

FRENCH CRITICISM OF WALTER SCOTT

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## PREFACE

In the nineteenth century there has been an increasing interest in the comparative study of literature, through the increased importance of internationalism and through the work of educational institutions. For these reasons, it seems worthwhile to know the place a great English author holds in the mind of a nation as important in international affairs as France. The endeavor in this paper is to show, from available French criticism, the place of Walter Scott in France.

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## FRENCH CRITICISM OF WALTER SCOTT

### Chapter I

#### INTRODUCTION

Scott's Place in European Literature---Nature of French Criticism in the Nineteenth Century.

When Hans Christian Andersen first arrived in Copenhagen, he was often without sufficient money for a meal, but with the few cents he possessed, he obtained from a library one of Walter Scott's novels and reading it forgot hunger and cold and felt himself rich and happy.<sup>1</sup> Goethe also was much pleased with the novels and intended to read Scott's best novels in succession. "All is great," he said, "material, import, characters, execution, and then what infinite diligence in the preparatory studies! What truth of detail in execution!"<sup>2</sup>

Walter Scott was satisfied that his genius should flow naturally. And the consequence is that it was

.....  
1. Andersen: Correspondence. 204.

2. Goethe: Conversations. II, 364.

never checked, that it flows still for us with all its spontaneous charm, and that it will flow on for ages to come. "Scott's romances in prose and verse are still so universally known as to make any review of them here individually, an impertinence. Their impact on contemporary Europe was instantaneous and wide spread. There is no record elsewhere in literary history of such success. Their immense sales, the innumerable editions, and the translations and imitations of them, are matters of familiar knowledge!" As the creator of the historical novel and the ancestor of Kingsley, Ainsworth, Bulwer, G. P. R. James; of Manzoni, Freytag, Hugo, Mérimée, Dumas, Alexis Tolstoi, and a host of others at home and abroad, his example is potent yet.

Scherer says, "It was Walter Scott's great example which, in the second decade of this century, first made conscientious faithfulness and study of details the rule in historical novel writing". But whatever rank may be ultimately assigned to the historical novel as an art form, Continental critics are at one

.....  
 3. Saintsbury: Famous Scots.  
 4. Henry A. Beers: A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century. 28.  
 5. Ibid., 30.  
 6. Ibid., 167.

with the British in crediting its invention to Scott. "It is an error," says Heine, "not to recognize Walter Scott as the founder of the so-called historical romance, and to endeavor to trace it to German imitation." The one point at which the English movement outweighed the German was Walter Scott whose creative vigor and fertility made an impact upon the minds of Europe to which the romantic literature of the Continent affords no counterpart.<sup>7</sup>

Spain also came, in time, to have her own Byron and her own Scott; the former in José de Espronceda, author of *The Student of Salamanca*, who resided for a time in London; the latter in José Zorrilla, whose *Granada, Legends of the Cid* were popular for the same reason that *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake* were popular; for their revival of national legends in a poem both simple and picturesque.<sup>8</sup>

In Russia the study of English Literature and poetry was, until a comparatively recent date, somewhat inadequate and fragmentary. The subject was not considered in its completeness nor was any individual work studied in its entirety. Before the advent of

.....  
 7. Henry A. Beers: *A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century*. 158.

8. Ibid., 246.



Byron, Walter Scott was for many years the only English author at all generally known. "Between 1830 and 1840, the novel, as exemplified in the works of Zagoskine, . . . .Pavlov, Bestoujev, and Pogodine, drew more and more to the front in Literature. Some of these writers were still unconscious Romanticists, imitators of Sir Walter Scott."

Literary criticism in the eighteenth century had been the criticism of taste or the criticism of dogma. In the nineteenth century, it became naturalistic---a natural history of individual minds and their products, a natural history of works of art as formed or modified by social, political, and moral environments and by the tendencies of races. This, in fact, is the criticism of human nature as a whole. Of this theory of criticism, Sainte-Beuve, one of the greatest of French critics, says: "In the range of criticism and literary history, there is no reading, it seems to me, more entertaining, enjoyable, and at the same time instructive in every way, than good lives of great men; not shallow and dry biographies, scanty yet pretentious notices, where the writer thinks only of shining, and where

9. Waliszewski: History of Russian Literature.230.

10. Ibid., 246.

every paragraph is pointed with an epigram. I mean broad, copious, even diffuse histories of a man and his works: biographies that enter into an author, produce him under all his different aspects, make him live, speak, move as he must have done in life; follow him into his home, into his domestic manners and customs, as far as possible connect him on all sides with this earth, with real existence, with the every day habits on which great men depend no less than the rest of us." Such criticism must inevitably have followed the growth of the comparative study of literature in an age dominated by the scientific spirit. With this knowledge of the French attitude toward criticism in the nineteenth century, we turn to French criticism of Sir Walter Scott.

## Chapter II

## SCOTT---THE MAN

Ancestry---Interests and Education of his Youth---  
Interests of his Later Years---His Death.

Sir Walter Scott came of a very old Scotch family. His grandfather was a prosperous farmer and his father was a member of the bar, being a writer to the Signet. To his mother, who was refined and educated, he owed his brilliant and natural qualities.

11

At an early age, Scott knew all the poetry of his beautiful country, its interesting excursions, and the legends. There were still living many from whom he could hear incidents of the old life. He was still near enough to the old days to read their stories or hear the ballads sung. He knew also the works of Beattie and the songs of Burns. Much of his early life was spent enjoying the beauties of Scotch scenery and life in the hills. Taste and circumstance, therefore, had made Scott an Antiquary. To this taste for the old was added the great gift of story-telling.

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.....  
11. Sainte-Beuve: Premiers Lundis. II, 113.

12. Ibid.

Maignon says, "La nature l'avait créé conteur".

There was nothing Scott liked better than to sit for hours telling stories to his acquaintances and he recited old verses not only to them but to all those who wished to hear him. <sup>13</sup> At an early age he began to read books from which he gained a remarkable fund of general knowledge. However, he seems to have paid little attention to regular studies. Together with his comrades, he studied German, in which literature Bürger's ballads pleased him above all other works. <sup>14</sup> To him the most important hours were those spent in rambling through old Border towns, visiting ruins, and pouring over books.

At the age of sixteen, Scott's father took him into his office as writer to the Signet. This work did not please him; yet later he became an Advocate, and a very successful one. In spite of all this, however, he felt an irresistible attraction towards literature. In this he was much benefited by the great store of romantic legends which he had been gathering on long excursions into all parts of Scotland. Often on these excursions he would change his route to see an old Gothic ruin. In his day the memorials of the past had

.....  
13. Taine: Littérature Anglaise. IV, 298.

14. Sainte-Beuve: Premiers Lundis. II, 113.

not yet disappeared. There were castles, fortresses, and abbeys still standing, as well as regions in which the old customs of early times remained. Madame de Staël said, that Scott preferred the most insignificant ruin to a place which offered him natural beauties alone. Influenced by this same love for the old and the Gothic, he built Abbotsford as a sort of feudal manor. Here everyone was welcome, men of all countries and conditions. M. Samuel speaks of Abbotsford as a place of pilgrimage for the admirers of the Romancer, who belonged to all ranks of society and to all nationalities. Scott wished to be thought of as a gentleman, as the Lord of Abbotsford rather than as an author.

The hostess of the feudal manor whom he had met on a visit to the poetic English Lakes was the daughter of a French refugee, Jean Carpentier. Their life was happy and undisturbed, owing perhaps to Scott's good nature and happy temperament. Taine writes of him, "il est bon protestant, bon mari, bon père, tres moral". Scott was more than fifty when he lost his fortunes and M. Valbert writes thus of the touching scenes of his last years: 'When Scott returned to

.....  
 15. Le Grand Encyclopédie: Samuel, Walter Scott.

16. Ibid.

Abbotsford after a journey taken for his health, he was only a shadow of himself. He walked among his gardens and admired all. But when he returned to his work, he could not write, his head fell upon his breast and great tears ran down his cheeks. He was carried to his room, which he hardly left again before his death.<sup>17</sup>

Scott's death was an important event---one could almost say a public grief in France. During his long suffering, the French journals published every day a bulletin of his condition. All the articles inspired by his death were filled with a sincere,<sup>18</sup> often profound emotion. Sainte-Beuve said, 'This is not a sorrow for England only; it is a sorrow for France and for the civilized world, to which Walter Scott, more than any other writer of the time, has<sup>19</sup> been a marvelous enchanter and amiable benefactor'. The Constitutionnel<sup>n</sup> of September 30, 1832, adds, "il a enfin achevé de mourir. Sa vie est remplie, sa gloire complète.....Un génie aussi vaste, aussi varié, aussi attachant, est un bienfait pour le siècle auquel il échoit comme un don providentiel." But the

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17. Valbert: Revue des deux Mondes. July 1, 1892.

18. Maigron. 123.

19. Sainte-Beuve: Premiers Lundis. II, 108.

highest and most touching praise was that given by the Revue de Paris deploring this great loss. First is a tribute to Scott: "Il meurt immortel par son nom, et pur dans sa vie". To this the Revue adds the same thought expressed by all, that the entire world should carry the grief of this man's death. It adds further, "That which the English have said of our Moliere, that he belongs not only to France but to all civilized nations, we wish to say of their Walter Scott. But we are especially anxious to declare that of all foreign writers, Walter Scott is the one who has been most easily naturalized with us, and the one who has most readily triumphed over all national prejudices."<sup>20</sup>

.....  
 20. Revue de Paris. September, 1832.

## Chapter III

## SCOTT---THE POET

## His Art---His Success---His Influence.

The French seem to have been chiefly interested in Scott as a poet in connection with Byron, Southey, or some other popular English poet; and in the relation of his poetic art to that of his prose work.

Scott spent much of his youth in reading the legends compiled by Bishop Percy <sup>21</sup> from which he drew the inspiration for publishing a similar work, the *Minstrelsy of the Border*. The Revue des deux Mondes says, 'It is evident that the work of Bishop Percy on the ancient ballads has been the source from which Scott gained his first inspiration. Scott's ballads were in the style and rhythm of old popular songs. The same thought and veneration for ancient times, the same study of costumes and characters which made the success of the poems secured the success of the novels, but in these the details of character are more finely drawn, the passages truer.'

.....  
21. Taine: *Littérature Anglaise*, IV, 298.



In speaking of Scott's poems and novels, Taine writes, 'The Lady of the Lake, Marmion, The Lord of the Isles, The Fair Maid of Perth, Old Mortality, Ivanhoe, Quentin Durward, who does not know by heart all these names?' Of their historical value he says, 'All these pictures of a distant age are false. Costumes, scenery, externals alone are exact; actions, speech, sentiments, all the rest, is civilized, embellished, arranged in modern guise'. Scott is the poet of lords and monarchs and also the poet of peasant, of soldier, of artisan. He wished to arouse the intellect, to stimulate the reader to a desire to know the heart of his characters and in this he was successful. The characters, great and small, act as one feels they should act under the circumstances and are truly characters of their own age. In his poems, as in his novels, the Scotch author shows himself original in the characters, true in discourse, and faithful in description. That which especially distinguishes his talent is the art with which he disposes of the contrasts which ought to serve as shadows in his picture. To him each object is important, the smallest detail is never useless and that which seems especially superfluous becomes most necessary. The important value is the faithful painting of Scotch

customs. It is nature which cannot be found elsewhere, it is the truth of his dialogues, of his descriptions. When his poems lack the general interest which we like to find in the classics, it is supplied by the interest of the moment, which prolongs the curiosity without provoking impatience. <sup>22</sup> The reader is carried along by the ardor and impetus of his style of writing.

Of this style, Valbert says: 'In judging of certain passages of Scott's Journal one is able to imagine that poetry is for this Scotchman only a sort of industry a little more refined than the others'. Yet without hesitation he has been placed above Byron by many French critics, and his influence has been very great. But influences of great currents of thought have fallen upon France from every side. It is necessary, therefore, to credit a part of this foreign influence to Shakespeare, Byron, Schiller, and especially to Goethe. One is able to say that Goethe and Byron have been the exponents of sensibility; Schiller and Scott of imagination. Yet none, more than Scott, not even Byron, has enjoyed such continuous appreciation with both French Romantic poets and <sup>23</sup> also the French reading public.

.....  
22. *Minerve Littéraire*. I, 305.

23. *Émile Faguet*.

Doudan, in a letter to his brother, writes concerning Scott's ability to portray real life and says at the close, 'Les Ivanhoe, La Fiancée de Lammermoor, Marimon, et, se tu ne l' admire point, ne m' écris de ta vie'.<sup>24</sup> Simond visited Loch Katrine and spent eight hours in that place, celebrated, he says, for its picturesque beauties and by the poem of Scott more picturesque yet. Scott has placed upon its bank and in the neighboring regions the scene of his last work, The Lady of the Lake. In the following statement, The Journal des Débats echoes the feeling of all France: 'One awaits with lively impatience the placing on sale of the second book of poetic novels of Walter Scott. The success which Matilde of Rokeby obtained should assure Marmion the same popularity.'<sup>25</sup>

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 24. Lettres. I, 138.

25. Maignon: footnote, 107.

(The phrase "poetic novels" refers to Scott's narrative poems.)

## Chapter IV

## SCOTT---HISTORICAL NOVELIST

The Historical Novel before Scott---Scott as the Founder of the Real Historical Novel---Influences Shaping his Work in this Field---Organization of the Real Historical Novel.

From the French point of view, Scott was the founder of the Romantic School, which had such great influence in France. Many of the French writers of repute---Victor Hugo, Alexander Dumas-père, Mérimée, Chateaubriand, and especially Balzac---took him as their model. Yet historical novels were not lacking in France before Scott. There was the Cleopatra of La Calprenède or his Pharamond, Memoirs d' un Homme de Qualité by <sup>the</sup> Abbé Prevost, or even Gil Blas of Lesage. Women especially had tried their hand at this form of novel. Madame de La Fayette, the author of Zaide and La Princesse de Clèves; in the seventeenth century; in the eighteenth century Mademoiselle de La Force, Madame de Fontaine, Madame de Tencin, and Mademoiselle de Lussan. Their object had been, however, to popularize or make

romantic the data of history, as Brunetièrè says, even when they had not made use of history as an easy pretext to spare themselves the labor of invention. He also says, 'If the sense of history consists in the perception of differences which distinguish epochs, in the thorough knowledge of characteristic detail, and especially in the knowledge of the bearing of "manners" upon customs, usages, and laws, it may be truly said that this is what novelists before Walter Scott, and historians themselves did not possess before Chateaubriand'.<sup>26</sup> History was for them only an accessory, a useless one, and one which might be detached without great damage to the novel. History should be treated for itself and not relegated to the unworthy role of embellishment. The aristocratic character of literature had kept the novel from representing life, certain details were considered vulgar, details which were unworthy the artist and with which it was thought the reader was so familiar that they would be tedious to him. But these are the details most expressive of real life.

There were three types of novel before the

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 26. Brunetièrè: Honoré Balzac. 22.

historical, which presented these realistic details in varying degrees. The first was the idealistic novel; then came the realistic type, in which history was for the author merely a pretext by which he might give to his novels historical names, owing perhaps to the fact that in them were events or characters of which history speaks. Secrets of history, love affairs, intrigues, were treated in a conventional manner, with the most cruel monotony. There are always the same scenes of adventure after some pages more or less historic. As an example, one has only to read the 'insipid trash' of Durand, de Villedieu, "e tutte <sup>27</sup> quante".

From La Calprenède to Madame de Genlis, for two centuries, there had been no progress and the last work was as far from the good historical novel as its illustrious ancestors. There was the same profound ignorance of history, the same systematic disfiguration in their treatment of history---as an aid and not for its own sake. Yet, in spite of all this, one of the important characteristics of the historical novel is in the works of this group. It was never the contemporary age, nor modern times, but on the

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 27. Maignon: Le Roman Historique, Cf. for a detailed discussion of the idealistic, realistic, and picturesque novel and their relations to the historical novel.

contrary the past centuries from which they chose their scenes. However, they lacked the sentiment of history and even exactness.

Chateaubriand was the first writer in France to have a profound sense of history. Even the historians of the nineteenth century saluted him as their guide. It was with him that local color was truly established in literature, though it was not entirely lacking in the works of Georges de Scudéry. But it had been treated abstractly and used for painting characters isolated from local circumstances. Chateaubriand attempts to give a faithful image of man with all the differences which race, climate, civilization have brought about in his intellect and heart.

The hour had not yet arrived in which writers had discovered that the historian, poet, and novelist must be faithful to customs, costumes, and all local values. Maignon says the historical novel 'lacked a man who from his earliest years was familiar with history and with all the poetic side of history, with that mixture of false and true which forms the treasure of legend; for whom the past life with the pell-mell of its least details and practices and ordinary customs was also real, as living as the

present; whose imagination was naturally turned towards archaeology and who could vividly experience for himself and portray for others the particular charm of old stories, old legends, old castles, and old armour; a man, capable of translating all these for us in a narrative more enjoyable than learned, with the sole ambition of interesting by the rapidity, humor, and cordiality of his paintings. He came, but from the other side of the Channel, and he was Sir Walter Scott'.  
28

The real historical novel is indeed the work of Scott. It belonged to him as tragedy to Corneille, comedy to Molière, and the fable to Lafontaine. He gave it form and life and made it enter into literature, a type of novel which before was uncertain, undetermined, and a hybrid. He united, and to an eminent degree, all the qualities of the three groups-  
28  
realistic, idealistic, and the picturesque.

Taine, in discussing Scott's love for the past, remarks: 'He had developed a passion for the country, especially the historical regions, and travelled every year for seven years in the wild district of Liddendale, exploring every stream and every ruin;

.....  
28. Maignon. 72.



sleeping in shepherds' huts, gleaning ballads and legends. Beneath the lover of the Middle Ages we find first the prudent Scotchman, an attentive observer, whose sagacity has become sharpened by his familiarity with law; a good man, easy and gay as befits the national character, so different from the English'. Taine adds: 'In addition to a mind of this kind, he had all-discerning eyes, an all-retaining memory, a ceaseless studiousness which comprehended the whole of Scotland.'<sup>29</sup> One of the editors of the Revue des deux Mondes says in a footnote to an article by Allan Cunningham, 'It is useless to add to this brilliant appreciation of Scott. But I do not think, like Allan Cunningham, that imagination is the distinctive characteristic of Scott's force of intelligence. One finds more power of memory and observation than of imagination.'

General conditions in England at this time also influenced Scott. For more than a half century an irresistible current turned English Literature towards the things of the Middle Ages. Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve, Anne Radcliffe, and many others had given a place of honor to the Gothic.'<sup>30</sup>

.....  
 29. Taine: *Littérature Anglaise*, IV.

30. Maigron. 77.

All of these qualities---memory, observation, understanding of human nature, love of past ages, and great imagination---made Scott the successful organizer of the real historical novel. In this new organization, the first point of importance was the new role of history, especially the historical values in the characters. The French Critics generally agree that history before Scott was only an embellishment or pretext by which the novelists might give to their works an historical name. But in Scott it is history for its own sake and history alone. History is given the first place and sentiment or intrigue the second. It is indeed the essential and distinctive characteristic of the Waverley Novels.

The mistake of making the historical figures the principal characters is never made. Maigron says: 'An important, material, and striking proof of this is in the very titles of the works. He never names them after the great characters introduced. It is Ivanhoe and not 'The Return of Richard', Kenilworth and not 'Elizabeth of England'; it is The Abbot and not 'Mary Stuart'; Quentin Durward and not 'Louis XI.'<sup>31</sup> But sometimes, continues Maigron, Scott permits the historical characters to occupy for an instant the first .....

31. Maigron. 78.

place and the first role, as for example, Louis XI in Quentin Durward; Mary Stuart in The Abbot; Elizabeth in Kenilworth. But this is rather exceptional in the work of Scott and there is always some special explanation for it.

The French critic continues, 'Scott's pictures are all founded upon reality. In his novels that which is not true seems to be true and when it is not history of men it is history of the human heart. Louis XI and Mary Stuart we find as true in the novel as in the most exact and faithful of histories, and it is needless to say that they are distinctly more animated and lively. We see the King of France in his traditional costume but the masterpiece of masterpieces, the marvel of marvels, is the portrait of Mary Stuart. Grace, charm, joy, and energy, he has expressed all in perfect harmony and with truth and life.'

Alexander Dumas, in his Memoirs, says, 'Walter Scott is, I believe, the first who has held, with some success, to the painting of customs and historic events in the form of an imaginary intrigue. He is the true creator of the type of novel which makes use of

facts in history instead of seeking only names. Few historians are as faithful as this romancer. His compositions have the minutest exactitude of chronicles, the majestic grandeur of history, and the interest of a novel. There is as much history in the novels of Scott as in the majority of histories and historiographies.<sup>33</sup> Another Frenchman writes, 'L'histoire, elle aussi, dut beaucoup à Walter Scott'.<sup>34</sup>

The fact that Scott placed his scenes and characters in a real age of the past was a novelty in the historical novel. Old Mortality, The Legend of Montrose, Woodstock, The Fortunes of Nigel, Peveril of the Peak, have for a background the seventh century; with The Monastery, The Abbot, Kenilworth, we go back to the sixteenth century; Quentin Durward, Anne of Geierstein carry us back to the fifteenth century; and it is the epoch of the twelfth century or even preceding ages which called forth Ivanhoe, The Bride of Lammermoor, and Count Robert of Paris.<sup>35</sup> He has, besides, placed upon his novels the color of the age in which he has portrayed them.

To Victor Hugo the works of Scott have a didactic

.....  
33. Dumas: *Memoirs*. III, 214.

34. André Hallay in Le Journal des Debats.

35. Maigron. 78.

element. This is especially shown in Quentin Durward. The author, says Hugo, seems to show how loyalty, even in an obscure being, young and poor, arrives more surely at its goal than perfidy aided by all the resources of power, riches, and experience. The first role is given to Quentin Durward, an orphan cast into an unknown world unprotected except by his own strength and resourcefulness. The second important character is ~~Quentin Durward~~ Louis XI, a king more adroit than the most adroit courtesan. These two characters, so different, react one upon the other in such manner as to express the fundamental idea of the work with singular truth. Hugo adds another lesson which may be drawn from the same novel; that prudence is stronger than audacity, which is shown in the meeting of Louis XI with the Duke of Burgundy. One is ambitious, despotic; the other a tyrant, hard, and warlike. Louis XI puts himself into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy, thinking by his very audacity to gain his point.

Literature before Walter Scott was very aristocratic. Details of real life were considered unworthy of a place in literature and the characters

themselves were usually aristocratic, or at least not  
 37 common people. Therefore, the democratic element

in Scott's novels was another new feature. He makes  
 a various crowd brilliant in their costumes and be-  
 longing to all subdivisions of humanity pass before  
 38 your eyes. The crowd also becomes an important

part of the novel. 'The role of Gurth is almost as  
 important as that of his master Cedric. Wamba is as  
 often in the scene as the Templar, and Richard the  
 Lion-Hearted is far from eclipsing Robin Hood, Locks-  
 ley, and his worthy companion in arms, the happy her-  
 mit of Copmanhurst. Scott tried to give an image of  
 a society or of an epoch as complete as possible by  
 39 bringing out all the groups and all the classes.'

This democratic feature of the novel was continued by  
 Dickens. Of this relation between the two novelists,  
 Emile Faguet says: 'The English novel recreated by  
 this great master (Scott) was worthily continued by  
 Dickens, both sentimentalist and humorist, a jesting  
 though genial delineator of the English middle class  
 40 and an accurate and sympathetic portrayer of the poor.'

'In the composition of his novels, Scott had no  
 particular method. He meditated long on his subject

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 37. Brunetière: Balzac. 23.

38. Revue des Deux Mondes. 1833.

39. Maigron. 91.

40. Emile Faguet: Initiation into Literature.

but never made a plan. He never had the least idea how he was to begin his story. Valbert quotes Scott himself upon this point: 'My only purpose has always been to make interesting or amusing the chapter which I have written and abandon the rest to destiny'.

Valbert says further 'He did not revise and was often reproached for this by his son-in-law. He believed that each man has his own particular method of <sup>41</sup> expressing himself which is good if it is natural.'

To him art was merely an instrument by which the human heart could be made to feel astonishment, joy, pity, and terror; to furnish us with emotions as well as to calm them. The question of execution, of form, have in his eyes only a mediocre importance. A machinest knows exactly the power of his machine and the amount of work it is able to furnish in a day. Walter Scott knew exactly the number of pages he could write "from the rising to the setting of the sun".

In this connection Balzac declared: 'In the minds of all novel makers the plan of Kenilworth is the grandest, the most complete and extraordinary of all. It is the masterpiece from this point of view as St. Ronan's Well is the masterpiece in detail and patient

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41. Valbert. Revue des Deux Mondes. 1892.

finish; The Chronicles of the Canongate is the masterpiece for sentiment; Ivanhoe the historical masterpiece; The Antiquary for poetry; and The Heart of Midlothian for interest.'

Many times Scott's editors wished to correct some passages in the novels but to this he objected. He did not take the public too seriously but considered it only the slave of fashion. But, nevertheless, he was very successful and especially so in his characterization.

Scott's great originality has been always to subordinate the individual character to the royal function. Louis XI is defiant, tyrannical, but he makes use of these qualities in enlarging his domain; Elizabeth hesitates to give her hand to Leicester, but is this womanly subtlety or political calculation?<sup>42</sup> Louis XI does not forget even in the hut that he is King of France. Maria Stuart, when in captivity at Lochleven, does not forget that she is yet Queen of Scotland. It is the first time that historical characters recall that they are historical characters.<sup>42</sup> The Church is not less neatly characterized than the nobility. All the qualities of the new novel, says



Maigron, are found united in Ivanhoe. There is not a character who does not represent a class of society of that epoch. There is the beautiful drama, the scene between the Normans and Saxons. It is the duel of two nations, as vigorous, as animated, as passionate, as the conflict of the interests of individuals.

The characters are historic types. As individuals, they are emphasized as little as possible; they are all collective individuals. Cedric represents the independence and loyalty of the Old Saxon Thanes. He is a type and an essential historic type. In Kim is revived all the race of Franklins who with indignation and fury obstinately fought against the Normans. It is true of all the other characters that each is a representative and not an individual.

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'If we once know Scott's characters, it is impossible to confuse them or to forget them. Slight or profound, superficial or intense, their first quality is indeed life. And they are living from the most illustrious to the most obscure, minstrels and valets, duchess and peasant, wives, servants as well as masters; Gurth and Wamba as well as Cedric, Ivanhoe, or Richard; the ignoble Tony Foster and Michael Lambourne as well as the cold and seducing Leicester

or his gracious sovereign Elizabeth. There are no false elegances nor ridiculous conventions, nothing which suppresses the personality or reduces the man to be nothing but a role or a manikin, but individuals vigorous and brave, sometimes tragic and grotesque, as the situation calls for.<sup>44</sup> His characters, to whatever age he transports them, are his neighbors--- farmers, lords, gloved gentlemen, young marriagable ladies, all more or less commonplace characters of every age and condition from baron to fisherman; advocate to beggar; lady to fisherwoman. 'Who does not see them coming from every niche<sup>of</sup> memory---The<sup>45</sup> Baron of Bradwardine, Dominie Sampson, Mag Merrilies, The Antiquary, Edie Ochiltree, Jeannie Deans and her father---innkeepers, shopkeepers---an entire people. Taine continues: 'Most of these good folks are comic. Our author makes fun of them, brings out their little deceits, parsimony, fooleries, pretensions, and the hundred thousand ridiculous circumstances with which their narrow sphere of life never fails to endow them. Mark how the author smiles and without malevolence. He is never bitter. He loves men from the bottom of his heart, excuses and tolerates them; does not

.....  
44. Maigron. 163.

45. Taine; Littérature Anglaise. 301.

punish vices but unmask them and that not rudely.' <sup>46</sup>

Scott was especially successful in his portrayal of young women. In this respect, says Maignon, his imagination is Shakespearian. The characters are fragile and charming in their indecisiveness, yet they stand out very decidedly. Where does one find in our literature before Romanticism, says Maignon, coquetry more alluring, roguishness more coquettish than that of Catherine Seyton in her first conversation with Roland Graeme? But to Maignon the most charming of all the women is certainly Amy Robsart. Like the heroines of Shakespeare, she is lovingly faithful and devoted until death. She lives only for her adored Leicester, to please him, to see him laugh. For her the grave and moral writer departed from his habitual

46

reserve. His heroines are always touching and above all correct. <sup>47</sup> 'Scott had loved in his youth Willemina Belches. The love affair influenced his later life very much. It is of her that we read in the Lay of the Last Minstrel, Rokeby, and Red-

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gauntlet.' Balzac, in the preface to the Human Comedy, says of Scott's portrayal of women---his

.....  
46. Maignon. 169-171.

47. Taine: Littérature Anglaise. 303.

48. Revue des deux Mondes, July 1, 1892. 317.

opinion does not agree with that of other Frenchman---  
 'Scott was obliged to conform to the ideas of an  
 essentially hypocritical country. He has been false  
 to humanity in his painting of women because his  
 models were schismatic.' "La femme protestante n' a  
 pas d' ideal." Chateaubriand compares Scott with the  
 author of Clarissa Harlowe: 'Walter Scott did not,  
 like Richardson, dwell upon the interior phases of  
 character; he preferred to reproduce the exterior  
 phases of his characters. His imagination in this  
 direction has great charm, especially in the pictures  
 of Isaac and Rebecca.'

49

But that which was of more influence than Scott's  
 ability to portray character was his power of descrip-  
 tion. His description of character, scenes, and events  
 is dramatic, realistic, and full of "local color".  
 It was Scott who gave to the novel its dramatic form.  
 Paul Feval affirms that, "Si Richardson trouva l'  
 idée du roman actuel, il était réservé à Walter Scott  
 de lui donner sa forme dramatique ou, pour parler  
 mieux, scenique." The historic novels up to this  
 time had been only autobiographies or the auto-psy-  
 chology of the protagonists. But Scott placed in

his novels a new type as lively, as animated as the others were inert and lifeless. Dramatic interest abounded in these new characters. The Revue Française de Charles IX in speaking of the Chronique says, "Les personnages sont perpétuellement sur la scène, ou ils se meuvent sans l' aide de l' auteur; c' est toute la façon dramatique de Walter Scott". These characters, says Maigrón, are the actors themselves of the novels; they become our companions, who live before us for their own sakes---and our greatest pleasure. If they speak no one translates their words for us. We receive them from their own mouths without interfering with their originality or wisdom. He adds further, "Une fois créés et mis en scène, ils se développent de par la force et la logique seules de leur caractère, aussi indépendants de leur père que <sup>des</sup> héros de tragédie ou de comédie."

Through the influence of the characters, the dialogue became dramatic. In making the dialogue, the principal part, Scott has made his novels more dramatic. Rarely has one shown in the art of story-telling more vivacity or more dramatic quality. Maigrón expresses the opinion common to all Frenchmen, that 'Scott gives to us the sensation of everything he touches. He

renders his characters concrete and living.' To Maignon one of the dramatic incidents in *Quentin Durward* is the scene in which Quentin himself first appears. Of this incident he says, 'You see the young and fiery Scotchman advancing fearlessly upon the bank of the Somme seeking a ford. Two men who appear to him as good citizens are talking quietly on the other side. He calls to them and upon the advice of one of them enters the water. But the river is very deep and he is forced to swim vigorously. Having almost reached the bank he cries out, 'discourteous dogs, why did you not answer me when I asked if the river could be forded?' One of the men was Louis XI. Another scene Maignon considered dramatic and picturesque was that in which Quentin saved a man about to be hung and was almost put to death himself by French soldiers who considered him a friend of the culprit.

The novels also became dramatic by the distribution and arrangement of scenes. To Victor Hugo the most dramatic scene is in *Quentin Durward*, when Louis XI and the Duke of Burgundy whom the wisest councilors have never been able to reconcile, are reconciled by an act of cruelty which one imagines and the other

executes. For the first time they laugh together cordially and with pleasure; and that laugh effaces for a moment their discord. Victor Hugo also says, 'We have heard criticised as hideous and revolting the painting of the orgy. It is in our opinion one of the most beautiful chapters of the book. Walter Scott, having undertaken to paint this famous brigand surnamed the Sanglier des Ardennes, would have failed in his picture if he had not excited horror. A given drama must always be entered into frankly and one must seek in it all sorts of things.' Maigron says there are pages and even chapters which one might quote from Scott's works, showing his great dramatic ability.

Another quality of Scott's descriptions is their realism. This adds much to the dramatic force of scenes, events, and characters. Scott is a novelist of customs equal to Dickens. In Waverley, Guy Mannering, Rob-Roy, the Antiquary, he has painted with most admirable sincerity Scotch life as it was in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries; he described its lands and forests, costumes and customs; types of character from the gentleman to the small bourgeois and peasant, to the good citizen of the city or village. This may be

seen in the beginning of *The Antiquary*, the pretty scene in the street between two travellers waiting for the stage.<sup>50</sup>

It was one of the characteristics of Scott's novels that they picture life as it is, paint men of all varieties of passions and circumstances and in these paintings and true representations there is no intrusion of his own impressions or his own personality. He thinks that in all times, human passions have been the same, that from century to century, the opinions, sentiments, have not differed. He has given to men their true customs and to events their true color. "Tout ce qu' il voyait, tout ce qu' il entendait, les moindres incidens de sa vie lui servaient à mieux comprendre les hommes et les choses d' autrefois, et à donner à ces fictions un air de réalité."<sup>51</sup> Scott's description is not a vague generality. We see the characters' eyes, the most beautiful in the world; features the most regular. We know the color of their hair, the particular grace of their smile, their charms, their appearance, nothing is forgotten. Scott makes fun of his characters, brings out their little deceits, vulgarities, and the hundred thousand circumstances of ridicule with .....

50. André le Breton: Balzac.  
 51. Valbert. Revue des deux Mondes. July 1, 1892.



which their narrow sphere of life never fails to endow them. Mark how the author smiles and without malevolence. He is never bitter.

To render them more lifelike the writer has never forgotten to describe their costumes in detail.

Stendhal says, "Il n' y a pas de personnage dont le costume ne soit décrit, avec un détail une minutie qui impateaient."<sup>53</sup>

The coarse dress of Gurth, the varigated habit of Wamba make an integral part of their physiognomy and fixes them in our memory. It is the same with the yellow bonnet of Isaac or of the corsage of gold of the beautiful Rebecca. At the name of Quentin Durward, you see again the blue cap surmounted by a plume of an eagle, the embroidered scarf and the velvet jacket of scarlet. Leicester and his splendid habit, Louis XI and his small retinue of needy bourgeois as well as the skin of the wild boar with which Guillaume de la Marck covers his shoulders, all these details make an image and give each physiog-<sup>54</sup>omy its distinctive character.

In the picture of the murder of the Bishop of Liege, clear, vigorous,

.....  
52. Maigron. 190.

53. Stendhal: Racine et Shakespere.

54. Maigron. 190.

brightly colored and powerful, nothing is lacking. One sees the scene unroll itself, the group tumultuously agitated around the fierce and hideous Sanglier des Ardennes, the whole event animated and lively. "Elle a surtout une saveur, une franchise de réalisme." Of this realism in Scott's description Victor Hugo says, 'Certainly there is something bizarre and marvelous in the talent of this man who disposes of his work as the wind disposes of a leaf; who has the reader at his pleasure in all places and at all times, as well unveils the most secret recesses of his heart, as the most mysterious phenomena of nature, as the most obscure page of history; whose imagination dominates all imaginations; describes with the same astonishing truth the rags of the beggar and the robes of the king, shows all the charms, adopts all the dresses, speaks all their languages; leaves to the physiogomy of centuries that which the wisdom of God has placed unchangable and eternal in their traits.' This is truly the 'local color' which was one of the principles of the new school and one of the essentials of its organization. Scott by his admirable choice of detail creates from the first page the special atmosphere to which each belongs. For example, the .....

55. Hugo: Quentin Durward.

brilliant court of Elizabeth, a variegated world; the terrible contrast between the court of France and the court of Bourgogne.

Maigron summarizes the matter thus: "Ainsi le milieu explique toujours admirablement les personnages." He adds: "Mais le plus beau témoignage qu' on en puisse apporter, c' est encore à ce magnifique Ivanhoe qu' il faut le demander. Tout le monde connaît la forêt du premier chapitre." Scott's pictures are all founded upon reality. He knows the place which he describes and the events which have taken place there. The characters are well drawn and well sustained. It is the living painting of customs which leaves upon the novels of Scott a singular effect of originality. Scott has a great art, he excites laughter, he arouses pity almost at the same time. He knows all the distinctive traits of similar objects; the outlaw Hatteraick does not resemble at all the outlaw Muckleak, the Bohemian of Guy Mannering differs entirely from the sorcerer in The Bride of Lammermoor. The "local color" was the cause of Augustine Thierry's admiration for Scott. Brunetiere says Scott and Chateaubriand "were the first to realize this very simple point, that the feelings or ideas of a contem-  
.....  
56. Maigron. 96.

porary of Louis XIV differed in several respects from the ideas or feelings of a contemporary of Dagobert or Chilperic. And it does not appear to have been surmised before them. Local color is a literary acquisition of Romanticism." Lemaître says, "Eh bien, c' est ça'la couleur locale' dans le théâtre romantique; c' est ca et pas autre chose.....On peut lire la suite avec récit impersonnel au contraire, cet inconvénient est supprimé; c' est la merite de Walter Scott."

## Chapter V

## THE SUCCESS OF WALTER SCOTT IN FRANCE

Reception of his Novels---Reasons for his Success---  
 Influence Upon French Writers---His Aid in Develop-  
 ing French Romanticism.

The French have been much interested in Scott as the founder of the Romantic School, as well as the Creator of a new type of literature. No foreign writer had ever been so popular in France. One of the first French works to mention Scott was *The Voyage of a Frenchman in England* by Simond, 1816. From 1820 - 1830 there was no French author's name as well known and as glorious as that of Scott. The Diabte Boiteux of April, 1816, mentions the fact that an opera, *Guy Mannering*, had been given in Covent Garden, but as yet the novel of that name was unknown in France. However, the next month the Annales Politiques, Morales et Littéraires devoted eight columns to the discussion of this work. This was the first serious attention that a French Journal had given to any novel of Scott. This same Journal

published in July, 1817, contains a review of the Puritain's d' Ecosse (Old Mortality). Also an analysis of this same work appeared in the Journal des Debats of November, 1817. From this time, Walter Scott's popularity in France began. It can be said that from 1818 the name of Scott was frequently mentioned in all the periodicals, that were of most importance. They are filled with enthusiastic and unreserved appreciation. Each new novel at its appearance was praised by all the journals. In 1820, Victor Hugo wrote his praise of Walter Scott. Although though it was the admiration of a very young man, it was not equalled by that of any of his contemporaries. 'During this time, 1820 - 1830, the French press wrote very much of the great Scotchman. Writers did not spare their praises and the public turned all its attention to him. <sup>57</sup> The Globe of December 1824, announced that a bust of Scott had been brought to France and that it should be copied.

In 1825, lyric verses began to appear celebrating Scott's integrity, influence, and his place in France. From his works musicians drew subjects for their operas

and artists subjects for their pictures. After his death his charm remained. Lacretelle in his Testament philosophique et littéraire, 1840, placed him among the historians and philosophers. 'It would be impossible to count those among the present generation who owe their purest joy to Walter Scott's novels. His place is as marked in the history of French literature as in his own country. The reason for this profound success was, first, Scott's contrast to French taste; and, second, his great originality. (Maigron.)

French literature of the Restoration completely lacked imagination. One of the proofs of this was that it was very difficult to distinguish one writer from another. There was no originality but always the imitation of some pretended model. The costumes sometimes varied, but the characters remained always the same. "Leurs passions sont tempérées et leurs gaîtés décentes; l' esprit de société a adouci les asperités naturelles, arrondi les angles, contenu et discipliné l' humeur." <sup>58</sup> Maigron adds: "Personnages insipides et d' une insignifiance parfaite, tous coulés dans le même moule conventionnel et de

.....  
58. Maigron. 157.

59. Ibid. 161.

la plus odieuse banalité, fantômes vagues, incolores et froids, sans caractère et sans vigueur, sans relief ni personnalité; sans mouvement, et sans vie, voilà donc tout ce qu' avait su produire cette littérature de la Restauration et de l' Empire." <sup>60</sup> The French public cared more for intrigue and with this they had been fed. Into the midst of such conditions came the clean and fresh works of Scott, full of life and imagination. "Parmi les brillantes qualités", said Hoffman, "qui distinguent le talent de sir Walter Scott, on peut mettre l' imagination au premier rang; c'est beaucoup sur tous ceux que ont par là que cet écrivain l' emporte de couru la même carrière depuis un siècle." <sup>61</sup>

It is this imagination in the characters which explains the prodigious success of Walter Scott and is the reason that Hugo, Dumas, Vigny, Balzac, and Stendhal loved him so passionately, so religiously saluted him as a model and as a master. <sup>62</sup>

Scott was original in dialogue as well. "C' est," says Maigron, "sa plus grande originalité et son triomphe, la partie de son art dans laquelle on ne lui a jamais connu d' autre rival que Shakspeare." He adds 'Walter Scott knows how to make all his characters speak, take all tones, and at the same time he observes

60. Maigron. 162.

61. Journal des Débats. 1823.

62. Maigron. 164.



the characteristics belonging to them'....."Les personnages parlent souvent par plaisir de parler, leur barvardage ait aux yeux du sans que le lecteur d' autre excuse que sa verve et son intérêt, c' est-à-dire son naturel et son originalité"<sup>63</sup>

"C' est la peinture vivante de ces moeurs," declares Victor Hugo, "qui répand sur les romans de sir Walter Scott une singulière teinte d' originalité". The effect of Scott's originality upon French taste of the time is indicated by Alexander Dumas in his Memoirs. The first novel by Scott which he read was Ivanhoe. Accustomed to the insipid intrigues of Mme Cottin, it was difficult at first to become accustomed to the rude naturalness of Gurth and to the drollery of Wamba. But after the author had introduced Dumas into the dining room of the Old Saxon, after he had seen the food upon the oak table, when he saw the family of the thane take their seats at this table; when he saw Isaac with his yellow bonnet appear, his daughter Rebecca with her 'corsage d' or'; when he had seen the rude blows of the lance and the sword at the tournament at Ashby; then he said, "little by little the images, which had hedged my view, arose and I commenced to perceive other horizons."

De Barante in the Revue française of March, 1829, says:  
 "Ce sont les grands succès de Walter Scott qui ont  
 rendu nos auteurs si amoureux des moeurs, des costumes,  
 des époques historiques."

This contagious example of Walter Scott made more  
 than one young imagination dream of thousands of guineas  
 and a European glory. <sup>64</sup> From 1820 to 1830 the novels

of Scott received in France an extraordinary enthusi-  
 asm. Rosieres writes in the Revue critique: 'Our  
 secondary authors, who have not enough talent or origi-  
 nality to do as good work or better, in imitating  
 them (Scott's novels) follow their form and succeed  
 only in giving some mediocre imitations. Our writers

of talent and of too much originality to copy them,  
 simply transform them into types more or less differ-  
 ent.' <sup>65</sup> One can scarcely have an idea of the Scott-  
 vogue of which the year 1827 marks the climax. It is

found in the costumes, in the fashions, in furnishings,  
 upon the front pages of magazines and upon advertise-  
 ments of theaters. <sup>66</sup>

Hallay, in a review of Maigrón's work upon Scott  
 and Romanticism, feels that he is at times too enthusi-

.....  
 64. Globe. September 19, 1824. de

65. Revue critique d' Histoire et Littérature. 46.v

66. Maigrón. 120. ^

astic in his admiration for Scott, yet <sup>he</sup> (Hallay) writes 'One who has not read much of Walter Scott will have trouble in imagining how great has been his vogue in France and how profound has been his influence upon French letters. The name of Walter Scott ought to have a prominent place in a history of our literature. Maigron shows that before the Waverley Novels, the historical novel did not exist in France and that the Scotch writer has been with us the initiator of a new type. He shows the imitation of Walter Scott in Cinq Mars, La Chronique du Temps de Charles IX, Les Chouans, Notre Dame de Paris. Moreover, neither de Vigny, Mérimée, Balzac, nor Victor Hugo has ever thought of concealing that which they have taken from Walter Scott; on many occasions they have acknowledged themselves his disciples.' 67

Balzac in the preface to his Comédie Humaine acknowledges his debt to Scott. 'How to render the drama interesting to three or four thousands of people in a given social group?...If I could conceive the importance and the poetry of this history of the human heart, I would not see any means of executing it; for, up to our epoch the most celebrated authors have spent their talent in creating one or two typical characters, .....

67. Journal des Débats. July 26, 1898.

in painting one phase of life. It was with this thought that I read the works of Walter Scott..... Walter Scott, this modern inventor, imprinted a very great charm upon a type of composition, unjustly called secondary.....elevated the novel to the philosophic value of history.....He has placed here the spirit of ancient times, he has united at one time the drama, dialogue, portraiture, landscape, description; he has placed in these novels the marvelous and the true, these elements of the epic poem.....But he did not join one composition to the other in such a way as to coördinate them into a complete history, in which each chapter has been a novel and each novel an epoch. In perceiving this defeat in the work, which does not render the Scotchman less great, I saw at the time a favorable system of executing my work and the possibility of doing it.'

Hans d' Islande is the first serious imitation of Walter Scott in France. It is not an historical novel, but it is written in the dramatic style of  
68  
Scott.

Maigron declares that it is impossible to consider the historical novel in France in the nineteenth cen-

tury without giving a large share of attention to the author of *The Abbot*, of *Quentin Durward*, and of *Ivanhoe*. He continues "C' est lui le vrai fondateur du genre, et de 1820 a 1830 et au delà, tous nos écrivains ont subi son heureuse influence. Qu' ils l' avouent ou non---ils l' avouent en général---ils n' ont eu que lui pour modèle. Si Vigny, Merimée, Balzac, Hugo, et tous les inconnus qui les ont précédés, comme aussi les romanciers oubliés qui les ont suivis, diffèrent se profondément des *La Calprenède* ou des *Courttilz de Sandras*, c' est pour avoir connu, pratiqué, imité les '*Waverly Novels*'. Walter Scott est à l' origine de leur talent, et de leurs ouvres, même de celles qui paraissent les plus opposées a la manière écossaise." 69

Walter Scott is more than a memory: he remains an influence. A great literary success is manifest always by an influence, and it is very rare that an original spirit does not draw a crowd of imitators. 70  
 "Ils pullulent comme les volées d' insectes éclos un jour d' été dans la végétation surabondante." 71

Readers who care for poetry and lyrics prefer Lord Byron; but Walter Scott draws to himself serious .....

69. Maigron. 10.

70. *Ibid.* 134, 135.

71. Taine: *Littérature anglaise*. IV. 292.

men and reasonable women, mothers who seek suitable and interesting literature for their sons and daughters, dramatic authors who take from him subjects for their plays, the authors of historical works who see in this Romancer the forerunner, the revealer, the initiator of a radical reform in the style of writing history, a reform which is reflected in the works of Augustine Thierry and of Barante. As Balzac says, Walter Scott has given to Barante and to Thierry the taste for color, the passion of life.

Guy Mannering inspired La Sorciere of Ducange; Soulie planned to base a work upon Old Mortality and upon Kenilworth; Ducange found a drama from The Bride of Lammermoor; Ancelot owes to Scott his Olga; Gombaux took from the Chronicles of the Cannongate La Vie d' un Joueur; La Quittance du Diable, an unpublished work by Musset, imitated Redgauntlet.<sup>72</sup> Maignon remarks "On comprend qu' ils aient <sup>S</sup>ucite de si vifs enthousiasmes-----et que tout de suite les disciples de l' Écossais aient été legion".

Edmond Esteve writes in his work Byron et le

.....  
72. Maignon. 121.

Romantisme Francais: 'The infallibility of the classic doctrines were now doubted and Chateaubriand had already enlarged the means for those disposed to give every liberty to their imagination and to their language, when the productions of two foreign writers, Walter Scott and Byron, invaded France in 1816. One saw only their portraits upon the boulevards, only their volumes in boudoirs.'<sup>73</sup> J. J. Coulmann, when visiting Byron, said to him, "Walter Scott et vous faites fureur en France.....Nos boulevards sont couverts de son portrait et du vôtre".

'Walter Scott was about 1820 the uncontested master of the French novel. Merimée and Vigny, Victor Hugo and Alexander Dumas took from him the art of mingling truth and fantasy, the real and the imaginary, of portraying character, of coloring a description, of conducting a narrative, and of drawing out a dialogue. The founder himself, or, if you please, the renewer of the realistic novel, has placed his undertaking under the patronage of the English story-teller, and has inscribed his name on the base of the monument.'<sup>74</sup>

'With Notre-Dame de Paris the author takes exclusively for a patron "L' illustre antiquaire" who

73. E. Esteve: Byron et le Romantisme Francais.

74. Ibid. 483.

has revealed to him the secret "d' allier à la minutieuse exactitude des chroniques la majestueuse grandeur de l' histoire et l' intérêt pressant du roman".<sup>75</sup> De Sacy remarked "Les noms de Schiller, de Goethe, et de Kant se mêlaient dans nos conversations avec ceux de Shakespeare, de Byron, et de Walter Scott".

The novels of Scott started the Romantic Movement, which was<sup>a</sup> little late in France. His works had in France a vogue resembling "l' enjouement", the precision and variety of the local color making the principal merit. But what profound knowledge of the human heart, what vast erudition, what poetry, what exact reproduction of customs, what power of description and of characterization! (Estève.) It is true that the novels before Scott had some romantic elements, but it is to him that romanticists owe their fame; romanticists great or small, obscure or illustrious from Alfred de Vigny to Paul Ferroix, Frédéric Soulée to Balzac. It is justice to render this great foreigner his title to glory, to render to Caesar that which belongs to Caesar.<sup>76</sup>

75. Estève: Byron et le Romantisme Français. 485.

76. Taine: Littérature Anglaise. IV.



## Chapter VI.

## SUMMARY: SCOTT'S PLACE IN FRENCH LITERATURE

The place held by Walter Scott in French Literature has been without precedent. No other foreign writer has gained such success in France. He is the acknowledged founder of a new type of literature, the historical novel. To French Literature, which was full of monotonous intrigue, of contemporary life, conventional characters and lifeless description, Scott brought true representation of events of past ages, living characters, a vivid and refreshing imagination in the narration of events, in the presentation of character, and the dialogue. It is, as Maigron has said, impossible to treat of the historical novel in France without giving a large share of attention to the author of *The Abbot*, of *Quentin Durward*, and of *Ivanhoe*. Moreover, Scott aided French Romanticism to know itself. His novels became models for many imitators, especially for the greatest French writers of the nineteenth century: Hugo, Dumas, père, Mérimée, and Vigny, in their

historical novels. Balzac owes to Scott the inspiration for his great work. In this respect Scott is considered by the French the source of the modern realistic novel. It was his exactitude in the smallest details, before considered too commonplace for Literature, that Balzac followed in his realistic novel.

In the minds of the French, Scott had also given an added interest to history; he had romanticized it. Scott held for these reasons a place as high in French Literature as in English. Maigron, one of the greatest authorities on Scott and one who has studied his subject carefully, says, "Sa place est marquée dans l'histoire de la littérature française aussi nettement que dans celle de son propre pays."

In the material available for this study, one paragraph was found on Scott as a critic---in the Journal des Savants, December, 1827, by Raynouard. "Le public, accoutumé depuis longtemps à applaudir dans les romans de sir Walter Scott ce talent original qui les distingue, cette imagination féconde et variée dont les créations hardies ne s'éloignent pas de la nature, et sur tout de la vraisemblance qu' est pour les romanciers ce que la

vérité est pour les historiens, à admirer cet art heureux d'attacher aux personnages et aux événemens un vif intérêt par l'énergie, la fidélité ou la singularité de caractères, par les contrastes les plus frappans et les mieux combinés, par les situations qui excitent et soutiennent la curiosité, par une peinture de mœurs qui, plus ou moins exacte, selon les temps et selon les lieux, est toujours assez vive et assez brillante pour séduire ou charmer le lecteur, enfin cette composition habile et vaste qui, dans un mouvement rapide et animé, réunit tant de passions diverses, exprimées avec force, nuancées avec justesse, et qui, presque toujours imaginées par l'auteur, semblent n'être que la fidèle expression de la nature; le public, dis-je, se constamment occupé des romans de sir Walter Scott, n'a peut-être pas fait assez d'attention au mérite particulier dont l'illustre romancier a fait preuve dans la biographie de Dryden." 77

Taine, in discussing Antiquarians, writes: "One of them, a novelist, critic, historian, and poet, the favorite of his age, read over the whole of Europe, was compared and almost made equal to Shakespeare,

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had more popularity than Voltaire..."

Taine recognizes Scott as a critic and historian, but devotes his chief discussion to Scott as a novelist and a poet. He states that "in France nearly a million and a half copies of Scott's novels have been sold, "et on vend toujours".

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.....  
 78. Taine: Littérature Anglaise, IV. 295.  
 79. Ibid.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

## CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF FRENCH CRITICISM OF SCOTT

1816. Le voyage d' une Français en Angleterre. Simond.  
(Note: The first French work in which Scott is mentioned.)

Un Opéra de Guy Mannering.  
(Les Annales politiques, morales, et littéraires.  
May 7, May 16.)

1817. Un analyse des Puritains. (Les Annales. July 24)

Puritains d' Écosse. (Old Mortality) (Journal des Débats. Nov. 28.)

1819. L' Officier de Fortune et de la Fiancée de Lammermoor.

(Conservateur littéraire. Dec. 2.)

1820. Sur un Choix de poésies de Byron, W. Scott et Moore.

(Minerve littéraire.)

1823. Sir Walter Scott et Quentin Durward.

(Le Mercure du XIX siècle.) Felix Boden.

Revue Encyclopédique, XVIII. Patin.

Analyses détaillées des romans ou des annonces d' editions.

(Journal des Débats. April 28.)

Voyage d' une Jeune Française en Angleterre et en Écosse pendant l' automne. Blanque, Ad.

(Note: Ouvrage significatif entre autres pour l' influence de Walter Scott.)

1824. On the Bust of Scott.  
(Le Globe, December 2.)
1825. Voyage historique et littéraire en Angleterre  
et en Écosse. Pinchot, A.  
Poem on Walter Scott. Emile Vander-Burch.
1826. Poem on Scott. Cordellier-Delanoue.  
On the Talent of Scott.  
(Le Globe, Nov. 4. Théodore Jouffroy.)
1827. À propos de la Vie de Dryden.  
(Journal des Savants. Dec. Raynouard.)  
Walter Scott's Vie de Napoleon Bonaparte.  
(Premiers Lundis. V. 1. July 28. Sainte-Beuve.)  
On the Talent of Scott.  
(Le Globe Jan. 13. Théodore Jouffroy.)
1828. Letter concerning Scott.  
Doudan. I. Apr. 3.
1829. Letter concerning Scott.  
Doudan. I. Aug. 6.  
Sur la vérité des mœurs des Waverley Novels.  
(Le Revue Française. March. Barante.)
1831. Littérature et philosophie Mêlées. Victor Hugo.
1832. La Mort de Walter Scott.  
(Premier Lundis. II. Sainte-Beuve.)  
(Le Constitutionnel. Sept. 30.)  
(Revue de Paris. Sept.)

1834. Du roman historique en France et en Angleterre.  
(La Revue Britannique. Nov.)
1837. La Littérature anglaise sous la reine Anne.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. April. Villemain.)
1839. De la Littérature anglaise depuis Walter Scott.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. March 1. Ph. Chastes.)  
Revue littéraire et critique de la Littérature  
anglaise.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. Nov. 1, Feb. 15. Ph.  
Charles.)
1847. La Littérature pseudo-populaire en Angleterre.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. Sept. 15. Ph. Charles.)  
Initiation into Literature. Emile Faguet.  
(Transl. by Sir Howe Jordan.)
1854. Walter Scott et la Princesse de Clèves. Stendhal.  
(In "Racine et Shakespeare".)
1856. History of Comparative Literature. Frédéric  
Loliée.  
(Transl. by M. D. Powers.) This date should be 1896.
1862. Les Écossais en France et les Français en Écosse.  
Francesque Michel.
1875. Le roman réaliste contemporain.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. April. Brunetière.)
1879. L' Esthétique naturaliste.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. Sept. 15. Charles Bigot.)
1880. Le roman expérimental.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. Feb. 15. Brunetière.)



1881. L'origine du roman naturaliste.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. Sept. 15. Brunetière.)
- Idées sur le romantisme et les romantiques.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. July 1. Blaze de Bury.)
1883. Classiques et Romantiques.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. Jan. 15. Brunetière.)
- Le roman naturaliste. Brunetière.
1890. Balzac et les Anglais.  
(Journal des Débats. Aug. 29. Filon.)
1892. Le Journal de Walter Scott.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. July 1. Valbert.)
1898. Le roman historique a l'époque romantique.  
Essai sur l'influence de Walter Scott. Louis Maignon.  
(Note: This is the largest work on Scott in French.)
- Walter Scott et le romantisme français.  
(Journal des Débats. July 26. André Hallay.)
- Review of Maignon's Work.  
(Revue Critique d' Histoire et Littérature.  
Rouel Rosières.)
1899. Walter Scott et la Littérature française.  
(Revue française d' Edinbourg. Louis Maignon.)
- Le romantisme français et l'influence anglaise.  
(La Quinzaine. Oct. 1-16. H. Potez.)
1900. Une nouvelle histoire du roman anglais.  
(Revue des deux Mondes. April 15. F.de. Wyzen.)

1901. Mme de Staël et le Mouvement romantique.  
(Revue Critique d' Histoire et<sup>de</sup> Littérature.  
v. 52. Friedwagner.) ^
1905. Balzac. André Le Breton.
1906. Balzac. F. Bruneti ère.
1914. Initiation into Literature. Emile Faguet.  
(Transl. by Sir Horne Gordon, Bart.)

## Appendix B

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF SCOTT'S WORKS: WITH THOSE  
MENTIONED BY THE FRENCH STARRED

1796. #Translations from the German of Bürger.
1799. #Goetz Von Berlichingen.  
The House of Aspen.  
#Ballads.
1802. #Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.
1803. Review of Southey's Amadis of Gaul.  
Review of Sibbald's Chronicle of Scottish Poetry.  
Review of Ellis's Ancient English Poetry.  
Review of Life and Works of Chatterton.
1804. Sir Tristrem.
1805. #The Lay of the Last Minstrel.  
Review of Godwin's Fleetwood.  
Review of Report Concerning Ossian.  
Review of Sohnes' Translation of Froissart.
1806. Review of Selections of Metrical Romances.
1808. #Marmion.  
#Life and Works of John Dryden.
1809. Review of Cromek's Reliques of Burns.  
Review of Southey's Chronicles of the Cid.  
Review of Curse of Kehama.
1810. English Minstrelsy.  
#The Lady of the Lake.  
Essay on Scottish Judicature.
1811. #Vision of Don Roderick.
1812. #Rokeby.

1813. The Bridal of Triermain.
1814. Life and Works of Jonathan Swift.  
 #Waverley.  
 Essay on Chivalry.  
 Essay on Drama.
1815. #The Lord of the Isles.  
 #Guy Mannering.
1816. #The Antiquary.  
 Tales of my Landlord.  
 The Black Dwarf.  
 #Old Mortality.
1817. Harold the Dauntless.  
 Introduction to The Border Antiquities.  
 #Rob Roy.
1818. Review of Mrs. Shelley's Frankenstein.  
 Tales of my Landlord. Second Series.  
 #Heart of Midlothian.  
 Provincial Antiquities of Scotland.
1819. Tales of my Landlord. Third Series.  
 #Bride of Lammermoor.  
 #Legend of Montrose.  
 #Ivanhoe.
1820. #The Monastery.  
 #The Abbot.  
 Lives of Novelists.
1821. #Kenilworth.  
 #The Pirate.
1822. Halidon Hill.  
 Macduff's Cross.  
 #The Fortunes of Nigel.
1823. #Peveril of the Peak.  
 #Quentin Durward.  
 Essay on Romance.  
 #St. Ronan's Well.
1824. #Redgauntlet.

1825. Tales of the Crusaders.  
The Betrothal.  
The Talisman.
1826. #Woodstock.
1827. #Life of Napoleon Bonaparte.  
#Chronicles of the Cannongate.  
Tales of a Grandfather. First Series.
1828. Essay on Moliere.  
#Fair Maid of Perth.  
Tales of a Grandfather. Second Series.
1829. #Anne of Geierstein.  
History of Scotland.  
Tales of a Grandfather. Third Series.
1830. The Doom of Devorgoil and Auchindrane.  
Essays on Ballad Poetry.  
Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft.  
Tales of a Grandfather. Fourth Series.  
History of France.  
History of Scotland.
1831. Tales of my Landlord. Fourth Series.  
#Count Robert of Paris.  
Castle Dangerous.

## Appendix C

## TITLES GIVEN TO SCOTT BY THE FRENCH

(Arranged according to frequency of use.)

L' illustre écrivain.

L' illustre Écossais.

Le grand romancier.

Le glorieux étranger.

L' illustre romancier.

Le grand Écossais.

Le romancier.

L' Écossais.

L' auteur Écossais.

Un grand créateur.

Un homme immense.

Un peintre immortel de l' homme.

L' enchanteur prodigue.

L' amiable bienfacteur.

L' Horrière du roman historique.

## Appendix D

## SOME EARLY FRENCH TRANSLATIONS OF SCOTT

The first translation was that of Guy Mannering by J. Martin, 1816.

Other translations which appeared soon after are the following:

Old Mortality, 1817.

The Antiquary, 1817.

Waverley, 1819.

The Bride of Lammermoor, 1819.

The Pirate, 1821.

## Appendix E

A LIST OF CHARACTERS IN SCOTT'S NOVELS, ESPECIALLY  
POPULAR IN FRANCE

Antiquary, The

#

Amy Robsart

Bothwell

Catherine Seyton

Cedric

Dominie Sampson

Edie Ochiltree

Gurth

Isaac

Ivanhoe

Jeannie Deans

Leicester

Louis XI

Mary Stuart

Meg Merrilies

Queen Elizabeth

Quentin Durward

.....  
 #A play on this character was planned by Victor  
 Hugo.



Rebecca

Roland Graeme

Rose Bradwardine

Wamba

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