not a guide-book, we shall not give here a minute catalogue of the treasures to be seen at Abbotsford, referring the reader instead to Mrs. Maxwell-Scott's excellent catalogue of the 'Armour and Antiquities.' But we are sure that none who visit the place will come away unsatisfied, or will fail to be moved by the personal relics of the Great Wizard, such as his chair, his clothes and writing-desk, which bring before us the man himself, for whose memory Abbotsford is but a shrine.



Plan of Abbotsford and grounds

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