

KELSO AND LASSWADE.

PATERFEX TELLS OF THE HILLS
OF SCOTTS BOYHOOD.

Is Early Youth and How it Was Spent,
Among Romantic Surroundings—His
School Days and Their Wild Frolics—
How He First met His Wife.

"Ewes and lambs on braes ran bleating;
Linnies chirped on larks tree;
Fie the west, the sun, near setting,
Flamed on Roslin's tower sae hie.
Roslin's towers and braes sae bonnie!
Craigie and water, woods and glens!
Roslin's banks, unpeeped by oon,
Save the Muses' Hawthornden."

McVillie's towers, sae white and stately,
Dim by gloaming, glint to view;
Thro' Lasswade's dark woods keek sweetly
Skies sae red and lit sae blue."

—Hector Macneil.

"Blessings be with them—and eternal
praise," who by the might of Virtue
and Genius endear to us the hills we never
bathed, and the vales our feet have never
trodden! Through them the scenes that
nourished us first, and gave food for fancy,
are twin in our affections with the Tweed
and the Wye. Somehow the world becomes
all as one, where brave men tread it, and
it is illustrated by song, and sown thickly
both with deeds and dreams. They exer-
cise a spell to draw our feet; and as pil-
grims, we cross the ocean and climb the
mountain, that we may kneel at their
shrines; while hearts that have been thrill-
ed by the prowess of the warrior transfused
through the fire of the poet feel a new
ecstasy in the presence of the shrines of
Dunedin or of Alloway, the height of
Stirling, or the field of Bannockburn. And
what land draws the pilgrim and stranger
with a cord stronger than Caledonia binds
about us? Truly it is said, and to the
verse our heart is responsive,—

"On this earth there is a spot
To which my soul admiringly turns,
It is the land of Walter Scott,
It is the land of Robert Burns!
On for a glimpse of that proud land
Where Genius all triumphant shines!
To stray a pilgrim, glad in hand,
And worship at her thousand shrines!"

This boy-life at Sandy-knowe (a queer
misnomer!) meant more for Scott than all
his school-days did for him. Nature and
romance were to claim him; and the brain
of the imaginative child was here to absorb
the materials for his poems and his Waverley
stories as eagerly as the sepie does blood
and as readily as the sponge does water.
The old time was before him in character,
as well as scenery, and their singularity and
picturesqueness were photographed in
memory as on the retina of that most living
eye. The old worthies of the place doted
on his childhood, as he did in after years
on little Marjorie Fleming. We hear of the
quaint recluse, "old MacDougal of Makers-
town, in his little laced cocked hat, em-
broideder scarlet waistcoat, light colored
coat, and white hair tied military fashion,
kneeling on the carpet before the child, and
drawing his watch along to induce him to
it. We hear of "Old Ormiston the herds-
man telling him all sorts of stories, who
used to bring him out into the moorlands,
and blow his whistle, when the nurse was
to fetch him home." Narrow was his
escape from the mad nurse who, anxious to
escape the solitude, confessed how she was
tempted to carry the child out among the
crag, cut his throat with the scissors, and
bury him in the mass. Her maniac fancy
was that she was under the devil's own im-
pulse; perhaps the Dr. Todds will think
his majesty recanted upon reflection
perceiving how instrumental his works
would become. What effect such things
might well have is suggested to us by
some similar child-experience, in an old
house, with its own legends, and super-
stitions goes to make a weird night by
the stories told all day. For in this wild,
solitary place were poured into his ears
"all sorts of border and other ballads:
"Watt of Harden," "Wight Willie of Aik-
wood," "Jamie Telfer," "The Fair Dodhead,"
"Hardyknute," and the like; and the stories
of the cruelties practised on the rebels at
Carlisle, and in the Highlands, after the
battle of Culloden, related to him by a
farmer of Yethyn who had witnessed them.

"Tragic tales which," said Scott, "made so
great an impression on me." And then
the spot was as a mountain of vision, to
one who carried eyes like the poet. There
were visible, near and remote, the beauties
of that now classic country which his pen
has made of interest to all the world. As
his biographer points them out,—nearly
in front of Sandy-knowe, "across the
Tweed, Lesudden, the comparatively
small, but still venerable and stately abode
of the lairds of Raeburn; and the hoary
Abbey of Dryburgh, surrounded by yew-
trees as ancient as itself, seem to lie al-
most at the feet of the spectator. Oppo-
site him rise the purple peaks of Eildon,
the traditional scene of Thomas the
Rhymer's interview with the Queen of
Faerie; behind are the blasted peol which
the seer of Crookhorn himself inhabited,
"The Broom of the Cowdenknowes,
the pastoral valley of the Leader, and the
bleak wilderness of Lammermoor. To the
eastward, the desolate grandeur of Hume
castle breaks the horizon, as the eye travels
toward the range of the Cheviot. A
few miles westward, Melrose, "like some
tall rock with lichens grey," appears
clashed amid the windings of the Tweed;
and the distance presents the serrated
mountains of the Gala, the Ettrick, and
the Yarrow, all famous in song. Such
were the objects that had painted the ear-

liest images on the eye of the last and great-
est of the Borden minstrels."

The picture of the child, seated at the
feet of his grandfather at Sandy-knowe,
listening to Miss Jenny as she read the
Bills, or whatever good book, is supple-
mented by that of the boy,—lame still, but
grown vigorous with abundant life, and
fondness for sport,—rambling with Jamie
Ballantyne (the future publisher) along the
riverside at Kelso telling stories, singing
songs, reciting scraps of poetry and bal-
lads, and making echo ring generally with
their laughter, or watching the salmon as
they came flashing from the Tweed.

Kelso was, and is, a quaint, retired, old
fashioned country town, on the Tweed, and
at its confluence with the Teviot; where it
has broad sandy beaches, and is surround-
ed by a wealth of rural scenery that was
the pride and joy of Scott's heart. He
could never to his latest day forget the
pleasant times of his boyhood in this old
town, and along its sweet and sunny waters.
Here the river broadens, and runs between
steep banks, "magnificently hung with
splendid woods;" by day the angler may
wade in his tall boots, and cast his line; and
at evening, the ruddy flare of the torch
marks where the spear-men take the prey,—
"like genii armed," as the poet describes
them. What rare sport had Scott and his
friends, along these banks! And yonder
comes that other stream to join its "kin-
dred river," embayed in the music of his
verse:

Sweet Teviot! on thy silver tide
The glaucous bales first blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warriors ride
Along thy wild and willowed shore;
Where'er thou wind'st by dale or hill,
All, all is peaceful all's still!
As if thy waves, since time was born,
Since first they rolled upon the Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
Nor started at the bag-piper's horn.

Adjoining the town is a fine park, and
walls of an old castle rise from the midst of
its trees; while within its limits are the
noble ruins of an abbey about which the
poet spent many a dreaming hour, amid his
recreations. Scott's relatives dwelt here
also, and it became a second home—the
peculiar home of his heart. Eastward of
the Kirkyard was the home of Miss Janet
Scott, in a house surrounded by woody
acres, stretching downward to the Tweed,
with its mounds and winding walks, and in
the midst a summer-banquet-house. "It
was laid out in the old style with high
pleached hornbeam hedges, and had a fine
plane tree. In many parts of the garden
were fine yews and other trees, and there
was also a goodly old orchard. Here, as
in a very paradise he used to devour heaps
of poetry." While he went to the town
grammar school, he had likewise a rare
tutor out of Tasso's "Jerusalem delivered,"
Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry,"
and the works of Fielding, Richardson,
Smollett, Mackenzie and other novelists.
"The features of this garden," we are told
remained deeply imprinted on his mind,
and have been reproduced in different de-
scriptions of his works. Like the garden
of Eden itself, this charming old garden
has now vanished. Indeed, he himself
relates with what chagrin he found, on re-
visiting the place many years afterwards,
the good old plane-tree gone, the hedges
pulled up, and the bearing trees felled!
Here, also, lived his Uncle Robert at
"Rosebank" a little farther out of the town
and on the same side of the stream, with its
lofty trees embowering his home, and the
smooth green lawn running clear down to
the bank of Tweed.

We shall not be able to follow up Scott's
school days very closely,—for it was not
in the schools he obtained the most impor-
tant part of his education, even though he
regretted in later years a want of thorough-
ness, and of that deep knowledge of litera-
ture which might have enabled him to form
a compact and more finished style. Yet
in him we have so much that we are not
disposed very deeply to regret this, in his
case. We cannot have all in one; and per-
haps if we cannot have better, we may have
cream. But when the Edinburgh high
school is in session he is there—that is,
after his eight year, in charge of that ex-
cellent man and ripe scholar, Luke Frazier,
and after him the rector Dr. Adam. But
Scott had rather scamper in the yards, than
to be chief of the form, and he had rather
kick a football, than wrestle with a root,
mathematical or classical. "Notwith-
standing his infirmity" he was among them
all "the swiftest of the racers, the strongest
of pugilists, the most persevering in snow-
ball bickers, the most daring climber of the
kittle rine steps (a pass of peril leading
along the dark brow of the castle rock)
and the most dextrous and strategic com-
mander in the mimic battles fought in the
cross causeway between the children of the
mob and those of the better-to-do citizens." Yet,—if he took to himself the cognomen
of "dunce," "blockhead," "incorrigibly idle
imp," and the like,—it was known by the dis-
cerning that he had intellectual powers, if
they were but awakened, and in particular
an amazing memory, for all literary anti-
quarian, legendary, or historical lore. Nor
may we here consider his collegiate period,

"What a charm of innocence and quietude was in
the retired home-life,—how attractive the picture!
"Old Mrs. Scott sitting with her spinning wheel at
one side of the fire, in a clean, clean chair;
the grandfather a good deal faded, in his elbow chair
opposite; and the little boy lying on the carpet at
the old man's feet, listening to the Bible," etc.
This is not an inferior school for one who was to
give us some affecting pictures of domestic and
social life.—P. F.

nor his pursuits of the law, wherein, like
others of his kind he was apt to "pen-
stare" when he should engross; but will
hasten on to love, to poetry, and to scenery
again.

It was during his apprenticeship to his
father (in the second year, Scott says,) that
by the bursting of a blood-vessel he
was confined and restricted to a vegetable
diet, and a regimen of books and dreams.
He burst like the Ancient Mariner, into the
"silent sea" into the wide wide sea of
novels, poems; and it is said, after having
been blind and blistered, drove the cir-
cling "libraries" to their wits' end, or
played unlimb'd chess for several months.
Thus while he reclined, and "not suffered
to speak above his breath," he was "pre-
paring himself for the future exigencies of
his literary life as effectually . . . as when
rambling through the mountains of Perth-
shire with Inverhaye, or 'making himself'
with short-reed among the traditional
wilderlands of Liddesdale. As Ferguson strung
his beads, so Scott on pillow or count-
erpane arranged his shell or read of battles
and pebble brigades, as he read of battles
that got him in order to write Flodden,
and many another well-contested field.
Mirrors were combined to refresh his eyes
with the world outdoors, and the troops
marching. So he made capital of his ill-
ness; and when he arose to return to the
office it was to bid "a long farewell to
disease and medicine."

A tincture of wildness and excess in his
blood, which broke out in wild frolics and
escapades in his boyhood, was chastened in
later years by the "meas" of a pure and
passionate attachment. His first attach-
ment had been unreciprocated, and brought
him sorrow; but his second was more suc-
cessful, and so long as its object remain-
ed, filled all after his life with con-
tent. The poet had attained his perfect
manhood but not his perfect fame, when at
Spa of Gilsland, a pretty watering place
in Cumberland, he first saw Charlotte
Margaret Charpentier, and fell in love
with her. This fair scion of a French
family had been brought thither by her
friends to break up one attachment, not
agreeable to Lord Downshire her guardian,
and here she straightway fell into another
not to be escaped from. "The meeting,"
we learn, "was like one of those in his
own novels. He was riding with his friend
Adam Ferguson—the joyous, genial friend
of his whole life—one day in that neigh-
bourhood, when they met a young lady
taking an airing on horseback, whom neither
of them had before seen. They were so
much struck with her appearance, as to
keep her in view till they were sure that
she was a visitor at The Wells. The same
evening they met her at a ball, and so much
were they charmed with her that he soon
made her a proposal, and she became his
wife. All who knew her in her youth
speak of her as a very charming person,
though I confess that her portrait at "Ab-
bot'sford" does not give me much idea of her
personal charms." "But," says Mr. Lockhart
who had the best opportunity of knowing,
"without the features of a regular beauty,
she was rich in personal attractions; a form
that was fashioned as light as a fairy's; a
complexion of the clearest and the brightest
olive; eyes large deep-set and dazzling, of
the finest Italian brown; and a profusion
of silken tresses, black as the raven's wing;
her address hovering between the reserve
of a pretty Englishwoman who has not
mingled largely in general society, and a
certain archness and gaiety that suited
well with the accompaniment of a French
accent. A lovelier vision, as all who re-
member her in the bloom of her days have
assured me, could hardly have been imagin-
ed."

With his charming bride Scott settled
among his loved hills in a bit of the choicest
scenery the neighborhood of Edinburgh af-
fords. Some seven miles is the Lasswade
cottage, a very bower of retirement where
some of his happiest years were spent, and
some of his best work done. His friends
gathered here, and "blithe little wife"
proved a most excellent hostess. Howitt,
who visited it described it as "a lovely
neighborhood. It is thrown up with lofty
ridges all finely wooded. The country
there is rich, and the noble woods, the fine
views down in the fertile valleys, and the
Fik coming sounding along its channel
from Rosslyn and Hawthornden make it
very charming. It is in the immediate
neighborhood not only of Rosslyn with its
beautiful chapel, and the classic cliffs and
woods of Hawthornden, but of Dalkeith;
and Lord Melville's park is at Lasswade it-
self. The cottage of Scott is still called Las-
swade cottage. Every one still knows the
house as the one where he lived, (this is
over forty years ago.) A miller near said,
"He minded him well. He was an advoca-
te then, and his wife a little dark French
woman?" The house Howitt found occu-
pied by two Miss Mutters who kept a
lady's school, and was "run down," but it
still occupied "a very sweet secluded
place." It stands about fifty yards from
the roadside, as you approach the village
from a hamlet called Loanhead; and as
you descend the hill, you see it some

Scott's nickname among his own set was Duns
Scottus. His dress at this time was neglected.
Corduroy breeches was his common attire; and
when reproached with their meanness his reply was,
"They be good enough for drinking in; come and
let us have some oysters in the Covenant Close."
These convivialities, however were after relin-
quished.

fifty yards from the roadside.
"There are two roads leading
from the highway up to the house; one be-
ing the carriage drive up to the front, and
the other to the back, past some laborers'
cottages. It is a somewhat singular look-
ing house, having one end tall, and thatched
in a remarkably steep manner, and then
a long, low range, running away from it.
The whole is thatched, white-washed, and
covered with Ayrshire roses, evergreen
plants, and masses of ivy. When you get
round to the front, for it turns its back on
the road, you find the lofty part project-
ing much beyond the low range, and having
a circular front. A gravel walk or drive
goes quite round to this side, and is divided
from a paddock by laurels. There are
three paddocks. One opposite to the tall
end, and extending down to the road, one
in front, and one behind, in which stands
near the house, in a still smaller enclosure,
a remarkably large yew-tree. The
paddocks are all surrounded by tall full-
grown trees, and they shut in the place to
perfect retirement. At the end of the low
range lies a capital large kitchen garden,
with plenty of fruit trees; and this extends
to the back lane, proceeding toward the
valley of the Esk. The neighborhood is
full of the houses of people of wealth and
taste. Here for many years lived Henry
Mackenzie. . . . Here Scott was busy with
his German translations of "Lenore," "Gotz
Von Berlichingen," and his "Border Min-
strelsy." Here Mat Lewis, and Heber, the
collector of rare books visited him; as
well as the crabbed Ritson, whom the
rough and impatient Leyden put to flight.
Then came Wordsworth and his sister
Dorothy, from a tour in the Highlands;
and Scott set off on a ramble down to Mel-
rose and Teviotdale. Here he had partly
written the "Lay of the Last Minstrel,"
and edited and published "Sir Tristram."
These facts are enough to give a lasting
interest to the cottage of Lasswade."

From his cottage Scott could slip easily
into Edinburgh, for business or social
pleasure, and back again to books, and
desk, and "wee wulkie." Thence he
made his romantic excursions into Liddes-
dale, to Ettrick forest, and all that now
famous border region. With exquisite de-
light he fell in with the country-folk and
their yet unchanged customs; looked on
wildest and most beautiful scenes, and con-
versed with new-found poets, and spirits
kindred with his own, among the peas-
antry,—such as Jamie Hogg, and Willie
Laidlaw Leyden, he had met in Edinburgh,
a rude and powerful border minstrel, with
a giant's powers, but "uncouth as a colt
from the moors." Scott had found Scot-
land out, that he might introduce her and
open her mountain-gates to the world.
What the Eldorado's and Islands of Won-
der were to the voyagers of Phillip and
Elizabet, these unfrequented
wilds became to him who looked on
them with new-creating eyes. He came
and rejoiced in his combined mission of
poet, romancer and historian of his native
land. We hear in those crying lines,—
"O Caledonia, stern and wild!" There
is nothing in biography, one has well said,
that strikes me so full of the enjoyment of
life, as these "raids," as Scott called them,
into Liddesdale, and other border wilder-
nesses.

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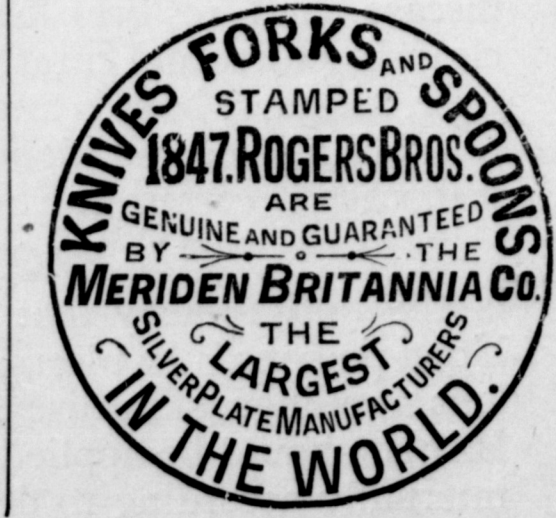
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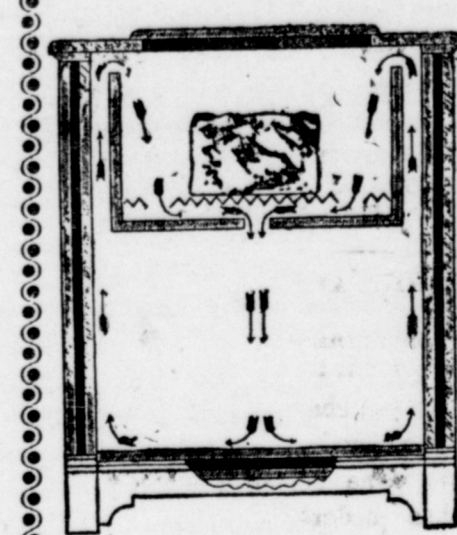
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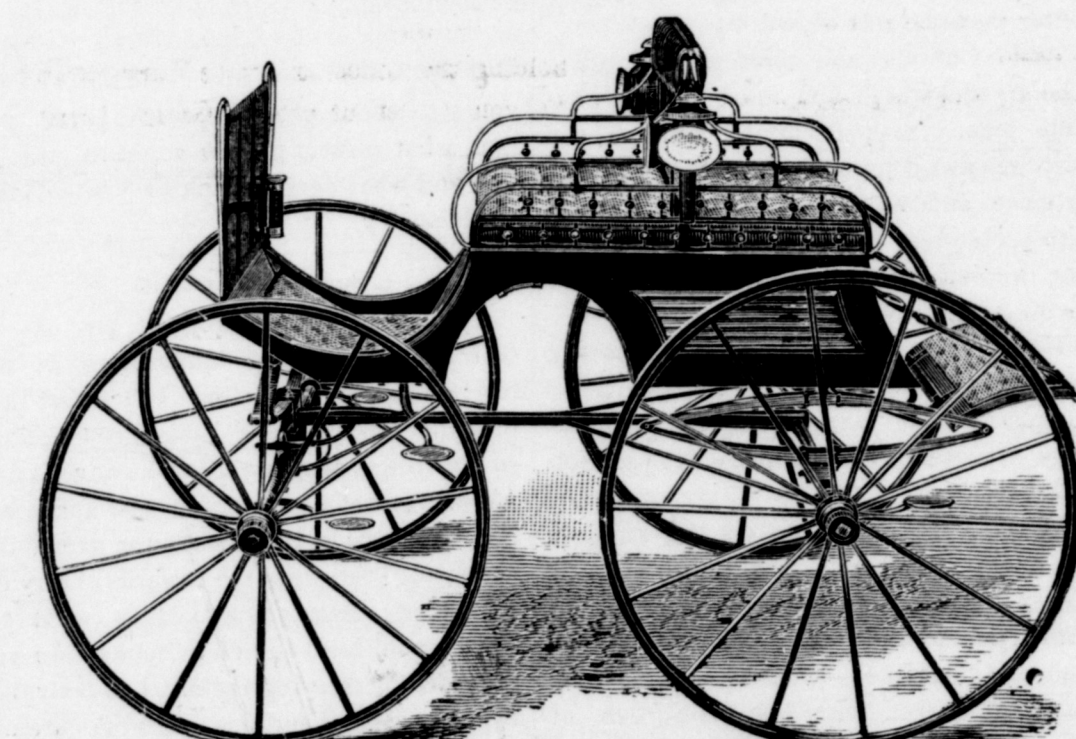
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