SOME
SCOTTISH-NOVELISTS.

by
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Introduction

Sir Walter Scott

George Macaulay

Robert Louis Stevenson

J. M. Barrie

S. R. Crockett

John Watson (Ian MacLaren)
Introduction

Scotland, the size and population being taken into consideration, stands near the first if not at the head in literary ranks. With other countries it has followed the usual line of development with one exception, that of the Drama. The Ballad literature is exceptionally fine, in fact as considered, by some critics, the best of the kind ever written. Their lyrical poetry contains some of the most beautiful songs ever produced. Their fiction and essay work is not so conspicuously good as their work in other lines, but still in this we must make one exception, that of Carlyle.

To the present century is due the honor of producing the best of Scotch writing, the Novel. Almost all types of the novel are here represented.

It would be impossible in this small space to speak of all the Scotch novelists so I will confine myself to six of the most famous of them and give a few thoughts on their preparation and work, not so much from my own ideas as from those of others who are more conversant to judge them.

Sir Walter Scott.

Sir Walter Scott though the first in importance was not the first Scotch novelist. His predecessors did fair work but of the kind
to be utilizing in other than their own time to anyone but a student of literature.

Sir Walter Scott was of gentle birth, for he was directly descended from Walter Scott, who was commonly called "Auld Walt o' Horden." He says of himself: "I am therefore bisually descended from that ancient Cheifman whose name I have made to ring in many a story and from his fair damne the "Flower o'Yarrow, no bad genealogy for a BorderMicntel."

His mind was turned to the study of Border history and poetry, the basis of his fame as a poet and romancer, by his pride in the seal as supposed feudal dignity and the manauding exploits of his ancestors. On his mother's side he could also trace his descent from chiefs of famous clans.

Scott's mother was a woman of imagination and culture, his father was methodical and industrious. The son strives to have inherited the best qualities of once and acquired the best qualities of the other.

Scott says that his speed of writing was due to preparation begun in boyhood. When a child he was left much to himself and being delicate was not pushed in school, he had much time
therefore to read. In this reading he acquired much of the romantic lore of which he made so much use in after years. Chance threw him in with much of this style of literature, not all from books, but part from stories told him by friends and relatives. During his studies and apprenticeship he still pursued steadily and ardently his own favorite studies. That he was willing to master dry and uninteresting work! It is said that Scott learned French and Italian for no other reason than to be able to read the romances and love of those countries in the original language. In pursuit of romantic reading shows to some extent the strength of Scott's passion.

Scott is really what may be called the father of the modern historical novel. He did not originate it, but he put it in the modern form. His historical novel is used as the model by later writers. Scott wrote at a very rapid rate and his stories show it; they move along rapidly and keep up your interest throughout the story. His characters are clearly and distinctively drawn. No two seem alike. It has been said of Scott that he was "Second only to Shakespeare in creative cer-
imaginative literature. Perhaps the least self-conscious of all our poets, a narrative poet of near pre-Ruskinianness, all is great in the Waverley novels. Material, effect, characters, execution.

His Ballads have the same interest to us as his novels. They are sonorances in verse instead of prose.

His most famous or rather most popular novels are Ivanhoe, The Antiquary, Old Mortality, Waverley, Kenilworth, The Talisman, Red and Green, Guy Mannering, Rob Roy, Tancred and The Bride of Lammermoor and the Heart of Midlothian.

Ivanhoe is perhaps the most read and most popular of Scott's novels. Ivanhoe is a story of the crusades in the time of Robin Hood, the outlaw and his merry men. The feudal system was still in its full strength and the Jewish persecutions were as bad as ever and romance and chivalry were still alive. It was when the Church still held the whole of England under its rule. The story hinges upon feuds between the Saxon nobles and between the Saxon nobles and the Norman. Richard Coeur de Lion has just returned to England.
from his imprisonment in Austria, to find his brother John preparing to usurp the throne. The beauty of the story lies in the swiftness of movement. The vivid descriptions of scenery and characters, principally the characters of the men though Rebecca, who is one of his few well drawn women characters in higher life, is one of the most forcible and beautiful characters in fiction.

George MacDonald

George MacDonald, the next great Scotch novelist, both in rank and time was born about 1824. His most famous novels are "Alice Forbes of Howglen," "Anne of a Quiet Neighborhood" and "Wilfred Cumberland." He rather inclines toward mysticism in his novels and themes throughout his stories a very strong religious force. In most of them he develops the life of our young men from childhood up. Though his stories are fascinating this is the usual plan. He was the first novelist to bring out the Scotch University life, and this he did with peculiar success. No one who has read Alice Forbes will ever forget this phase of it.

He is one of the most original novelists.
of the day, especially in describing humble Scottish life and feeling, whose germ
bears to dwell on the border land between
poetry and power, between this world and
romance.

"Mr Macdonald is a metre of
thought and sentiment, with fine fancy
and descriptive power, but with little
no constructive tact. His ideas are apt to
run away with him, and to cover one
part of his story to move in a wholly
different atmosphere from that of the other.
The quaint realism of the first volume
"David Elginbrod" but he differently serenely,
seaweed with the spiritualistic effectiveness
of the latter. The "Tales of a Quiet Neighborhood"
ensue the same way also "Malcolm."
His Scotch is the dialect of the east of
Scotland, Moray and Aberdeen. Not the
classic Scotch of Burns and Scott.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Robert Louis Stevenson came into prominence
about fifteen years ago and since then has
been ranked very high. His stories are mostly
of adventure or of the supernatural.
As a child he was not an especially
brilliant scholar. It is said by a friend of his
that when she first knew him his school
days and times were past and he was
facing what he called "the equinoctial gale
of youth" and beginning to put his self-taught
art of writing into print. His enthusiasm
was very infectious and refreshing. He was
always full of new ideas, new ventures,
full of sweeping changes, a rabid radical.
a religious doubter; though with him as with
others, there was more belief in honest doubt
than in half the creeds. He had an in-
satiable curiosity. It is said of the Picturesque
notes of Edinburgh that no one could clothe
the historical facts of Edinburgh in more
graphic words than this fine son of hers.
To those who knew Stevenson he was not so
much the famous author as the sympathetic
cousin; the unique ideal talker we welcomed
when he was a boy.

Hamilton W. Matie says that Stevenson
leaves the commonplace severely alone.
He knew at a glance what was meaningless
and what was significant of character,
birth and tradition. He had a novelist's joy
in whatever made a character, a dramaticist,
delight in whatever suggests movement, passion, and the stir of elemental forces. This is what gives him the skill in meeting semi-savage man. You find these in the story "In the South Seas."

Marie also says: 'There are dim places and dark corners in Stevenson's imagination which he is careful not to explore too thoroughly. They hold in reserve for him the fears and fancies of an earlier time and he delighted to call out of these recesses strange and weird figures, such as "Will o' the Mill", "Markheim", and "The Wrecker."

"In his book "Tales," Stevenson constantly deals with this elusive but mysterious element in human thought, but he holds it in close contact with the soundest kind of good sense."

"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" most daring and most successful recent example of this power.
Hyde o'er Man says. The strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde was never a
work of art. It was set down, as it was
at once apparent to the discerning, for
exactly what it was worth! A dream
dream monstrous Vague Malfounded. It
did indeed provide the "freak shudder." It
was Stevenson's elfin joke awful enough
to the average mind. But it made an
unpermissible story and one which has
always borrowed from the unapproachable
other works of its author an importance
which it does not deserve.

Mr. Addington Symonds one of Stevenson's
darkest friends in a private letter to him
gave this criticism. I doubt whether any
one has the right so to scrutinize 'the abysmal
deep of personality' at least I think he
ought to bring more of distinct belief in
the resources of human nature, in faith,
and sympathy with our frailty, into the
matter than you have done. The art is
burning and intense. The Beau Dr. Charing
disappearance and Poe's work is water. Also one
discern at once that this is an allegory
of all Love. Nature's souls who yield themselves
to evil. Most of us are on the brink of educating a Mr. Hyde at some epoch of our being. But the scientific cast of the allegory will only act as an incentive to moral self-murder with those who perceive the allegory profundity. ... you see I am trembling under the magic leading wand of your fancy and rebelling against it with the soul of a soul that hates to be contaminated with the mere picture of victorious evil. Our only choice seems to me to be to maintain against all appearances that evil can never, and in no way be victorious. ... The suicide end of Dr. Jekyll is too commonplace. Dr. Jekyll ought to have given Mr. Hyde up to justice, this would have vindicated the trust of human dignity which is so honorably outraged in your book."

Several of Stevenson’s tales have been dramatized successfully. The Master of Ballantrae ends on the stage where the play might well have ended with the duel between the brothers.

Barrie, Crockett, Watson.

The next three novelists I will take up in our group, they are almost always
classed in this way and quite often called
the Nail-yard novelists on account of their
dealing with the lower classes of society.

Bancé

Of these three Bancé is undoubtedly the
most deserving of his fame. Any man that
can write such a tribute to his mother as
Bancé did in Margaret Agilley should be placed
high in the annals of literature. "Mr Bancé
has written nothing more characteristic than
'Margaret Agilley'!" Noah Brooks said. "This
sketch of Bancé's mother is at once intimate
and vivid, tender and true. The delicacy
of perception, the refinement of feeling, and
the unaffected charm of style give this bit
of biography the distinction which enriches
in the mind of a man whose genius is an
expression of a nature of singular
purity and sweetness. The gentle Scotch
woman with her frankness, loveliness, her
quiet courage, her sunny temper and her
charming humor, is a new figure in our
literature. The sketch is a bit of autobiography
as well; a glimpse into the childhood of the man
who in 'Sentimental Tommy' has given us
one of the finest and deepest records of a
boys' life which has ever been written."

In "Sentimental Tommy" says the critic the subtle mixing of humor and pathos is unusual even with this master of those qualities. "And in the Chicago Record." it is said the scope is broader perhaps even than "The Little Minister" and there is the same flashing of humor and pathos, the quality which as much as any other, has gained Mr. Barrie his great popularity.

Crockett.

No one who makes excursions into temporary fiction, says Hamilton Macie, after speaking of "In the South Seas," is suffered to remain long in the far East. Sooner or later he finds himself in Scotland, a country which of late years has had the good fortune to develop a number of truly tellers of genuine gift. Among the most familiar of this group is T. R. Crockett, whose latest venture in the field of romance, "They Gay Mac," describes a series of incidents which grew out of the great feud between the two branches of the Clan of Kennedy during the reign of James VI. Like most of its predecessors from the same hand the novel is furnished with an abundance
of startling incidents and picturesque adventure.

Mr. Crockett's works are almost evenly good. The most marked thing you notice in reading these is that the first one you read you will like the best. They are usually ranked in the order of reading. The Raddis, his first long story, is very strong and I myself admire it most. The Mail of the Monk Hagen is his only other novel of any importance.

John Hateful (Ian Maclaren)

Ian Maclaren has put out but one long story, "Kate Carnegie." It is quite on the level of his earlier shorter stories and quite superior to them in solidity of structure and in excellence of literary workmanship. It will easily take a place among the best novels of the year (1896) and is likely to be read for some time to come.

Conclusion

One of the peculiar things that we notice about the Scotch novel, is the very small part that is played by the woman.
In some of the stories women are often
mentioned but they are not so strongly or
so well drawn as the men. Stevenson
has no women—except to mention as
wife to inn-keepers in Treasure Island
and the Keepers of Mr. Hyde's rooms. Mr.
Crockett's women are all alike, with the
exception of Kate Kennedy, Nell Kennedy. Many
DuMaur and May Mischief are all the same
girl only with different associations. Some
women are all well drawn with a few
strong ones but they are not to be compared
with the men, and besides they are mostly
incomplete sketches. Of the remaining
three Banie draws the strongest women,
but how they compare with his other
characters?

In spite of the exceptions that can be
drawn it is true that they all excel in
the drawing of characters in common life.
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Barrie, Crockett, Watson

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