

LINES

ON THE

DEATH OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THOU pleasant noble Bard of fame far spread,
Now art thou gathered to the mighty dead,
And the dark coffin and the girdling mould
All that of thee is perishable, hold.
Mourners and mutes and weeping friends are gone;
The pageant closed, and thou art left alone,
The covered treasure of a sacred spot,
That in the course of time shall never be forgot.

Soon those who loved, admired and honoured thee,
In death's still garner-house will gathered be;
And great their number is, who have with pride
Looked in thy manly face, sat by thy side,

And heard thy social converse, — words of cheer,
 And words of power to charm the listening ear!
 At death's despotic summons will they come,
 Each in his turn from many a different home:
 From town and muirland, cot and mansion warm,
 The regal palace, and the homely farm.
 Soldier and lawyer, merchant, priest and peer,
 The squire, the laird of forty pounds a-year,
 The crowned monarch and the simple hind,
 Did all in thee a meet companion find.

For thee the peasant's wife her elbow chair,
 Smiling a welcome, kindly set, and there
 With fair exchange of story, saw and jest,
 Thou wert to her a free and pleasant guest;
 While nature, undisguised, repaid thee well
 For time so spent. She and her mate could tell
 Unawed, to such a man, their inmost mind;
 They claimed thee as their own, their kin their kind.
 From nature's book thou couldst extract a store,
 More precious than the scholar's classic lore.

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And how felt he, whose early rhymes had been
 To perilous inspection given, and seen
 By one whose brows were graced from every land,
 With chaplets twined by many a skilful hand?
 How beat his heart, as with the morning ray,
 To Abbotsford he took his anxious way,
 Imagining what shortly he must see,
 Him in whose presence he so soon will be?
 And how felt he, thy study's threshold passed,
 When on thy real face his eyes were cast?
 Thine open brow with glow of fancy heated;
 Thy purring cat upon the table seated;
 Thy sleeping hound that hath his easy lair
 Close on the precincts of his master's chair;
 The honest welcome of that sudden smile,
 And outstretched hand, misgiving thoughts beguile.
 But when thy cheerful greeting met his ear,
 "Fie on thee! foolish heart, a man like this to fear!"
 Thou wert to him, when blushed the eastern sky,
 A sage of awful mien and lofty eye;
 When noon-day heat called forth th' industrious bee,
 Thou wert the monitor both kind and free;

But when the changeful day was at an end,
Thou wert his easy cheerful host, — his friend.

When all whose eyes have e'er beheld thy face,
Departed are to their long resting-place,
Thou wilt exist in all thy magic then,
The cherished, speaking friend of living men.
In torrid climes, in regions cold and bleak,
In every land and language wilt thou speak.
Within the sick man's curtained couch thou'lt dwell;
Within the languid prisoner's cheerless cell;
Within the seaman's cabin, where the sound
Of many leagues of water murmurs round.
The buoyant school-boy will forego his play,
In secret nook alone with thee to stray;
The sober sage wise tomes will cast aside,
An hour with thee — a pleasant hour to bide.

Men of all nations, of all creeds, all ranks,
Will owe to thee an endless meed of thanks,

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Which more than in thy passing, checkered day
 Of mortal life, they will delight to pay.

For who shall virtuous sympathies resign,
 Or feed foul fancies from a page of thine?
 No, none! thy writings as thy life are pure,
 And their fair fame and influence will endure.

Not so with those where perverse skill pourtrays
 Distorted, blighting passions; and displays,
 Wild, maniac, selfish fiends to be admired,
 As heroes with sublimest ardour fired.

Such are, to what thy faithful pen hath traced,
 With all the shades of varied nature graced,
 Like grim cartoons, for Flemish looms prepared,
 To Titian's or Murillo's forms compared;
 Stately or mean, theirs still are forms of truth,
 Charming, unlearned, and learned — age and youth:
 Not extacies expressed in critic phrase,
 But silent smiles of pleasure speak their praise.

When those, who now thy recent death deplore,
 Lie in the dust, thought of and known no more,

As poet and romancer, thy great name
Will brightly shine with undiminished fame;
And future sons of fancy fondly strive
To their compatriots works like thine to give.
But of the many who on her wide sea
Shall boldly spread their sails to follow thee,
More as romancers on thy track will gain,
Than those who emulate the poet's strain.
A tale like Waverley we yet may con,
But shall we read a lay like Marmion?
And fearlessly I say it, though I know
The voice of public favour says not so:
For story-telling is an art, I ween,
Which hath of old most fascinating been,
And will be ever, — strong in ready power,
To combat languor and the present hour;
And o'er these common foes will oft prevail,
When Homer's theme and Milton's song would fail.
But strong in both, there is in sooth no need
Against thy left hand for thy right to plead:
Think as we list, one truth, alas! is plain,
We ne'er shall look upon thy like again.

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Thy country, bounded by her subject sea,
 Adds to her fame by giving birth to thee;
 In distant lands yon fancied group behold,
 Where busy traders meet in quest of gold;
 Motley and keen, all gathered round a youth,
 Who simply stands unconscious of the truth,
 Look at him wistfully, and hark, they speak—
 The Turk and Jew, Armenian and Greek,
 Their rapid lips the whispered words betraying—
 “He's from the land of Walter Scott,” they're
 saying.

That Caledonian, too, with more good will
 They greet as of thy closer kindred still:
 But who is he, who, standing by their side,
 Raises his head with quickly-kindled pride,
 As if he meant to look the others down?
 Ay; he is from thine own romantic town.

Thou art in time's long course a land-mark high,
 A beacon blazing to the nether sky,
 To which, as far and wide it shoots its rays,
 Landsmen and mariners, with wistful gaze,

From ship, and shore, and mountain turn their
sight,

And hail the glorious signal of the night.

Oh Dryburgh! often trode by pilgrim feet
Shall be thy hallowed sod; solemn and sweet,
Will be the gentle sorrow uttered there,
The whispered blessing and the quiet prayer.
Flower, herb, or leaf by children yet unborn
Will often from thy verdant turf be torn,
And kept in dear memorial of the place
Where thou art laid with a departed race;
Where every thing around, tower, turret, tree,
River, and glen, and mountain, wood and lea,
And ancient ruin, by the moonlight made
More stately with alternate light and shade,
Thy once beloved Melrose,—all speak of thee,
With mingled voices through the gale of morn,
Of evening, noon, and night, most sadly borne,
A dirge-like wailing, a mysterious moan,
That sadly seems to utter “He is gone!”

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SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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To God's forgiving mercy and his love—
To fellowship with blessed souls above—
Bright hosts redeemed by him whose voice of hope
Revealed th' immortal spirit's boundless scope—
We leave thee, though within its narrow cell,
Thy honoured dust must for a season dwell—
Our friend, our bard, our brother,—fare thee well !

*Hampstead,
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