

NOTCHES ON THE STICK.

MORE INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF THE GREAT UNKNOWN.

Paterfex Talks in a Charming Way of The Sir Walter Scott—Abbotsford interestingly Described—Pen Picture of the Novelist And Various Members of His Family.

Up winding stately Tweed I've sped,
And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
And Ettrick banks now roaring red
While tempests blow;
But every joy and pleasure's fled,
Willie's awa'!

—Burns to William Creech.

The Minstrel's favorite home still remains to attract the feet of many pilgrims. Among their hills the towers of Abbotsford rise on the vision of a long succession of pilgrims from many lands, near and distant; while many a Scot, in whose bosom the home sentiment survives, upon entering the valley of the Tweed looks upon them proudly and pensively. Let us, at least in fancy, go with others, for we have many guides, and some of them, like Irving, are not only intelligent but of a sunny humor. We shall be reminded that Sir Walter not only more than paid his way while he was living, but is a source of untiring revenue, now he is dead. Bear witness, ye host of innkeepers, ye railway and steamboat companies, ye coach-and-livery-men, in all the Caledonian land! Throughout the land the Master's magic has touched well-trodden thoroughfares have been opened up, and the toll-keeper is there; roads have been made over the heretofore impassable morasses, rocks have yielded to the occupation of mankind, and places of entertainment have sprung up in what was a wild, lonely, beautiful wilderness—now populous enough! Perhaps in some calm summer or autumnal evening the traveller makes his approach. So Howitt came more than forty years ago and not only described that visit, but one made some twenty years earlier. 'Scott was then living at Abbotsford, and drew up at the inn-door to take post horses to Kelso. While these were got out we had a full and fair view of him as he sat, without his hat, in the carriage reading, as we ourselves were breakfasting near the window of a room just opposite. Then there was one small inn in the place, and very few people in it; now there were two or three; and these, beside lodging-houses, all crammed full of guests. The inn-yards stood full of travelling carriages, and servants in livery were lounging about in motley groups. The ruins of the abbey were like a fair for people, and the intelligent and very obliging woman who showed them to us said that every year the numbers increased, and that every year foreigners seemed to arrive from more and more distant regions.' Since then how have the years increased, yet the concourse of pilgrims still continues, reinforcements ever arriving!

How truly beautiful this whole region is, apart from its historic and classic memories! As the thoughtful traveller approaches Abbotsford he is apt to think of that last journey of the Great Minstrel over this very route, returning from Italy, when, on descending to the vale of Gala, he seemed suddenly to arouse from the torpor in which he had been reposing, and gazed about him in a dreaming half-wondering manner. 'Suddenly he murmured,—"Gala Water, surely, Buckholm, Torwoodlee." Then, at last, seeing the Eildon Hills, and catching a first glimpse of Abbotsford, he uttered a wild cry of delight, as if his heart went leaping before him, to be in the midst of scene of past delights—to reach the home of his joys and sorrow:

"And as the hare whom hounds and horns pursue
Pursues to the place from whence, at first he flew,
He still has hope, his long vexations past,
Here to return and die at home at last."

The traveller whom we follow arrived at evening, and the sun was sinking out of sight. The place was thronged just as at Melrose, and the court yard was as full of equipages as though it were a gala day. But day after day, during the touring season it is the same—a continual stream of visitors coming and going, and groups ever waiting without for their turn to be conducted through the house. The show and monetary features detract somewhat from the feeling of pleasure and the sentiment of reverence which a quieter and more leisurely inspection would induce. The ownership of this famous residence is better than the proprietorship of a metropolitan museum, and must yield a handsome income. Whoever expects to see a structure of the feudal dimensions, or on the ample and massive scale of an old time baronial mansion will be disappointed. It is neither Holyrood nor Windsor, it is only a mimic castle. The first impression is apt to be voiced in the words—I had imagined the house to be larger, its towers more lofty, its whole exterior more imposing. The trees planted by Scott had, by that time, grown into thick plantations, in which the house appeared to be buried, and hidden from view, for the most part, from the gaze of the approaching traveller. An abrupt descent is made from the hillside to the road, and the visitor comes in front of the building, which seems to become diminutive in proportion to the largeness of his Gothic ideal. It seems, indeed, neither large nor lofty. The trees, shielding it hitherto, no longer withhold from his eyes the object of his search. He stands before a small castellated gateway. The novel

ist's description of a feudal stronghold may rise in memory. But where is the warder, who should look out from the window above? The poet himself, can answer:

"The beacon light is quenched in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill!"

The lord of the demesne is now away! On either side are the stone pillars into which crosses have been cut, between which the traveller passes. He comes in front of the mansion, and looks along the facade; he gazes at the entering portal, or portico; at the bay-window, and their ornamentation of painted panes, through which the sun, when shining there, might cast a tinted glow along the floors within; on the tall gables and battlemented turrets, terminating in what seem peaked lanterns for festival illuminations; on the corbels and armorial escutcheons,—above the door, and aloft on the wall of stars and crescents. He notes the "light screen of freestone, finely worked and carved, with its elliptical arches and iron lattice-work, through which the garden is seen with its espalier trees, high brick walls, and greenhouse, with a doorway at the end leading into a second garden of the same sort" Here, indeed, are the dark whinstone walls of Scott's latest home, builded of the graywacke of his native hills, with its freestone quoins and projections of windows and turrets. There is a mingled and romantic and classic look about the pile,—that which we might expect of the antiquarian and poet who superintended its building. The model of Scott's dog, Maida, lying in stony quiet and silence in the court, is a reminder of one of his loves. This is on the right hand. As he reads the well-known inscription, he seems to see the poet issue from the door with the living dog and his carice companions gambolling at his heels, as we have seen them in the graphic pages of Irving. 'The house can neither be said to be Gothic nor castellated. It is a combination of the poet's, drawn from many sources but all united by good taste, and forming a unique style more approaching the Elizabethan than any other. Round the court of which the open-work screen is the farther boundary, runs a covered walk, that is along the two sides not occupied by the house and the terrace; and in the wall beneath the arcade thus formed are numerous niches, containing a medley of old figures brought from various places. There are Indian gods, old figures out of churches and heads of Roman Emperors. In the court, on the opposite side of the portico to the dog Maida, is a fountain, with some similar relics reared in the stone front around it.'

The visitor may pass around to the opposite side of the building. Here its real size impresses more strongly; the facade being of more continuous range. At one end is the square tower of Scott, to which an ascent may be made by an outside stairway. An octagonal tower is at the other extremity, well covered with clinging tendrils of 'the ivy green,' which terminates in a flag-staff. On the right hand of the square tower you enter into the outer court, which allows you to go round the end of the house from one front to the other, by the old gateway which once belonged to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh. Along the whole of this front runs a gallery, in which the piper used to stalk to and fro while they were at dinner. A singular taste was this, which not everyone relished. At its proper distance on the hills the bagpipes might be musical; but at so short a range, they must to a delicate ear, when so confined, have been dissonance itself. They were however, gratifying to the poet, as characteristically Scotch; and no one who has read the 'Lady of the Lake' needs to be told its author loved the pipes. Long after the piper was discharged he used to come about the place, and, but for the extenuating memory of Scott, must have been regarded as too much a nuisance and vagabond.

Our pilgrim is now prepared to enter. Here is the way, already described. Up to this entrance drove the carriage, on that summer day, when the falling Minstrel came—as a wandering bird comes with a wound in its bosom,—that he might finish his languishing, and die in the home nest. Scott, in his eagerness, could scarcely be restrained from flinging himself out over the wheels, before the necessary help to alight could be given him. Here, beside the portal stood his long-time servant and faithful friend, who assisted in carrying his master's shattered frame into the dining-room. There in his chair he sat for a few bewildered minutes, when his eyes rested on Laidlaw, and he exclaimed,—"Ha! Willie Laidlaw, how often, man, have I thought of you!" The dogs knew their lord's return, and gathered about him with glad sympathy, climbing to his chair, or fawning upon him, and licking his hands. The old man looked on them, and sobbed like a child till nature was exhausted; then he was laid asleep in his own Abbotsford again.

Entering to the hall, no scene is of interest superior to the first. The pilgrim's eyes are at once captivated by their view of the finely-grained porch, copied from that of Linlithgow's old palace. The stag-horns on the walls are fit trophies of the chase among the Highlands. A door is opened, and the visitor finds himself in the entrance hall, which is the especial museum of the manor. It is, as Lockhart has described it, wainscotted from the kirk of Dunfermline, while

the old pulpit of John Knox was cut in two and placed as chiffoiniers between the windows. One looks up along the walls, thickly hung with old suits of armor, with arms, and the horns of moose and deer. There is notable among these treasures the head of a musk bull. At the left hand, and near the door, the guide will point out relics of Waterloo,—cuirasses, standards, eagles, and the like. At the other end of the hall the visitor will be called to examine 'two full suits of armor, one Italian, and one English of the time Henry V., the latter holding in its hands a stupendous two-handed sword, I suppose six feet long, and said to have been found on Bosworth field.' Of much interest is the free-stone fire-place, opposite the entrance, which, it is said, was 'imitated from an arch in the cloister at Melrose, with a peculiarly graceful spandrel.' The iron gate of Sharpe, the murdered Archbishop, stands within it, and a massive Roman camp-kettle before it is a relic that might have gladdened the heart of Captain Grose. 'On the roof, at the centre of the pointed arches, runs a row of escutcheons of Scott's family, two or three at one end being empty, the poet not being able to trace the maternal lineage so high as the paternal. These were painted accordingly in nubius with the motto,—Nex alta velat. Round the door at one end are emblazoned the shields of his most intimate friends, as Erskine, Morritt, Rose, etc., and all round the cornice run the emblazoned shields of the old chieftains of the Border, with this motto in old English letters:—"These be the Coats Armouries of the Glannis and Chief Men of Name who kept the Marghys of Scotland in the Auld Tyme of the King. Trewe were they in their Tyme, and in their Defence, God Them Defendit." The chairs in this hall of relics are from the Scotch palace. Two things are of singular interest, the chain shirt which Oliver Cromwell once wore, and which now hangs here on the wall, and a 'huge tawny lion skin.' Thoms Pringle, who could catch lions, or peetize about them, sent it to his friend from South Africa.

The groined ceiling of the passage that opens from this hall to the dining-room is very fine. It is a transcript of that at Melrose. At the end is an open space where may be seen two full length paintings,—portraits of the Misses Scott,—one being of Miss Annie Scott.

The breakfast-room is one that most vividly brings Scott before the thoughtful visitor. Here that fertile, busy mind often began its daily task. At this revolving pyramidal table he often stood consulting his books of reference laid open there. Here, at this small oak table, he breakfasted,—sometimes alone, after his wife was gone; for, though usually his daughter Anne joined him at the door, it she did not come he sat to the matin meal in solitude, feeling he could not be detained from his work. There is a snug homelikeness about the room, and from it are obtained views up the valley that are quite charming. It is a cheerful room, and it is easy to see why Scott loved to linger in it. There are books still lying just where they then were,—as everything is kept as nearly as possible as he left it,—books of poetry and general literature,—in fact 'such a collection as might serve for casual reading, or to refresh the mind when weary of writing.' A bust of Henry MacKerze is placed in a niche; and over the fireplace is a fire oil painting of Fast Castle or Wolf's Craig, in Lammermore, by the artist, Thomson. The are also in this room several delicate pieces in water colors.

The library of a great author is always a grand attraction. We remember Southey's lines, and what would we give to wander in his wilderness of books and take down the choice tomes he loved to handle, when he could do no more. Alas! that library is a thing of the past. But Scott's yet remains, and, though not so extensive, is as significant. Gazing we share the feeling of Crabbe, expressed in his well-remembered poem:

With awe, around these silent walks I tread;
These are the lasting mansions of the dead:
"The dead!" methinks a thousand tongue reply:
"These are the tombs of such as cannot die!"
Crowned with eternal fame, they sit sublime,
And laugh at all the little strife of time!"
Here are some twenty thousand volumes,

—many of them rare and precious,—protected by doors of wire-work. Not a few of them were obtained by their owner for special use in the composition of his works. But this place derives an additional interest from having been the haunt and wood-work of a great literary genius, in some respects the most remarkable of his time. The room is on a noble scale and rich in ornamentation. The beautiful carving of the cedar ceiling cannot fail to attract admiring attention. Its compartments, "and

most lovely carved pendants, where you see bunches of grapes, human figures, leaves, etc." will be likely to linger in the visitor's memory. Roslyn, that gem of chapels, is said to have furnished this pattern. A bust of Sir Walter by Chantrey adorns this apartment, and one of Wordsworth; while on the table by the great bay window is a model of the head of Shakespeare at Stratford. This nook was doubly fascinating to Howitt from the memory of a picture of it he had seen several years before his visit. Here is the working-table where sat Sir Walter; while from the richly-carved ceiling depends the brazen hanging lamp from Herculesum. On a table of porphyry stands a silver urn, enclosing human bones taken from the Piræus, which was the gift of Byron, as may be seen from the inscription. In this apartment are other gifts, among them the ebony chairs presented by George IV.

Of marked beauty are the carved box-wood chairs, once the property of a Roman Cardinal. A full-length portrait of the poet's soldier-son—the second Sir Walter—is here to be seen. It represents him beside his horse in full uniform, and is a very attractive picture.

In the drawing-room—which is also finished with cedar-wood—is the portrait before alluded to, a large painting by Raeburn. Engravings have made the world with it. There he sits at ease in the shelter of a wall, with his two dogs beside him. It is declared a very life-like portrait of him as he appeared at that time of life. It resembles Chantry's bust very closely. In this room is the portrait of Lady Scott. "Oh!" exclaims one visitor 'such a round-faced little blackamoor of a woman! One instantly asks,—Where was Sir Walter's taste? Where was the judgment which guided him in describing Di Vernon, Flora Melvor, or Rebecca? 'But,' the house keeper replies, 'she was a very brilliant little woman.' This is the testimony of those who knew her best. 'How greatly then,' observes Howitt, 'must the artist have sinned against her! The portrait of Miss Anne Scott reveals her likeness to her father; she is portrayed very attractively. The visitor looks with interest into the pictured face of the poet's mother, and sees 'a good, amiable, motherly-looking woman, in an old-fashioned lady's cap.' A memorial of Byron is in this room also, in the form of a verde antique table. It stands between the front windows bearing 'a vase of what resembles purple glass, a transparent marble, inlaid beautifully with gold. The black ebony cabinet, in this room, was, with the chairs in the library, presented by the royal house Scott so much affected.

Akin to the entrance-hall in interest is the armory. It is that collection begun by the author of Waverley, while yet a boy. The barest inventory of this room's contents would require unallowable space; but a few may be taken as indicative of the whole. Here is the old wooden lock of the Tolbooth of Silkirik. Here also, is 'Queen Mary's offering-box, a small iron ark or coffer, with a circular lid, found in Holyrood house.' That stout short gun, is Holer's rifle, given by the hero's widow to Sir Humphrey Davy, and by him to Sir Walter. Some service on the part of Davy prompted the widow's gift, and with a view to the poet's museum he accepted it greatly delighting her with the thought that it would be preserved to future generations in such a place as Abbotsford. Here, too, is the old white hat worn by the burgesses of Stowe when installed with Rob Roy's purse and gun,—a very long one, with the initials R. M. C. (Robert MacGregor Campbell) round the touch-hole. Here is a rich sword, in its silver sheath, presented by the people of Edinburgh to Sir Walter for the pains taken by him in the entertainment of George IV, during his visit to the city. And here is the sword of Charles I., afterwards the property of Montrose. A collection of claymores, and the swords of German executioners, of a similar kind to these in use fifty years ago in that country. On the blade of one of these is an inscription, of which Scott himself gives a translation:

Dust, when I strike, to dust; from sleepless grave,
Sweet Jesus, stoop a sin-stained soul to save.

Here also are the hunting-bottle of James I, the Covenanters' dread—the torturing thumbkins; martyred Wishart's iron crown; Buonaparte's pistols, taken from his carriage at Waterloo; and the pistols of Claverhouse, made of steel, in the fashion of the time, all inlaid with silver. Two great keys of the Tolbooth are here saved from the ravage of the mols who burned the doors of that prison, and who seized and hanged Capt. Porteous. Of all the rooms at Abbotsford this speaks most eloquently of Walter Scott.

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Whoever enters the dining-room must be impressed by the painted head of Mary Queen of Scots, as it appeared immediately upon passing the fatal ordeal. It might seem ghastly but, on the contrary, as one has said, 'it gives a better notion of the beauty of Mary than any of her living portraits.' 'The hair is still black, not gray, or white, as stated by the historians.' This painting is by Amis Cawood, and it is said that Scott took great pains to establish its authenticity. The room abounds in interesting portraits, some of them very fine. The handsome Nell Gwynn, as at Glamis Castle, here shows her radiant beauty. The equestrian figure of Lord Essex, the great parliament general, looks noble. Here are portraits of Oliver Cromwell in his youth, and of the fascinating Monmouth. The poets are also here. One lingers over the face of Thomson, and wonders if he was ever, indeed so fair. The speaking face of 'glorious John Dryden' wins the eye. Hogart, imaged by his own hand, is there; and there are Gay and Prior by Jervas. Portraits of royalty are also intermingled; the celebrated Charles XII of Sweden; Henrietta, the fair queen of the First Charles of England; the Second James consort, Ann Hyde. There Raleigh shows magnificent in his broad hat, yet with less of splendor than some of his portraits attribute to him; and there smiles handsome Lucy Watters, first mistress of easy-living Charles, and mother of the unhappy Monmouth; there also is the Duchess of Buccleugh, Monmouth's wife. But one picture invites especial attention, for various reasons; it is that which represents the marriage of Scott of Harden, the poets famous ancestor, to 'Muckle-mouthed Meg,' who is 'making the widest mouth possible, with a very arch expression as much as to say: 'Since you will be obliged to have me, I will, for this once have the pleasure of giving you a fright!' * * * This, with the portrait of 'Old Beattie,' Scott's great-great-grandfather, is an ancestral picture of significance.

There is one other room of peculiar interest to the visitor at Abbotsford, and this is the poet's writing-room. It is near the entrance-hall, and may be taken on the way back, when he is completing his round. It is walled by shelves of books, and surrounded by a gallery which enabled the poet to get at them easily, and also served as a means of entrance from his bedroom; so that, by turning his key in the lock, he could be safely here and undisturbed, while his guests deemed him in bed. There was generally some one at Abbotsford, and the early morning hours were precious to him for work. A corner of this room is also familiar to us by means of a steel engraving seen during our boyhood in the home of a friend at Lower Horton. Quite natural look the leather-covered easy-chair, and the desk at which he used to sit when penning the pages that thousands read so eagerly. Was it not here that, during the period of his decline, on a day when he felt a little more bright and hopeful than usual, he requested that he might be placed with his writing materials before him; and where, when he attempted to close his fingers upon the pen they refused duty, while it dropped, and forever, from his helpless hand? A little closet is opened, and there hang his walking-stick and boots, and close beside them the last suit he ever wore,—a bottle-green coat, a plaid waistcoat, gray plaid trousers, and white hat. Here are his garden tools. With these he would slip through the closet, by a door opening into the garden, and prune the trees of his plantations, or slip unobserved to the wood or field, and wander quietly at his will. In the writing room is a full-length portrait of Rob Roy, and a head of Claverhouse. Here, standing on the chimney-piece, is the German light-machine, with which he used to kindle his study-fire; and here is the chair made of wood from the house where, at Robroyston, according to the brass plate on the back, 'Wallace was done to death by traitors.' This room,—which is connected with the library, and with the entrance hall,—is the only sitting-room which faces southward.

But forever consecrated in memory is the room of rest, where occurred the beautifully solemn and impressive scene; when, on a calm September morning, he awoke from dreams to clear consciousness, and prepared to embark on that mysterious sea over which a traveller never returns. Hastily summoning his son-in-law, he said: "I may have but a minute to speak to you. My

dear, be a good man; be virtuous, be religious. Nothing else will give you comfort when you come to lie here." He paused, and Lockhart said: "shall I send for Sophia or Anne?" "No," said the dying man, "do not disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night. God bless you all!" Then he sank into the slumber from which he was only momentarily to awake on the arrival of his sons. At length, on the 21st of September the end came, when in the presence of all his children—the sun of Autumn shining softly in at the open window, and the Tweed uttering its silver monody as it crept along, the spirit of the great poet left its tabernacle, and these earthly scenes forever. His eldest son kissed him and closed his eyes.

Such is an incomplete view of Abbotsford, and such are some of its associations. Perhaps the pilgrim, in pensive mood, may go down to the bank of the Tweed in the soft silence of the summer evening, listening to the soft soothing music of the stream that fell upon the ear of the dying poet. It may be he will repeat to a companion some verses of Andrew Lang,—himself a native of Selkirk, and a lover of Scott,—with which we deem it fitting to conclude this paper:

Three crests against the saffron sky
Beyond the purple plain;
The dear remembered melody
Of Tweed once more again.
Wan water from the border hills,
Dear voice from the old years,
Thy distant music hails and stills
And moves to quiet tears.
Like a loved ghost thy faded flood
Flies through the dusky land;
Where Scott, come home to die, has stood,
My feet returning stand.
A mist of memory broods and floats;
The border waters flow;
The air is full of ballad notes
Borne out of long ago.
Old songs that sung themselves to me,
Sweet through a boy's day-dream,
While trout below the blossomed tree
Splashed in the golden stream.
Twilight and Tweed, and Eildon Hill,
Fair and thrice fair you be;
You tell me that the voice is still
That should have welcomed me.
PASTOR FELIX.



OUR MAIL.

Our mail brings us every day dozens of letters about Burdock Blood Bitters. Some from merchants who want to buy it, some from people who want to know about it, and more from people who do know about it because they have tried it and been cured. One of them was from Mr. J. Gillan, B.A., 39 Gould Street, Toronto. Read how he writes:

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