

AT THE SUMMIT OF FAME.

PASTOR FELIX TELLS MORE ABOUT THE GREAT UNKNOWN.

His Fame Had Not Removed Him From the Warm Atmosphere of General Affection—Interesting Facts About His Children—The Friends in his Immediate Circle.

Did Watty Scott, who could not speak, Tho' latin weel he ken, an' Greek, When but a Clerk o' Session, Dream o' the rare transcendent power Behint that forehead's beaming tower, His grandeur o' expression?

THOMAS LATO.

The mock-antique baronial castle arose at Abbotsford, beside the Tweed, as fanciful a mass of bric-a-brac as ever entered into one composition. His creation it was by whose will it was reared, full as surely as 'Marmion' or 'Waverley.' The poet's daughter, Sophia, was married to John Gibson Lockhart; a man whose disagreeabilities of temper and aspect almost every one who alludes to him thinks fit to mention. 'Lockhart was a most ungenial man,' writes an author in an article now before me. 'How Sophia Scott ever came to love him puzzled all her friends. He was a man of undoubted ability, of varied and catholic culture, but there was a cross-grained element in his nature. He was never pleased; his humor was coarse, and spoiled with personalities.' This may be overdone; and it is better to admit that in the deep heart of the man was something that man might praise and woman might love. To admire is difficult, where faults, especially faults of temper, are paraded; but one may be just, honorable, faithful, and even generous, with a degree of the crabbed and the sardonic in his disposition. Many a shallow rogue can be 'sweetness and light' to his victims. Charlotte Sophia Scott, her father's first and favorite, is warmly commended for her amiability, and her gentle enthusiasm. Of all his children she resembled him most in her temper and taste. She was an excellent musician, and sang very sweetly the old Scottish songs and Border Ballads. By her marriage with Lockhart she had three children, the eldest being John Hugh—The famous 'Hugh Little-John' of Scott's 'Tales of a Grandfather.' He died in his early boyhood. A daughter Janet, and a son there was beside, who proved a rotten and treacherous pillar in the support of his house. Lockhart, himself, has written, respecting the sons of eminent men,—'The great sons of great fathers have been few. It is usual to see their progeny smile at through life for stilted pretension, or despised, at best pined, for an inactive, inglorious humility. The shadow of the oak is broad, but noble plants seldom rise within that circle.' Alas! but all he has mentioned here is better to be born than that which befell his own house, in the possession of a prodigal, who, fortunately, died without issue.

Mention may here properly be made of others in his immediate circle. There was a sister, Anne, in his father's household, a girl of 'flighty temperament,' whose brief life was a chapter of accidents. She seemed in the constant peril of one who was the spite of the elements, whom fire was determined to burn, or water to drown. She was the fourth child and died in 1801. Thomas, the next in the family, who was a man of good parts and character, and of an excellent humor died in Canada, while paymaster of the Seventieth Regiment. Robert, the first surviving son in his father's family group, (for there was an earlier Walter who died in infancy), went to India as a officer in the service of the East India company, and fell a victim to an ungenial climate. John lived long on his half pay, as a major in the army, at Edinburgh. Next on the family list came the name of the great poet. The sixth, and youngest, was the black sheep or scapegrace of the family. He was a child 'whose conduct was in the 1st degree imprudent, and whose fate was disastrous. He had in the West Indies disgraced himself by cowardice, and died on his return in 1806. Sir Walter disowned him, and put on no mourning at the news of his death—conduct which he afterward thought harsh and unfeeling, and bitterly regretted.' Conochan in the 'Fair Maid of Perth,' is believed to contain 'some traits of this poor unfortunate.'

Of Scott's own children there were three, after Sophia, Walter was his eldest son, and heir to the baronetcy. He is described as having charms of person, but entirely devoid of intellectual strength and brilliancy, even to the taste by which he might have appreciated the powers which distinguished his father. He entered the army as cornet in 'a crack hussar regiment,' married a Miss Jobson, an heiress, but died without issue, so that Sir Walter's title perished with him. Though with ample time and opportunity he never attained any distinction as commander of the Fifteenth Lancers,—a post to which he was promoted more on his father's account than on his own. His brother, Charles, had died before him, and he was never married. 'Ann, the second daughter, was the wag of the

He has written nothing that remains to the present day reader, except his life of Scott, and some translations from The Spanish Ballads. In his day he was well known, and much feared, as a critic, and the author of 'Reginald Dalton' and other novels. He is also author of a popular 'Life of Burns.' It is needless to remark that he was a writer of marked ability; some passages mark him a master of elegant prose.—P. F.

family, with a tart sardonic humor, which repelled rather than attracted.' She too, died unmarried. So the 'sole heir of the family which the Wizard fought so long and manfully to found,' was, after all, 'a girl, who married Mr. Hope, an eminent and wealthy English barrister, a Roman Catholic. Mrs. Hope died young, leaving again only a daughter, the Miss Hope-Scott of Abbotsford; her father having assumed the name and arms of Scott by royal sign manual.' O! the sons of Scott, Lockhart observes, that it was fortunate for them that the day of their father 'darkened in the morning of theirs. The sudden calamity anticipated the natural effect of observation and the collisions of society and business. All weak, unmanly folk were nipped in the bud, and soon withered to the root. They were both remarkably modest men, but in neither had the better stimulus of the blood been arrested.'

Scott was now at the summit of his influence, and the time had seen no literary career at once so well approved and so brilliant. The heights of praise and dignity he had attained had not removed him from the warm atmosphere of the general affection. His name had everywhere a talismanic power, and the ear that heard it spoken was glad. The Caledonian abroad was already proud when he remembered that Walter Scott was his countryman; and more than any other, living or dead, except Robert Burns, he stood for Scotland as if he had been the very Genius of the land. Hearing it, the loneliest and most romantic regions of that haunted country were vividly before him. There were their native heaths; the lochs, half in gleam, half in shadow. They saw the craggy pass, the pine hung mountain, the shepherd's shieling; they heard the roar of the cataract, and the eagle's cry, mingling with the sound of the distant pibroch. Remembering him, they 'amid the green, naked mountains and islands of the west,' while around them were 'thundering seas and the cry of sea birds,' and the cathedral music of the waves in Stabia. Thinking of him, they saw Bannockburn and Flodden, and heard the voice of Bruce and Montrose speaking to them. They closed their eyes, and lo! the Ettrick and the Tweed, and all the romance and glory of the Border! If ever mortal drank the full intoxicating cup of praise, that man was Sir Walter. From the monarch to the meanest reader; from Edinburgh, to the farthest wilds of Russia and America, the enthusiastic admiration of 'the great Northern Magician,' as he was called, was one universal sentiment. Wherever he went he was made to feel it; and from every quarter streamed crowds on crowds to Abbotsford to see him. He was on the kindest terms of friendship with almost every known writer; to his most distinguished contemporaries, especially Byron, Miss Edgeworth, and Joanna Baillie, he seemed as though he could not testify sufficient honor; and, on the other hand, the highest nobility, nay, royalty itself felt the pride of his presence and acquaintance. Never had the glory of any literary man, not even of those who, like Petrarch, had been crowned publicly as the monarchs of the age, reached such a pitch of intense and universal splendor. The field of this glory was not one country—it was the vast civilized world, in which almost every man was a reader. No evidences more striking of this were ever given than on his tour in Ireland, where the play was not allowed to go on in Dublin till he had stowed himself to the eager people; and on his return from whence, he declared that his whole journey had been an ovation. It was the same on his last journey on the continent. But the fact mentioned by Lockhart as occurring during his attendance in London, at the coronation of George IV in 1821, is worth a thousand others, as it shows how truly he was held in honor by the common people. He had missed his carriage and had to return on foot between two or three in the morning, when he and a young gentleman, his companion, found themselves locked in the crowd some where near Whitehall; and the bustle and tumult were such that his friend was afraid some accident might happen to the lame limb. A space for the dignitaries was kept clear at that point by the Scots Greys. Sir Walter addressed a sergeant in this celebrated regiment, begging to be allowed to pass by him into the open ground in the middle of the street. The man answered shortly that his orders were strict—that that thing was impossible, while he was endeavoring to persuade the sergeant to relent, some new wave of turbulence approached from behind, and his young companion exclaimed, in a loud voice—'Take care, Sir Walter Scott, take care!' The stalwart dragoon hearing the name, said,—'What! Sir Walter Scott? He shall get through anyhow.' He then addressed the soldiers near him,—'Make room, men, for Sir Walter Scott, our illustrious countryman!' The men answered,—'Sir Walter Scott! God bless him!' and he was in a moment within the guarded line of safety.

His fame had not always so cordial a manifestation, in that it made him the prey of the mendicants of all the world, and the children of vanity generally. Such generosity as his is rarely found, and such abuse of it may be rare. Had he possessed the purse of Fortunatus he could scarcely have answered all the demands made upon it, and the solicitations from near and afar. A notable example of this species of annoyance,—having in it a smack of humor, which was the only circumstance about it which Scott could relish,—was the case of the American lady (!) who sent him a manuscript through the mails at the then ruinous rate of \$25, which was collected of himself! The manuscript, as one might suspect, was entirely worthless; but scarcely had the natural irritation this impudence occasioned subsided in his mind, when he was astounded by a duplicate of the work, entailing the same expenditure, 'for fear the original might miscarry!' Scott, in such cases, was said to have been an easy critic, where there was any thing at all to commend; and he often interceded with Constable, and other publishers for authors who might have had a slim chance without him. This occasioned Constable's quietly humorous remark, that 'he liked Scott's sin bins, but not those of his fostering.' At last, 'Waverley' was discovered, without a veil. The novel had been ascribed to this one and to that, even to one of the Minstrel's own brothers. 'Yet nobody of discernment could long have been in doubt about the matter. "What were they but prose amplification of his 'Lady of the Lake,' his 'Marmion' and his 'Lord of the Isles'?' So early as 1820, rambling on for', William Howitt and his gifted wife came to Aberfoyle, in the Highlands. There the minister, Mr. Graham, 'who had written 'Sketches of the Scenery of Perthshire, accompanied us to the spots in that neighborhood which are marked ones in the novel of 'Rob Roy.' It was he who had first turned the attention of Scott to the Scenes of Loch Katrine and the Trossachs. "Can there be a doubt," we asked, "that Scott is the author of 'Waverley'?" "Could it be anybody else?" he replied. "If the whole spirit and essence of those stories did not show it, his visits here during the writing of 'Rob Roy' would have been decisive enough. He came here, and inquired out all the extraordinary haunts of Rob. I accompanied him upon Loch Ard, and at a particular spot I saw his attention fixed; he observed my notice, but desired his daughter to sign something to divert it; but I felt assured that before long I should see the spot described,—and there, indeed, was Helen Macgregor made to give her celebrated breakfast." Long before the formal acknowledgement," our author continues, "few, in fact, were they who were not fully satisfied of the identity of Walter Scott and the author of 'Waverley,' as was the staid Ettrick Shepherd, who from the first had the 'Waverley novels' bound and labelled, 'Scott's novels.' No one could have seen Abbotsford itself without being at once convinced of it, if he had never been so before. Without, the very tones of the old gairway of the Tolbooth of Edinburgh stared the fact in his face; within, it was a perfect collection of testimonies to the fact. The gun of Rob Roy; the pistols of Claverhouse; the Thumbkin which had tortured the Covenanters; nay, a whole host of things cried out:—"We belong to the author of 'Waverley.'"

We have spoken hitherto of Scott's love of his home river, and the surrounding scenes, as well as his passion for hunting and wild sports. Perhaps no piece of writing puts it all more expressly than the following song:

On Ettrick Forest's mountain dune,
'Tis blithe to hear the sportsman's gun,
And seek the heath-frequenting brood
Far through the noon-day solitude;
By many a cairn and trenched mound
Where chiefs of yore sleep lone and sound,
And springs where grey hair'd shepherds tell,
That still the fairies love to dwell.

"Along the river streams of Tweed
'Tis blithe the mimic fly to lead,
When to the hook the salmon springs,
And the line whistles through the rings;
The boiling eddy sees him try,
Then dashing from the current high,
Till watchful eye and cautious hand
Have led his wretched strength to land.

"'Tis blithe along the midnight tide,
With stalwart arm the boat to guide;
On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
And headful plunge the barbed spear;
Rock, wood, and scur, emerging bright,
Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
And from the bank our band appears
Like Genii, arm'd with fiery spears.

"'Tis blithe at eve to tell the tale,
How we succeed, and how we fail,
Whether Alwyn's lordly meal,
Or lowlier board of Ashetel;
While the gay tapers cheerly shine,
Bickers the fire and flows the wine,
Days free from thought, and nights from care,
My blessing on the Forest fair."

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ford, and the country life of Scott, for something as heartsome and bracing as our literature affords.

An elaborate cumbrous affair to Sir Walter was the entertainment proffered to his sovereign, George IV., on occasion of his visit to Edinburgh and to Abbotsford in 1822. Much display there was, and much glory there might have been in it of the pyrotechnic and fanfare kind; but in the end, it was ruinously expensive, and generally disheartening and unsatisfactory. When subjects entertain kings the kings have usually the best of it. This devotion of the poet to "a gouty old debauchee,"—whose unclean, dishonorable years had disgraced the already tarnished name of king, beyond the ordinary habits of such incumbents of an office in itself questionable,—is something difficult for us to relish. Yet we are prepared to excuse this, in some measure. All was generous on Scott's part, as his acts and the movements of his heart ever were. He saw the representative and head of a great people, and refused to look at the blotches and stains we are fain to investigate. So his was the first and most cordial hand extended to welcome the man born to the purple, when he entered Edinburgh. He was the foremost, in devising plans for the royal entertainment, and projecting the parades by which the gaping public should be made aware of his magnificence. Yet we learn that "his loyalty was sorely tried before the visit concluded; the selfish almost brutal nature of the royal rone was too apparent, and it greatly grieved and mortified Scott. It is said, and probably with truth, that the poet's devotion was not appreciated, and that the king spoke of him and his everlasting clans and tartans as a bore. At any rate, Scott's exertions on this occasion nearly cost him his life, and but for the safety-valve of a prickly eruption he would have fallen a victim to his sincere but shortsighted loyalty."

The star of Byron had now arisen, a red, resplendent Mars of song, darting its angry splendors afar; and in its beams the orb of the Northern Minstrel began to grow pale. Darker than the front of Rhoderick Dhu gloomed the front of his Laras and Gisors and Corsairs; more thrilling than the best of the Border Lays, came the impassioned, lyrical cries of this Bechmanian peer;—and England and the world could not be at the feet of Scott and of Byron, too. So Scott claims the world's attention and admiration by fresh manifestations of his astonishing genius. He admitted that he had relinquished poetry because Byron had excelled him 'in the description of the strong passions, and in deep seated knowledge of the human heart.' Yet must the poems of Scott remain among the imperishables equally with those of Byron. With the romances, they have been an actual infusion of life-blood into the public. They were the opening up of a totally new world, fresh and beautiful as the imagination could conceive. They actually seem to smell of the heather. Every rock hung with its dark pines, or graceful birches; every romantic lake, bosomed in its lovely mountains; the hunt careering along its richly-colored glens; the warrior, full of a martial and chivalrous spirit; the little highlander, with dirk and phillibeg, crouching in the heath, like the Indian in his forest, or speeding from clan to clan with the fiery cross of war,—every one of these images was [when first produced] as new to the English public as if they had been brought from the farthest region of Japan. And still they subsist in that perpetual freshness and newness which genius ever gives, for the charm of future generations.

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Children of vanity generally. Such generosity as his is rarely found, and such abuse of it may be rare. Had he possessed the purse of Fortunatus he could scarcely have answered all the demands made upon it, and the solicitations from near and afar. A notable example of this species of annoyance,—having in it a smack of humor, which was the only circumstance about it which Scott could relish,—was the case of the American lady (!) who sent him a manuscript through the mails at the then ruinous rate of \$25, which was collected of himself! The manuscript, as one might suspect, was entirely worthless; but scarcely had the natural irritation this impudence occasioned subsided in his mind, when he was astounded by a duplicate of the work, entailing the same expenditure, 'for fear the original might miscarry!' Scott, in such cases, was said to have been an easy critic, where there was any thing at all to commend; and he often interceded with Constable, and other publishers for authors who might have had a slim chance without him. This occasioned Constable's quietly humorous remark, that 'he liked Scott's sin bins, but not those of his fostering.' At last, 'Waverley' was discovered, without a veil. The novel had been ascribed to this one and to that, even to one of the Minstrel's own brothers. 'Yet nobody of discernment could long have been in doubt about the matter. "What were they but prose amplification of his 'Lady of the Lake,' his 'Marmion' and his 'Lord of the Isles'?' So early as 1820, rambling on for', William Howitt and his gifted wife came to Aberfoyle, in the Highlands. There the minister, Mr. Graham, 'who had written 'Sketches of the Scenery of Perthshire, accompanied us to the spots in that neighborhood which are marked ones in the novel of 'Rob Roy.' It was he who had first turned the attention of Scott to the Scenes of Loch Katrine and the Trossachs. "Can there be a doubt," we asked, "that Scott is the author of 'Waverley'?" "Could it be anybody else?" he replied. "If the whole spirit and essence of those stories did not show it, his visits here during the writing of 'Rob Roy' would have been decisive enough. He came here, and inquired out all the extraordinary haunts of Rob. I accompanied him upon Loch Ard, and at a particular spot I saw his attention fixed; he observed my notice, but desired his daughter to sign something to divert it; but I felt assured that before long I should see the spot described,—and there, indeed, was Helen Macgregor made to give her celebrated breakfast." Long before the formal acknowledgement," our author continues, "few, in fact, were they who were not fully satisfied of the identity of Walter Scott and the author of 'Waverley,' as was the staid Ettrick Shepherd, who from the first had the 'Waverley novels' bound and labelled, 'Scott's novels.' No one could have seen Abbotsford itself without being at once convinced of it, if he had never been so before. Without, the very tones of the old gairway of the Tolbooth of Edinburgh stared the fact in his face; within, it was a perfect collection of testimonies to the fact. The gun of Rob Roy; the pistols of Claverhouse; the Thumbkin which had tortured the Covenanters; nay, a whole host of things cried out:—"We belong to the author of 'Waverley.'"

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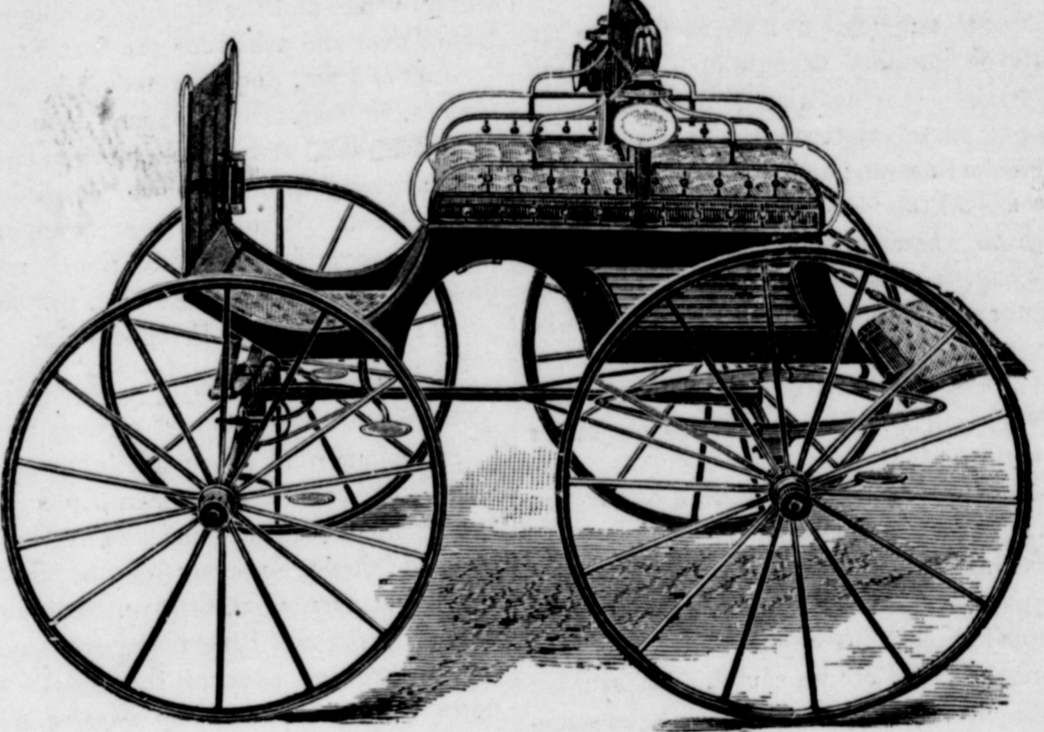
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As Long As a Flour Barrel. It is probable that at first thought most persons would be inclined to doubt the accuracy of the old saying that a horse's head is as long as a flour barrel. Flour barrels vary somewhat in length. Some are wide stouter and shorter, some slender and a little higher. An average flour barrel is about twenty-nine inches in height.

A man to whom the old saying was familiar made up his mind the other day to see for himself just how near right it was, and he measured the heads of three horses. One of these horses was said to have rather a large head for its size; it wasn't a very big horse. This horse's head, exclusive of its ears, measured 28 inches in length. The heads of the two other horses, which were horses of fair average size, with average heads, measured, one, 27 inches, the other 27 1/2 inches. So that this investigator discovered that the old saying was substantially true.

Bicycle Breakfasts. Bicycle breakfasts are a popular way of entertaining friends who ride wheels this season. A series of such breakfasts have recently been given by a club in the neighborhood of the Sound, where the roads are all that could be wished. The meet usually takes place on Saturday morning, allowing the male guests who have come to spend Sunday to participate in the pleasure. The time for meeting is at the early hour of 8 A. M., and after partaking of coffee or chocolate, with dainty sandwiches and rolls, the cyclists start for a two hours' spin, returning to find a dainty but substantial breakfast awaiting them. The table and room are decorated with foliage from the woods or field flowers. Several of these breakfasts have been served upon shady broad verandas.

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