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THE BALLANTYNE PRESS AND ITS FOUNDERS

[Illustration: JAMES BALLANTYNE

From the Picture at Abbotsford.]

THE BALLANTYNE PRESS AND ITS FOUNDERS 1796-1908

[Illustration: ENTRANCE TO OFFICES OF OLD PAUL’S WORK]

EDINBURGH
BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.
1909

PREFACE

_At the Centenary of the birth of Sir Walter Scott, in the year 1871, a sketch of the Ballantyne Press was issued, setting forth its close connection with him, and giving statistics of the Novels. But the story of the Press, its rise and vicissitudes under the control of James

Ballantyne and Sir Walter, its progress and development, and its collapse and new birth, as gleaned from Lockhart's "Life of Scott" and other sources, has not been given in a succinct form. For this purpose the late Mr. W. T. Dobson, for some forty years one of the principal Readers at the Press, gathered together considerable material which it has been thought might prove to be of general interest. The Press has therefore, with the assistance of Mr. W. L. Carrie, M.A., put the story into its present book-form._

PAUL'S WORK, _April 1909_.

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THE BALLANTYNE PRESS

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF THE HOUSE

The History of the Art of Printing in Edinburgh shows periods of fluctuating progress—times of decadence and revival—at recurring intervals. These are found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and towards the close of the eighteenth century another period of decadence seems to have arisen, although a few of the printers in the city strove to maintain the fairer traditions of the art and did good work. Among these it is interesting to note that the firms of Neill & Co., Pillans & Wilson, and Oliver & Boyd are survivors of that far-off time.

With the origin of the Ballantyne Press at Kelso in 1796, and its removal a few years afterwards to Paul’s Work in Edinburgh, a revival took place

which inaugurated a new era for printing in Scotland. The advent of James Ballantyne was productive of great changes, as he helped to diffuse a taste for correct and elegant workmanship till then comparatively unknown. Curwen, in his “History of Booksellers,” referring to the high level of English typography, mentions the Ballantynes of Edinburgh as founding a press, the excellent work of which had gained the good-will of many authors and publishers both in Edinburgh and London.

[Illustration: KELSO IN 1797]

James Ballantyne was the son of a merchant in the Border town of Kelso, and was born in 1772. He was educated at the grammar-school of that town, then kept by Lancelot Whale, an admirable scholar and teacher, who is said to have resembled Dominie Sampson in “Guy Mannering.” For a short time in 1783 James had as schoolfellow and companion the youthful Walter Scott, who was staying at Rosebank for the benefit of his health. The two became associated, perhaps to the neglect of their tasks during school hours, through the story-telling propensities of Scott.[1] After school they would wander along the banks of the Tweed, and these rambles had many pleasant associations—the one happy in drinking in the romantic stories and legendary lore which the other was equally happy in pouring out. This school friendship was never broken off, as Scott paid frequent visits to the Border town for some years afterwards; and when James Ballantyne went to Edinburgh to complete his legal training, after finishing his apprenticeship in Kelso, it is more than probable that he would meet Walter Scott, who was then attending the law-classes of the University. The intercourse would be renewed in the class-rooms and also in the monthly symposiums of the Teviotdale Club, to which they both belonged. On the conclusion of his legal studies, James Ballantyne commenced business as a lawyer in Edinburgh, but success proving slow he returned in 1795 to his native town; and here, whatever legal or other work he may have carried on, he seems, according to an advertisement in No. 1 of the _Kelso Mail_, to have acted as agent for the Sun Fire Insurance Co. Being a young man of literary ability as well, he soon attracted the attention of the county people, who prevailed upon him, in 1796, to become the editor and manager of a new weekly newspaper, the _Kelso Mail_, which they were promoting in opposition to the _Kelso Chronicle_, a paper of advanced democratic principles, circulating in Roxburgh and the other Border counties. In this way he established his first practical connection with printing.

[Illustration: REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE FIRST PAGE OF THE FIRST NUMBER OF THE “KELSO MAIL”]

In the prospectus of the paper given in No. 1, April 13, 1797, there occurs this paragraph: “In the Miscellany we present to the Public, it shall be our endeavour to combine amusement with information. Literary speculations, poetical productions of merit, extracts from popular works, and interesting anecdotes, shall occasionally be called in to relieve the more important details, which they shall not, however, in any instance be suffered to supersede. In this department of our undertaking, we hope from the arrangements we have made, to be able to furnish to the Public a species of entertainment, which will be a source of innocent and agreeable relaxation, while it will afford an opportunity for those of our young countrymen who are partial to the lighter species of literature, to indulge the excursions of their fancy, and ascertain, without abusing their time, how far they may be qualified to succeed in pleasing the Public.”

The somewhat lengthy Prospectus does not parade the usual phrase about “the felt want,” but it implies it all the same, and it is pleasant to record that the _Kelso Mail_ is still flourishing, having published its centenary number in April 1897. By the courtesy of the present

proprietor, there is given here a reduced facsimile of the first page of No. 1.

For the purposes of the new paper James Ballantyne had to make several journeys—first to London, to arrange for correspondents, and also to Edinburgh and Glasgow, in order to obtain type and other printing appliances—Glasgow at that time having one of the best type-foundries in the country.

In October 1799, when Walter Scott was returning from a ballad-hunting raid through Ettrick Forest and Liddesdale, he stayed at Rosebank in Kelso for some days, and the school friends again met. Scott had recently published translations of the German ballads of Bürger—"Lenore" and "The Wild Huntsman,"—through the publishing house of Manners & Miller of Edinburgh. This little book had been well received in Scotland, but had gained no general acceptance in the south. It had led, however, to a correspondence with a few who were interested in ballad lore, especially with Matthew Gregory Lewis (known generally as "Monk" Lewis), who was then engaged upon a similar work called "Tales of Wonder," but who had delayed its progress in such a way as to cause considerable annoyance to Scott and to others who had promised their aid.[2] In the meantime it happened that, while Scott was at Rosebank, James Ballantyne called one morning and asked him to supply a few paragraphs on some legal question of the day for his newspaper. Scott complied, and, carrying his manuscript to the printing-office, took with him also some ballads of his own composition designed to appear in "Monk" Lewis's collection of "Tales of Wonder." "With these, especially the 'Morlachian fragment after Goethe,' Ballantyne was charmed. Scott talked of Lewis with rapture; and, after reciting some of his stanzas, said: 'I ought to apologise to you for having troubled you with anything of my own, when I had things like this for your ear.' 'I felt at once,' says Ballantyne, 'that his own verses were far above what Lewis could ever do, and though, when I said this, he dissented, yet he seemed pleased with the warmth of my approbation.'"

On parting, Scott made a casual remark that he wondered his old friend did not try to get some work from the booksellers, "to keep his types in play" during the intervals of publication of the weekly _Mail_. Ballantyne replied that such an idea had not occurred to him, and that, moreover, he had little acquaintance with the Edinburgh publishers; but that his types were good, and he thought he could produce work equal to that of any of the town printers. "Scott, with his good-humoured smile, said, 'You had better try what you can do. You have been praising my little ballads; suppose you print off a dozen copies or so of as many as will make a pamphlet, sufficient to let my Edinburgh acquaintances judge of your skill for themselves.' Ballantyne assented; and exactly twelve copies of 'William and Helen,' 'The Fire King,' 'The Chase,' and a few other pieces, not all Scott's own, were thrown off accordingly, with the title (alluding to the long delay in the publication of Lewis's collection) of 'An Apology for Tales of Terror, 1799.'"[3] A reproduction of the title is given on the opposite page.

It happened also that Hughes, Ballantyne's chief workman, had been trained in one of the foremost printing-houses of the time, and was capable of using his materials to the best advantage; and this, joined to James Ballantyne's excellent taste in the selection of type, contributed to the production of the ballads in a style of typographical perfection worthy of the most eminent printers before him.

[Illustration]

In the beginning of 1894 a copy of this very limited edition of the "Apology" was advertised at a moderate price by a bookseller in London.

It was immediately purchased by an Edinburgh bookseller, who had a higher opinion of its value than his London brother. This copy bore an inscription in James Ballantyne's handwriting, of which the following is a slightly reduced facsimile—

[Illustration]

Evidently, however, John Murray had given it away some time after, as it shows the further enrichment of the poet Campbell's book-plate pasted on the title-page. The book is rare, and, till this copy was discovered, the only one known to exist was that at Abbotsford. It consists of seventy-six pages and a title, and from a printer's point of view deserves the high praise bestowed upon it—having meadows of margin, wide leading, good spacing and colour.

[Illustration]

In chronological order another Kelso book falls to be noticed here, before we come to the important time of the association of Scott and Ballantyne with the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." The reproduced title shows it to be the life of Count Boruwlaski, a celebrated dwarf, who died in 1837 at Durham, in the ninety-ninth year of his age.[4] The book, a copy of which is at Paul's Work, bears the date of 1801, and must of course have been issued during the dwarf's lifetime. In a letter to Mr. Morritt, soon after the publication of "Waverley," Scott has the following humorous reference to the Count:—"I am heartily glad you continued to like 'Waverley' to the end. The hero is a sneaking piece of imbecility; and if he had married Flora, she would have set him up upon the chimney-piece, as Count Boruwlaski's wife used to do with him."

[Illustration]

In connection with this chapter on Kelso work, it is gratifying to be able to print here, besides the facsimile of the first page of No. 1 of the _Kelso Mail_, a reduced facsimile of a playbill for the "New Theatre" at Kelso for Monday, November 16, 1801.[5]

CHAPTER II

REMOVAL TO EDINBURGH

The "Apology" having proved thoroughly satisfactory to Scott, he wrote to Ballantyne: "I have been for years collecting old Border ballads, and I think I could, with little trouble, put together such a selection from them as might make a neat little volume to sell for four or five shillings. I will talk to some of the booksellers about it when I get to Edinburgh, and if the thing goes on, you shall be the printer." Ballantyne was delighted with the proposal; and the result of this venture changed the whole course of his fortunes, as well as those of his friend and patron.

The "neat little volume" alluded to grew into the "Border Minstrelsy," the editor being fortunate enough to arouse the interest of many scholars and antiquaries, who gave him valuable help in the work. The first two volumes were printed and issued by Ballantyne in 1802, and bore the Kelso imprint (Vol. I. 258 + 146; II. 392 + 6). The edition consisted of eight hundred copies, fifty of which were on large paper. It was disposed of in the course of the year; and the terms of publication having been that Scott should receive half the clear profits, his share amounted to £78,

10s. When the book appeared, the obscure imprint of “Kelso” was regarded with wonder by connoisseurs of typography, who had probably never heard of such a place, and were astonished at the specimen of handsome printing this provincial town had produced: it was received with the exclamation, “What a beautiful book!”[6] The editor’s name did not appear on the title-page, but was appended to the Dedication to the Duke of Buccleuch. A third volume of the “Minstrelsy” followed in 1803, and was published along with a reprint of the first two volumes. It had Edinburgh on the imprint.

In consequence of the publication of the “Minstrelsy,” the Kelso printer soon acquired a more than local fame, and was in general request in the publishing world. He was therefore induced, towards the end of 1802, to remove to Edinburgh, and he commenced there his long and distinguished career as a book printer, “with two presses and a proof one.” He adopted at first the designation of the Border Press. This was for a short time in premises in the neighbourhood of Holyrood, and then again in Foulis Close, Canongate; but in 1805 he removed to better accommodation at Paul’s Work, where, according to one of Scott’s letters (July 1806), he had “established a hall, equal to that which the genie of the lamp built for Aladdin in point of size, but rather less superbly furnished, being occupied by about a dozen of presses.” In another letter to Ballantyne, Scott says, “I am glad you have got some elbow-room at last.”

Paul’s Work, at North Back of Canongate, under the shadow of the Calton Hill and near the foot of Leith Wynd, had been rebuilt in 1619, on the site of an earlier religious foundation, for the reception and entertainment of twelve poor men, under the name of the Hospital of Our Lady, with a chapel or altar dedicated to St. Paul; and it must also have had some connection with the police of the city. The accounts of the Town Treasurer and of the Dean of Guild are preserved in almost unbroken series from 1552 to the present time. Many of the entries are very quaint, and throw light on the social conditions then prevailing in Edinburgh. Several items illustrating the rough justice of those days, arranged under “discharge extraordinar,” and one referring to Paul’s Work, may be given:—

“Item, the day of 1554, for takin of ane
greit gebet furth of the nether tolbuith and
beiring of it to the hecht of the Dow Crag,
to haif hangit hommill Jok on, and down
bringing of it agane to Sanct Paullis Wark xij■

Item, for cords to bynd and hang him with, viij■

Item, the feird day of Fabruar 1554, for cordis
to bind Nicoll Ramsay quhill he wes hedit, vj■

Item, the samyn day, for cords to hang the man
that brint Lord James’ cornis, viij■”[7]

[Illustration]

Subsequent to Reformation times the building fell into decay, but was reconstructed and again occupied about 1619-1620 by certain Dutch manufacturers and weavers from Delft. It was decorated over the doorway with the city arms and the legend, “GOD · BLISS · THIS · WARK, 1619.” We next find it converted into a hospital for the wounded soldiers of General Leslie’s army, during the skirmishes which preceded his defeat at Dunbar, and thereafter it was used as a penal workhouse or bridewell. Portions of the grounds and buildings were cleared away about the middle of the eighteenth century by James Macdowall, a merchant of Edinburgh, who here erected a street of dwelling-houses under his own name. At the

east end of the street there was also an entrance to the printing-house. The whole district—houses and everything thereabout—has undergone a complete change, the ground having been appropriated by the station and goods-sheds of the North British Railway. As a bridewell or house of correction Paul's Work is referred to in the "Heart of Midlothian," in the scene where Madge Wildfire is examined regarding her knowledge of Geordie Robertson and the Porteous Riot:—

"'But maybe, Madge, ye wad mind something about it, if I was to gie ye this half-crown?' said Sharpitlaw, taking out the piece of money.

"'That might gar me laugh, but it couldna gar me mind.'

"'But, Madge,' continued Sharpitlaw, 'were I to send you to the Wark-house in Leith Wynd, and gar Jock Dalgleish lay the tawse on your back——'

"'That wad gar me greet,' said Madge, sobbing, 'but it couldna gar me mind, ye ken.'"

Paul's Work was also entered from the Canongate by the long, narrow, and steep Coull's Close, one of those lanes intersecting the towering structures of the High Street and the Canongate, so happily depicted in one sentence of "Guy Mannering": "Away walked Mr. Pleydell with great activity, diving through closes and ascending covered stairs, in order to attain the High Street, by an access which, compared to the common route, was what the Straits of Magellan are to the more open but circuitous passage round Cape Horn."

James Ballantyne lived close by at No. 10 St. John Street, which was entered by an archway from the Canongate, and led to South Back of Canongate. At the bottom of this street, within a couple of minutes from Holyrood, could be seen, quite near at hand, Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags, and St. Anthony's Chapel and Well—a beautiful and romantic environment of the grey old northern capital. St. John Street, long after the Canongate had been deserted by its courtly occupants, continued to be the residence of a few of the rural and city gentlefolk. In this retired spot, only a few years previously, lived the eccentric Lord Monboddo, who is said to have anticipated the "evolution" theory. Lord Monboddo's daughter was one of the loveliest women of her time—the "fair Burnet" mentioned by Burns in his "Address to Edinburgh." A tenement at the top of the street contained the abode of Smollett when in Edinburgh. From its being a private street it was a quiet locality, and in those days was guarded by an ancient seneschal in faded uniform, who barred all passage to carriages and carts, except for the service of those who lived in the street.[8]

[Illustration]

One of the earliest efforts of the press in Paul's Work was the third volume of the "Border Minstrelsy," which was published in April 1803. Scott wrote to Ballantyne: "I have to thank you for the accuracy with which the 'Minstrelsy' is thrown off. Longman and Rees are delighted with the printing." The new edition of the first two volumes, issued along with the third, consisted of 1000 copies; of Vol. III. (422 + 6) there were 1500 printed. Five other editions followed—the sixth being printed in 1820.

[Illustration: ST. JOHN STREET]

CHAPTER III

THE BALLANTYNE BROTHERS

The business of Paul's Work was immediately prosperous, and rapidly increased. James Ballantyne was an excellent man of business. He was also an artist in his profession, as is shown by many of his productions, and especially by the beautiful 1829 edition of Sir Walter Scott's novels printed at his press. It is to this edition that Mr. Percy Fitzgerald makes particular reference, when he writes: "The press of the Ballantynes, under the inspiration of Sir Walter Scott, issued marvels of brilliant and effective printing, which seem to ripen with age.... There is a calm dignity, an unobtrusive harmony, in the large page and its proportions and tint, that at once excites admiration.... A more beautiful, legible, and satisfactory edition could not be well imagined than that of the long set of the Waverley Novels, published about 'sixty years since.' The size, paper, illustrations, and extraordinary brilliance of the type make it quite a favourite edition—indeed, the famous tales seem to read differently in this than in later editions of more show and pretence."[9]

John Ballantyne, the next of the family to James, came to Edinburgh soon after the removal to Paul's Work, and was employed as a clerk. He is described at a later date, in the famous "Chaldee Manuscript," published in _Blackwood's Magazine_ of October 1817, as "John, the brother of James, a man of low stature, who giveth out merry things, and is a lover of fables from his youth up." He was originally destined for a mercantile life, but after a brief business training in London he returned to Kelso, and remained there till 1805, when he joined his brother James in Edinburgh. Lockhart thus pictures the two brothers: "James was a short, stout, well-made man, and would have been considered a handsome one but for grotesque frowns, starts, and twistings of his features, set off by a certain mock-majesty of walk and gesture, which he had perhaps contracted from his usual companions, the emperors and tyrants of the stage. His voice in talk was grave and sonorous, and he sang well, in a fine rich bass. John's tone in singing was a sharp treble; in conversation something between a croak and a squeak." As a storyteller John was unrivalled, having an infinite fund of ludicrous and characteristic anecdote, which he set off with a humour endless in its variety of shades. "Scott used to call the one Aldiborontiphoscophornio; the other Rigdumfunnidos. They both entertained him; they both loved and revered him; and I believe would have shed their hearts' blood in his service."[10] "Fatsman" was another of Scott's playful nicknames for James Ballantyne, as was also "Mr. Basketfill," used by Constable, in allusion to the well-known printer Baskerville.

A favourite entertainment of Scott was the reciting or singing by John Ballantyne of the "Cobbler of Kelso." On one occasion, when Scott, Constable, and the Ballantynes were discussing at Abbotsford the arrangements for the publishing of "Rob Roy," at the end of the business Scott turned to John, and said:—

"'By-the-by, 'tis a long time, Johnny, since we have had the "Cobbler of Kelso."' Mr. Puff (a name sometimes given by Scott to John Ballantyne) forthwith jumped up on a mass of stone, and seating himself in the proper attitude of one working with his awl, began the favourite interlude, mimicking a certain son of Crispin—at whose stall Scott and he had often lingered when they were schoolboys—and a blackbird, the only companion of his cell, that used to sing to him, while he talked and whistled to it all day long. With this performance Scott was always delighted: nothing could be richer than the contrast of the bird's wild sweet notes, some of which he imitated with wonderful skill, and the accompaniment

of the Cobbler's hoarse cracked voice, uttering all manner of endearing epithets, which Johnny multiplied and varied in a style worthy of the Old Women in Rabelais at the birth of Pantagruel."[11]

John's private residence was called Harmony Hall, a villa at Trinity on the Firth of Forth, surrounded by gardens, and about three miles distant from Paul's Work. Here he kept up an expensive style of living—in all things showing a great contrast to the sober and staid conduct of his brother James.

After James Ballantyne's removal to Edinburgh, he continued to edit the _Kelso Mail_ for about three years, when the pressure of the printing-office compelled him to relinquish the editorial chair. He was succeeded by his youngest brother, Alexander, who conducted the paper with marked ability and success for the next twenty years. Alexander ultimately came to Paul's Work, and was made a partner in the firm in 1829.[12] He was a good musician, and Sir Walter Scott, several times in his "Journal," tells us how much he enjoyed his playing upon the violin and the flageolet. Here is an entry under May 31, 1827: "Dined at James Ballantyne's, and heard his brother Sandy sing and play on the violin, beautifully as usual. James himself sang the 'Reel of Tullochgorum' with hearty cheer and uplifted voice." And again, on July 28 of the same year, he writes: "We heard Sandy's violin after dinner—

'Whose touch harmonious can remove
The pangs of guilty power and hopeless love.'

I do not understand or care about fine music, but there is something in his violin which goes to the very heart."

Alexander was an amiable and modest man, never connected with Scott in any business matters, but always his favourite in private. During some temporary financial difficulty of Scott in 1826, he was able to lend him £500. He was the father of Mr. John Ballantyne, R.S.A., a well-known artist in London, who died in May 1897, and of the late Mr. R. M. Ballantyne, celebrated for his tales of travel and adventure, published by Messrs. James Nisbet & Co., which are still popular with young people.

CHAPTER IV

SCOTT'S POETICAL ROMANCES

For many years after its institution the Ballantyne Press was in continuous action, and the number of volumes that issued from it can hardly be reckoned. Besides work for publishing houses in London and Edinburgh, all Scott's writings were first printed there, and the printing-house was constantly occupied in pouring forth edition after edition of his works. "Sir Tristrem" was published in May 1804 by Constable, who expected so little popularity for it that the edition consisted of 150 copies only, which were sold at the high price of two guineas. In due time, however, the work had its share in the celebrity attached to the name of its editor, and it was through the printing of this poem that the intimate connection of Constable and the Ballantyne Press began.

"The Lay of the Last Minstrel" was published in January 1805. It was a splendid quarto volume, with "meadows of margin," and was greeted with unbounded applause, both for its intrinsic merits and for its beautiful printing.

It may be doubted if, in the history of British poetry, any other work ever equalled the demand for the “Lay.” In 1825 the poem had reached its fourteenth edition, upwards of 33,000 copies having been circulated; and before 1830 11,000 copies more were printed and disposed of. Scott entrusted the revision of the manuscript of the poem to his two friends—William Erskine and James Ballantyne. Regarding the latter at this time, Lockhart observes—and in the light of his strictures after the financial crash the passage may well be deemed worthy of note: “The printer was himself a man of considerable literary talents: his own style had the incurable faults of pomposity and affectation, but his eye for more venial errors in the writings of others was quick, and though his personal address was apt to give a stranger the impression of insincerity, he was in reality an honest man, and conveyed his mind on such matters with equal candour and delicacy during the whole of Scott’s brilliant career. In the vast majority of instances he found his friend acquiesce at once in the propriety of his suggestions; nay, there certainly were cases, though rare, in which his advice to alter things of much more consequence than a word or a rhyme was frankly tendered, and on deliberation adopted by Scott.[13] Mr. Erskine was the referee whenever the poet hesitated about taking the hints of the zealous typographer, and his refined taste and gentle manners rendered his critical alliance highly valuable.”[14]

Shortly after the publication of the “Lay,” Ballantyne found his capital inadequate to meet the business which was flowing to his press. He accordingly applied to his great patron for assistance, and Scott assented, on condition of his becoming partner with Ballantyne, and having a third share in the profits. This arrangement was kept strictly private.[15] Attracted by Ballantyne’s superior taste and beauty of workmanship, Scott made it a point from the first, that whatever he wrote or edited should be printed at the Ballantyne Press; and his personal connection with it stimulated his inventive genius, directly and indirectly, to add to the rapidly growing printing-house.

In April 1805 Scott wrote to Ballantyne: “I have imagined a very superb work. What think you of a complete edition of British poets, ancient and modern?” This work he proposed to edit for thirty guineas a volume. The publishers did not quite respond to his views in the matter, as the booksellers refused to admit into the series certain poets whom the editor was insisting upon, and the scheme was abandoned. But it is interesting to know that, if not so complete in all respects as Scott would have desired, a Library Edition of the British Poets, begun in 1853, was issued from Paul’s Work in forty-eight demy octavo volumes, in every respect worthy of its reputation. This series was edited by the Rev. George Gilfillan, and published by James Nichol in Edinburgh.

“An Historical Enquiry respecting the Harp in the Highlands of Scotland” should find its proper place here, though not in any way connected with Scott. It has the date 1807, and was printed at Paul’s Work for Constable.

Mr. John Murray, in a letter to Constable, bears this early and remarkable testimony to the worth of James Ballantyne as a printer:

“_June 6, 1807._—I am quite delighted with the appearance of Mr. Gunn’s work upon the Harp, which is a splendid and honourable specimen of Scotch typography, which I think cannot be surpassed in Britain. I showed the book to Mr. Wright, a printer who stands foremost in the second class, and he admired and praised it greatly, and said that he thought that Ballantyne’s _general_ style of printing was superior to that of any other printer, and that it was a matter of nicety if Bentley and Bulmer exceeded him even occasionally.”[16]

“Marmion” was begun in 1807 and published in February 1808, as a splendid quarto volume, price one guinea and a half. Of this work 4000 copies were printed in the year of its publication, 6000 in the year following, and prior to 1836 as many as 50,000 in all.

In April 1808 William Miller of Albemarle Street published an edition of the Works of John Dryden in eighteen volumes. This was edited by Scott and printed at the Ballantyne Press. The speculation was considered a bold one at the time, but it must have been a success, as the entire work was reprinted in 1821.

“Queenhoo Hall,” in four volumes, Carleton’s “Memoirs of the War of the Spanish Succession,” and the “Memoirs of Robert Carey, Earl of Monmouth,” published in 1808, also Sadler’s “Life and State Papers,” three volumes quarto, published in 1809, followed by the Somers Tracts, in thirteen volumes quarto, were all edited by Scott, and printed by Ballantyne.

In May 1810 there appeared “The Lady of the Lake,” perhaps the most popular of all Scott’s poems. The first edition was in quarto, and the second in octavo; and the successive editions, as in the case of “Marmion,” amounted in 1836 to 50,000 copies.

The “Poetical Works of Miss Seward,” in three volumes, with a Prefatory Memoir by Scott, was published from Paul’s Work in the autumn of 1810. This was one of the unfortunate speculations of Scott, and the unsaleable stock had afterwards to be taken over by Constable at a ruinous loss.[17] “It is most curious,” says Professor Saintsbury, “how Scott, the shrewdest and sanest of men in the vast majority of affairs, seems to have lost his head whenever books or lands were concerned.”

In 1810 were also issued the two first volumes of the _Edinburgh Annual Register_, in the production of which Scott largely aided. James Ballantyne was editor, and other contributors included the poet Southey, Professor Leslie, the “Man of Feeling,” and William Erskine.

“The Vision of Don Roderick,” which was Scott’s contribution to the fund in aid of the sufferers from Massena’s campaign in Portugal in 1810, was published in a quarto volume in July 1811; and the romance of “Rokeby,” another quarto, in January 1813. The edition consisted of 3250 copies, of which only eighty remained unsold on the second day of publication. “Rokeby” was followed within two months by a small volume, “The Bridal of Triermain.” The MS. of this poem was transcribed by one or other of the Ballantynes, in order to guard against any indiscretion in the printing-office, as the little work was to be issued at first anonymously, “as a trap for Jeffrey.” He was not deceived, however, although other critics thought the work an imitation of Scott.

The “Life and Works of Swift,” in nineteen volumes, undertaken by Scott for Constable, was issued from the Ballantyne Press on the 1st of July 1814. The impression consisted of 1250 copies, and a second impression of the same number was required in 1824. This work was again printed at Paul’s Work in 1882-84 for Bickers & Son, London.

How much longer Scott would have continued to work out the vein of poetry within him we cannot say. He was still turning out rich ore when Byron electrified the world with his “Childe Harold.” Scott at once recognised that he had met his superior, and that his supremacy as a popular poet was seriously threatened. Many years after, only a few months before he died, he was talking over the events of his career with Lockhart, his son-in-law.

“‘I asked him,’ said Lockhart, ‘why he had ever relinquished poetry.’

"'Because Byron _bet_ me,' Scott replied, pronouncing the word _beat_ short. 'He _bet_ me out of the field in the description of the strong passions, and in deep-seated knowledge of the human heart; so I gave up poetry for the time.'"

But when we look at the rich legacy that Scott has left us in his Waverley Novels we cannot regret this. One morning, in searching an old desk for some fishing-flies, he found the forgotten MS. of the first two or three chapters of "Waverley," which he had written some time before. He read over the fragment, thought it had promise of good in it, and determined to finish the story. This trifling circumstance led to the unparalleled series of romances which were read with wonder and delight when they first appeared, and which will continue to charm so long as our language endures.

CHAPTER V

JOHN BALLANTYNE, PUBLISHER

The business at Paul's Work continuing to prosper, about 1808 or 1809 a new venture was made by John Ballantyne commencing as publisher, with Scott as a "silent" partner. He took the designation of "Bookseller to the Regent." This firm was projected as the result of a quarrel between Scott and Constable, regarding a political article which appeared in the _Edinburgh Review_—to which he occasionally contributed—combined also with the reputed incivility which he received from Mr. Hunter, the publisher's partner. The capital for the new firm was arranged, and a deed, deposited for the purpose of secrecy in the hands of Scott, laid the foundation of the firm of John Ballantyne & Co., publishers and booksellers, Edinburgh. Scott appears to have found most of the capital; and "jocund Johnny" was installed in Hanover Street as the avowed rival of Constable, and as publisher in Scotland, for John Murray, of the new _Quarterly Review_, which had been started in opposition to the _Edinburgh_.

[Illustration: JOHN BALLANTYNE

From the original painting by John Ballantyne, R.S.A.]

It has often been a matter of surprise that Scott, with his family pride, his fame, and his money, should have adopted such means of adding to his income. He seems to have been ashamed in some measure of this mercantile speculation, as all the arrangements were kept a profound secret—Scott being always considered the mere patron and friend of the Ballantynes. He evidently thought he would derive profit from a business guided by a man of knowledge like himself, and confounded the aspirations of an author with the expectations of a merchant.

Scott was now at the zenith of his fame as a poet. Immense sums had been given by other publishers for his works, still more splendid offers were made to him for further productions, and it would seem probable that the idea of sharing the profits of author, publisher, and printer had presented itself to his mind in this way. Accordingly, the first work published by John Ballantyne, and printed, of course, by James Ballantyne, was "The Lady of the Lake," for writing which the sum of £3000 was placed to Scott's credit in the publisher's books. After the business was fairly begun, Scott, greatly to the annoyance of Constable, almost wholly withdrew himself from the premises of the latter in the High Street, and directed his steps to the cheerful and handsome rooms of

John Ballantyne in Hanover Street. They formed a convenient resting-place in his daily journeys to and from Parliament Square, and contained a store of his favourite black-letter volumes. No doubt, also, considering the extreme degree to which party spirit was carried in those days, he would find himself pleasantly free from the band of Edinburgh Whigs who frequented Constable's premises in the Old Town.

But the publishing firm in Hanover Street, begun in pique, was never prosperous. Scott's goodness of heart led him to help on many books which he ought to have known could never be successful. These included a ponderous "History of the Culdees," by his friend Dr. Jamieson; a poor edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, by Henry Weber; three volumes of the Poems of Anna Seward, already referred to; a bulky collection of the Tixall Poetry and Letters; and, worse than all, the _Edinburgh Annual Register_, for which he himself did much work, but which left the firm with about £1000 a year on the wrong side of the ledger. Besides all this, John Ballantyne proved an indifferent and irregular book-keeper; and it was in vain that Scott repeatedly wrote letters of remonstrance to him, though in doing so he frequently made the bookseller's habits the subject rather of his jokes than of his indignation. John was happy-go-lucky in his methods, and as Mr. Andrew Lang says, "was like the proverbial spendthrift who can never be induced to give his benevolent kinsfolk a full schedule of his debts." The consequence was that the business was neglected and allowed to drift; and in 1813, when it was wound up, a great amount of useless stock had been accumulated, which was partly cleared off by forced sales to Constable and others. Scott by this time had resumed friendly relations with Constable, whose partner Hunter was now out of the firm. The printing business at Paul's Work was sadly hampered by these publishing transactions, and Constable himself was seriously injured by the burden of almost unsaleable stock, which he had to take over as part of the price he agreed to pay for the copyright of forthcoming works by Scott, and much of which he had afterwards to sell to other booksellers at a heavy loss to himself.[18]

Archibald Constable was one of the most sagacious men who have ever followed the profession of publisher.[19] Though he made no pretensions to literature, he was well skilled in it generally, and was of most essential service to Scott on many occasions. He came from Fife, served his apprenticeship with Peter Hill, and then set up for himself in a "small way" in a shop forming part of the Royal Exchange buildings, next door to Allan's Close, High Street. It was a mere box of a place, but as his business increased he enlarged his premises by opening a communication with the tenement behind. At first he devoted his attention to the collection of old and rare books, and the sign above his door had in large letters, "Scarce Books." Shortly after he began business the public were amused one morning to find the preposition "of" inserted in the sign, advertising that the bookseller was "Scarce of Books."

While struggling on, he gained the affections of the daughter of Mr. Willison, a well-known printer of Edinburgh. This connection seems to have arisen through the medium of the _Edinburgh Review_, which Constable published, and which Willison printed.[20] He discountenanced the match, but the young lady consulted her own inclinations, and the marriage took place soon after. The printer became reconciled, and gave his son-in-law considerable assistance; but the publication of the _Review_ was the chief means of Constable's advancement, and his little shop gradually became the rendezvous of the learned of Edinburgh.

After the failure of the publishing and bookselling company, John Ballantyne became a literary and art auctioneer in the Hanover Street premises. For this kind of work he was specially qualified; and he conducted it with marked success, particularly in the disposal of literary property. The auction rooms became a fashionable lounge. A

periodical which he issued in connection with his business was called the _Sale Room_, written very much after the style of the _Spectator_. It was rather a dull concern, however, and had little success; although one of its numbers contained a humorous poem by Scott called “The Sultan of Serendib, or The Search after Happiness,” and another had an article by Lockhart signed “Christopher Corduroy,” which first drew Scott’s attention to that writer.

The first number of the _Sale Room_ was issued on Saturday, Jan. 4, 1817, and contained the following introductory paragraph, presumably by John Ballantyne:

“An architect of great skill and experience was wont to say, that he found less difficulty in giving the plan of a gentleman’s seat than in devising a lodge for the termination of his avenue. We are much mistaken if a similar difficulty has not been felt by most periodical essayists. The first appearance before the public is like the entrance of a bashful person into a ceremonious company, and in both cases the French proverb applies, _Ce n’est que le premier pas qui coûte._ And how often have we seen such a person, qualified both to entertain and enjoy society, suffering during a whole evening under the too acute feeling of some awkwardness or inadvertent solecism, which he supposes himself to have committed on his first entrance. But the case of the essayist is still harder. The utmost that can be expected from a member of fashionable society is, that he shall present himself with the ordinary ease and grace of men of good breeding; and those who affect peculiarity, or marked singularity of manners, are in our day, as in Congreve’s, set down among the Lord Froths and Mr. Brisks, the solemn or lively coxcombs of society. But here the metaphor no longer holds; for, in this department of literature, mediocrity, however void of affectation, or even if marked by elegance, is insufficient to produce any impression on the public. It is expected of us, not only that we should be eloquent, but that we shall be new; not only that we should be correct, but that we shall be striking; and that our lucubrations should promise to combine originality with the humour of Addison, the learning of Cumberland, and the pathos of the Man of Feeling. Aware of the difficulty, not indeed of making such promises, but of giving the public any sound reason to think that it was in our power to keep them, we were somewhat tempted to elude the task of announcing our pretensions in an opening number; and, like the worthy Irishman, who, on finding the second month of attendance at the fencing-school was rated at a lower fee than that which preceded it, requested to take the second month first, we had half resolved to publish No. II. of THE SALE ROOM before No. I.”

This opening Essay was signed C. for Coryphæus, the name given to the presiding genius of the contributors to the periodical. It continued for twenty-eight numbers, the last being issued on Saturday, July 12, 1817. It consisted of weekly essays of varying length of from six to eight pages, and, when the subject matter was only sufficient to fill six or seven, the remaining pages were left blank.[21]

John Ballantyne was much in request as musical critic on the _Edinburgh Weekly Journal_, of which his brother James was editor. He also made at least one excursion into the field of letters. This was a novel in two volumes called “The Widow’s Lodgings.” It had little merit, but reached a second edition.

A curious story of John’s volatile nature and indiscreet vivacity is related in the second volume of Mrs. Charles Mathews’ life of her husband, the well-known humorist and actor. At a dinner-party where Constable, Terry, and John Ballantyne were present, he closed a speech he had been making about some books with the startling announcement: “I shall soon send you Scott’s new novel!” Mrs. Mathews goes on to say: “I

shall never forget the consternation of Messrs. Constable and Terry, and, indeed, we were as much embarrassed. Constable looked daggers—and Terry used some—for, with a stern brow and a correcting tone, he cried out 'John!' adding, with a growl resembling what is generally made to check or reprove a mischievous dog,—'Ah! what are you about?' which made us drop our eyes in pain for the indiscreet tattler; while Wee Johnny looked like an impersonation of Fear, startled at the sound himself had made. Not another word was said; but our little good-natured friend's lapse was sacred with us, and the secret was never divulged while it was important to preserve it."

John Ballantyne visited the Continent shortly after Waterloo, and published an account of his travels, in which the "long-bow" did good service. Being on one occasion rebuked by a lady for having stated as facts what were transparent fictions, his reply to the censure was in these few words: "Very true, madam, what you say; but truth is a great hamperer of genius."[22]

During the earlier and perhaps most interesting years in the career of the "Great Unknown," John Ballantyne managed all the business connected with the communication of the author's works to the public. When Scott began "The Bride of Lammermoor," his amanuenses were William Laidlaw and John Ballantyne, "of whom he preferred the latter, when he could be at Abbotsford, on account of the superior rapidity of his pen, and also because John kept his pen to the paper without interruption; and, though with many an arch twinkle in his eyes, and now and then an audible smack of his lips, had resolution to work on like a well-trained clerk; whereas good Laidlaw entered with such keen zest into the interest of the story as it flowed from the author's lips, that he could not suppress exclamations of surprise and delight—'Gude keep us a'!—the like o' that!—eh sirs!' and so forth, which did not promote despatch."[23]

In several long articles which appeared in _Tait's Magazine_ in 1843, entitled "Random Recollections of Scott and the Ettrick Shepherd," by Mr. John Morrison, a land-surveyor, there are several notices of James and John Ballantyne. The following is one of those relating to John: "On a day appointed," says Mr. Morrison, "we all set out on a hare-hunting expedition. Miss Scott rode Queen Mab, a little pony; John Ballantyne was mounted on Old Mortality, an old gaunt white horse. He was dressed in a green coat, the buttons of mother-of-pearl, silver and gold—with, if I remember well, a precious stone in the centre, and altogether a most harlequin and piebald figure. Sir Walter appeared to laugh and amuse himself with his grotesque appearance. I admired the buttons. 'And well you may,' said Sir Walter. 'These buttons, sir, belonged to the Great Montrose, and were cut, by our friend John, from an old coat belonging to the Marquis, which he purchased from an unworthy descendant of the family, Graham of Gartmore, with many other nick-nackets too tedious to enumerate.' On the same day," Mr. Morrison continues, "at and after dinner, although he looked very kindly on Johnny Ballantyne, Scott made himself merry at his expense, and Ballantyne seemed awed in his presence; although, when addressed, he turned a bold front to any one else. I ventured to joke him a little on the quality of his coat, and said it was the best at table. 'Yes,' said John, 'and it belonged to a better man.' You will find some difficulty in convincing Mr. Morrison of that,' said Sir Walter"—the latter well knowing that Morrison's sentiments regarding the character of Montrose were at variance with his own.

After some years of failing health, John Ballantyne retired to a villa which he had built near Kelso, and here he was frequently visited by Sir Walter. On one of these occasions, the latter revived a long-forgotten project of their early connection in business, and offered his gratuitous services as editor of a Novelists' Library, to be printed and published for the benefit of his friend. The offer was eagerly embraced, and the

first volume of “Ballantyne’s Novelists’ Library” appeared in February 1821, though the collection, notwithstanding the Biographies and Introductions which Scott wrote for it,[24] did not prove a fortunate speculation.

On the 16th of June 1821, John Ballantyne died at Edinburgh. Until a week or two before, Sir Walter had not entertained any thought that his end was so near. “I (Lockhart) accompanied Sir Walter when one of their last interviews took place, and John’s deathbed was a thing not to be forgotten. We sat by him for perhaps an hour, and I think half that space was occupied with his predictions of a speedy end, and details of his last will, which he had just been executing, and which lay on his coverlid; the other half being given, five minutes or so at a time, to questions and remarks, which intimated that the hope of life was still flickering before him—nay, that his interest in all its concerns remained eager. The proof-sheets of a volume of his Novelists’ Library lay also by his pillow; and he passed from them to his will, and then back to them, as by jerks and starts the unwonted veil of gloom closed upon his imagination, or was withdrawn again.... Scott was visibly and profoundly shaken by this scene and sequel. As we stood together a few days afterwards, while they were smoothing the turf over John’s remains in the Canongate Churchyard, the heavens, which had been dark and slaty, cleared up suddenly, and the midsummer sun shone forth in his strength. Scott, ever awake to the skyey influences, cast his eye along the overhanging line of the Calton Hill, with its gleaming walls and towers, and then turning to the grave again, ‘I feel,’ he whispered in my ear, ‘I feel as if there would be less sunshine for me from this day forth.’

“As we walked homewards, Scott told me, among other favourable traits of his friend, one little story which I must not omit. He remarked one day to a poor student of divinity attending his auction, that he looked as if he were in bad health. The young man assented with a sigh. ‘Come,’ said Ballantyne, ‘I think I ken the secret of a sort of draft that would relieve you—particularly,’—he added, handing him a cheque for £5 or £10—‘particularly, my dear, if taken upon an empty stomach.’”[25]

In the “Noctes Ambrosianæ” (vol. iii. pp. 93-95), there is the following tribute to the memory of John Ballantyne:—

Shepherd. Johnny Ballantyne!

North. Methinks I see him—his slight, slender figure, restless with a spirit that knew no rest—his face so suddenly changeful in its expression from what a stranger might have thought habitual gravity, into what his friends knew to be native there—glee irrepressible and irresistible—the very madness of mirth, James, in which the fine ether of animal spirits seemed to respire the breath of genius, and to shed through the room, or the open air, a contagion of cheerfulness, against which no heart was proof, however sullen, and no features could stand, however grim; but still all the company, Canters and Covenanters inclusive, relaxed and thawed into murmurs of merriment, even as the strong spring sunshine sends a-singing the bleak frozen moor-streams till all the wilderness is alive with music.

Shepherd. He was indeed a canty cratur—a delichtfu’ companion.

North. I hear his voice this moment within my imagination, as distinct as if it were speaking. ’Twas exceedingly pleasant....

Shepherd. What’n a lauch!

North. Soul-and-heart-felt!

Shepherd. Mony a strange story fell down stane-dead when his tongue grew mute. Thousands o' curious, na, unaccountable anecdotes, ceased to be the day his een were closed, for he telt them, sir, as ye ken, wi' his een mair than his lips; and his verra hauns spak, when he snapped his forefinger and his thoom, or wi' the haill five spread out—and he had what I ca' an elegant haun o' fine fingers, as maist wutty men hae—manually illustrated his subjeck, till the words gaed aff, murmuring like bees frae the tips; and then Johnny was quate again for a minute or sae, till some ither freak o' a fancy came athwart his genie, and instantly loupt intil look, lauch, or speech—or rather a' the three thegither in ane, while Sir Walter himsel keckled on his chair, and leanin' wi' thae extraordinar chowks o' his, that aften seem to me amaist as expressive as his pile o' forehead, hoo would he fix the grey illumination o' his een on his freen Johnny, and ca' him by that familiar name; and by the sympathy o' that maist capawcious o' a' souls, set him clean mad—richt-doun wudd a'thegither—till really, sir, he got untholeably divertin'; and folk compleened o' pains in their sides, and sat wi' the tears rinnin' doun their cheeks, praying him for gudeness to haud his tongue, for that gin he didna, somebody or ither would be fa'in doun in a fit, and be carried out dead.

[Illustration: SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

PAINTED BY SIR HENRY RAEBURN, R.A.]

CHAPTER VI

THE WAVERLEY NOVELS

[Illustration]

"Waverley," the first of a series of novels unsurpassed for power, picturesqueness, and variety, as well as healthy sentiment and morality, was published anonymously in three volumes on the 7th July 1814. This edition of 1000 copies was sold within five weeks. A second of 2000 followed immediately, and a third and fourth, each of 1000, appeared in October and November of the same year. The mystery in which the author had chosen to shroud himself, and the high literary character of the work, had meanwhile given rise to an intensity of interest and speculation hitherto unparalleled in the history of literature. Scott was pressed by his few friends who were in the secret to own the authorship, and take to himself the laurels which were being freely handed about. He steadfastly refused, and wrote the following humorous reply to one of John Ballantyne's expostulations:—

"No, John, I will not own the book—
I won't, you _Picaroon_!
When next I try St. Grubby's brook,
The A. of Wa—— shall bait the hook,
And flat-fish bite as soon,
As if before them they had got
The worn-out _wriggler_—Walter Scott."

About 40,000 copies of "Waverley" were sold previous to the publication of the first uniform edition of the novels, with introductions and notes by the author, in 1829.

"The Lord of the Isles," which Scott alludes to as closing his poetic labours upon an extended scale, appeared on the 18th January 1815. This

poem, the title of which was originally intended to be “The Nameless Glen,” was received with perhaps less favour than former ones. Regarding “The Lord of the Isles,” James Ballantyne had a somewhat delicate task to perform, of which he left the following account: “‘Well, James,’ said Scott to his printer, ‘I have given you a week; what are people saying about “The Lord of the Isles”?’ I hesitated a little, after the fashion of Gil Blas, but he speedily brought the matter to a point. ‘Come,’ he said, ‘speak out, my good fellow; what has put it into your head to be on so much ceremony _with me_ all of a sudden? But I see how it is, the result is given in one word—Disappointment!’ My silence admitted his inference to the fullest extent. His countenance certainly did look rather blank for a few seconds; in truth, he had been wholly unprepared for the event; for it is a singular fact that, before the public, or rather the booksellers, gave their decision, he no more knew whether he had written well or ill, than whether a die thrown out of a box was to turn up a ‘size’ or an ace. However, he instantly resumed his spirits, and expressed his wonder rather that his poetic popularity should have lasted so long, than that it should now at last have given way. At length he said, with perfect cheerfulness: ‘Well, well, James, so be it;—but, you know, we must not droop, for we can’t afford to give over. Since one line has failed, we must just stick to something else,’ and so he dismissed me, and resumed his novel.”

The interest taken in the growing success of the mysterious “Waverley” was greatly heightened, and the curious public were somewhat bewildered, by the simultaneous announcement with the publication of “The Lord of the Isles” of another prose work of fiction by the A. of W——, nearly ready for issue. This work, “Guy Mannering”—the result of six weeks’ labour of the Christmas recess—appeared on the 24th February 1815, and was pronounced by universal consent to be worthy of its author. The first edition, consisting of 2000 copies, was sold out the day after publication, and within three months second and third editions, amounting to 5000 copies, were also disposed of; and before 1837 the total sale reckoned up to 50,000.

The poem of “The Field of Waterloo” was issued in October 1815, the profits of the first edition being Scott’s contribution to the fund raised for the widows and orphans of the soldiers slain in the battle. Lockhart’s “Life” (v. 99-104) contains a list, much too lengthy to reproduce here, of the Ballantynes’ suggestions on this poem, with Scott’s objections and admissions. One or two instances of those by James may, however, be given:—

“Stanza I.—‘Fair Brussels, thou art far behind.’

James Ballantyne.—I do not like this line. It is tame, and the phrase _far behind_ has, to my feeling, some associated vulgarity.

Scott.—Stet.

Stanza VIII.—‘Nor ceased the _intermitted_ shot.’

James.—Mr. Erskine contends that _intermitted_ is redundant.

Scott.—‘Nor ceased the _storm of shell and shot_.’

Stanza XII.—‘Nor was one forward footstep _stopped_.’

James.—This staggering word was intended, I presume, but I don’t like it.

Scott.—Granted. Read _staid_, &c.

Stanza XV.—‘Wrung forth by pride, _regret_, and shame.’

James.—I have ventured to submit to your choice—

‘Wrung forth by pride, _and rage_, and shame.’

Regret appearing a faint epithet amidst such a combination of bitter feelings.

Scott.—Granted.

Stanza XXI.—‘Through his friend’s heart to _wound_ his own.’

James.—Quære—_Pierce_, or rather _stab_—_wound_ is faint.

Scott.—_Pierce._”

Constable (iii. 84) says regarding this revision: “No better evidence of Scott’s constitutional good nature could be given than will be found in the strictures on this poem by James and John Ballantyne when it was passing through the press, and the genial manner in which he either agrees or declines to give effect to them.” And Mr. Andrew Lang in his “Life of Scott”[26] testifies: “The emendations made by John Ballantyne on the proof-sheets of this effort show considerable intelligence and taste, and in several cases were approved of and accepted by the author, though he once said that he was ‘The Black Brunswicker of literature, who neither took nor gave criticism.’”

“Paul’s Letters to his Kinsfolk,” a series of letters describing a visit to Belgium and the field of Waterloo, appeared in January 1816 as an octavo volume,—the first edition consisting of 6000 copies, followed in the course of a few years by second and third editions of 3000. The work, avowedly by Scott, was hailed as a specimen of his prose writing, suggesting a comparison with that of the “Great Unknown.” The last of the “copy” of these letters reached James Ballantyne on the 26th December 1815, and contained a few lines of Scott’s playful doggerel, having reference also to his next novel:—

“DEAR JAMES,
I’m done, thank God, with the long yarns
Of the most prosy of Apostles—Paul;
And now advance, sweet Heathen of Monkbarns,
Step out, old quiz, as fast as I can scrawl.”

“The Antiquary,” begun towards the close of 1815, was issued in May 1816. Six days sufficed to exhaust the edition, which consisted of as many thousand copies. This work attained a popularity not inferior to that of its predecessors. It was while correcting the proof-sheets of this novel that the author took to fabricating mottoes for the chapter headings. One day John Ballantyne, who was sitting beside him, was asked to hunt for a certain passage in Beaumont and Fletcher, and as he did not succeed, “Hang it, Johnnie,” said Scott, “I believe I can make a motto sooner than you will find one.” From that time he had recourse to his own invention, attributing the mottoes to “old ballad” or “old play.”

The same year, October 1816, saw the publication of another volume of the _Edinburgh Annual Register_, containing an historical sketch of the year 1814 by Scott, sufficient of itself to form the contents of a large volume.

On the 1st of December 1816 the First Series of the “Tales of My Landlord,” containing “Old Mortality” and “The Black Dwarf,” appeared,

but minus the talismanic words “By the Author of ‘Waverley.’” This work, published by John Murray, was received with undiminished favour; and all doubt as to whether these “Tales” proceeded from the pen of the author of “Waverley” was set at rest in a week, and within two months three editions of 2000 each were printed. Murray and Blackwood had still in stock a large number of copies of this book, when John Ballantyne advertised a new edition, in disregard of arrangements with the publishers. He was expostulated with, and threatened with an action for damages; but as this would have revealed the author, who was still the “Great Unknown,” the matter was compromised and the books were transferred to Constable.

“Harold the Dauntless, by the Author of ‘Triermain,’” was published in January 1817. The “History of the Year 1815,” by Scott, appeared in the _Register_, published in August 1817; and time was also found to prepare an Introduction to a richly illustrated quarto edition of the “Border Antiquities,” which was issued a month later.

“Rob Roy,” projected in May and arranged for by Constable, was issued in December 1817. It started with a first edition of 10,000, and within a fortnight a second of 3000 more was required. While the manuscript of the novels was usually transcribed by the Ballantynes, this one was copied by George Stillie, a clerk at Paul’s Work. He died a few days after James Ballantyne in 1833. His brother James was in the service of John Ballantyne in Hanover Street, and, on the failure of that business, was employed at Paul’s Work. James Stillie was afterwards a bookseller in Edinburgh for many years, and his shop in George Street was the resort of book-collectors from all parts of the kingdom—including Mr. Gladstone when he came to Edinburgh. He lived to a great age, and died in August 1893.

Scott had scarcely completed “Rob Roy” when he projected the Second Series of the “Tales of My Landlord,” in which was comprised “The Heart of Midlothian,” to be ready by the 4th June 1818, at which date it duly appeared. The Third Series of the “Tales” came out on the 10th June 1819. This Series included “The Bride of Lammermoor” and the “Legend of Montrose.” Scott had suffered severely in health for some time previous, and the work was received with a sad presentiment that it might be the last from its author’s pen; but, except in a few errors, the result of his inability to correct the proof-sheets, no one could perceive the slightest indication of his illness.

On the 18th December 1819 the romance of “Ivanhoe” appeared. The work was hailed in England “with a more clamorous delight than any of the _Scotch novels_ had been.” It came out in three vols., post 8vo, price 30s., and in this original form 12,000 copies were sold. “Mr. Ballantyne the printer, who is a good judge, speaks very highly of this romance” (“Scott’s Letters,” ii. 63).

“The Monastery” was published by Longman & Co. in March 1820. It appeared in three vols. 12mo, like the earlier works of the Series. Its popularity was enhanced by “The Abbot,” which followed in September, published by the same firm, in conjunction with Constable.

“Kenilworth” appeared in January 1821, three vols. post 8vo, similar to “Ivanhoe,” and this form was adhered to in all the subsequent volumes of the Series. “Kenilworth” was one of the most successful of all at the time of publication, and will probably continue to hold a place in the highest rank of prose fiction.

The splendid romance of “The Pirate” was published in the beginning of December 1821; and “The Fortunes of Nigel” on the 30th May 1822, followed in June by the dramatic sketch of “Halidon Hill.” For the copyright of

the last Constable paid Scott the sum of £1000. “Nigel” took its place amongst the first of Scott’s romances, and on publication was eagerly sought after. According to a letter of Constable, “so keenly were the people devouring my friend _Jingling Geordie_” (George Heriot, one of the leading characters in the story), “that I actually saw them reading it in the streets” (of London) “as they passed along.”

At this time the profits of the author’s works were estimated at from £10,000 to £15,000 a year, and Ballantyne’s presses were taxed to their utmost. In addition to the ordinary work of the office, he had also in hand for Constable a reprint of Scott’s Poetical Works, miniature edition, ten vols., 5000 copies; Novels and Tales, twelve vols., miniature edition, 5000 copies; Historical Romances, six vols., 5000 copies; Poetry from “Waverley,” &c., one vol., 5000 copies—equal to 145,000 volumes; to which from thirty to forty thousand may be added as the result of Scott’s daily industry within the space of twelve months.

“Peveril of the Peak” appeared in January 1823. The work was at first rather coldly received, but was finally pronounced not unworthy of Scott’s pen. “Quentin Durward” followed in June, and attained great popularity. In this novel he had, for the first time, ventured on foreign ground, and the French public were seized with a frenzy of delight, to find that Louis XI. and Charles the Bold had started into life again under the wand of the Northern Magician. The excitement in Paris equalled that of Edinburgh under the influence of the first appearance of “Waverley,” or that of London under the spell of “Ivanhoe.”

Constable during this year completed the purchase from Scott of the copyright of the Waverley Novels, for which he had paid up to this time the sum of £22,000, in addition to Scott’s half-share of profits of the early editions. The novel of “St. Ronan’s Well” was published in December 1823.

Immediately on the conclusion of “St. Ronan’s Well,” Sir Walter began “Redgauntlet,” which was published in June 1824. It was originally called “Herries,” until Constable and James Ballantyne persuaded the author to choose the more striking name. This fascinating work contains more of the author’s personal experiences than any of his previous fictions, or even than all of them put together,—not to mention the incomparable legend of “Wandering Willie’s Tale.” It was the only novel Scott produced during this year, but he was abundantly occupied in preparing for press the second edition of his voluminous Swift, the additions and corrections to which were numerous and careful. Towards the end of the year the “Tales of the Crusaders” were begun, and were issued in June 1825. “The Betrothed” found little favour with James Ballantyne, and his remonstrance weighed so much with the author that he resolved to cancel it altogether. Meanwhile, spurred by disappointment, he began another story, “The Talisman.” The brightness of this new tale dazzled the eyes of the public; and the burst of favour which attended the brilliant procession of Saladin and Cœur-de-Lion considerably modified Scott’s literary plans, and “The Betrothed” was issued under its wing.

“The Letters of Malachi Malagrowther,” written against the Government proposal to interfere with the Scottish banking system,[27] appeared on the 1st of March 1826; and on the day following Scott writes: “The First Epistle of Malachi already out of print.” These Letters—of which there were three—first appeared in Ballantyne’s _Edinburgh Weekly Journal_, and were afterwards collected into a pamphlet and published by Blackwood. This ran into numerous editions, the Scottish banks taking hundreds of copies for gratuitous circulation. It was often referred to in subsequent discussions in Parliament, and is believed to have had considerable influence in causing the abandonment of the measure. A fourth Letter was written in December 1830, but, in deference to the opinions of James

Ballantyne and Cadell the publisher, the essay, though put in type, was never issued, and manuscript and proof were finally consigned to the flames.

“Woodstock,” written during a period of great commercial distress, was finished in April and issued in June 1826. This most successful novel realised the large sum of £8228.

The “Life of Bonaparte,” which had been in progress during two years of deep affliction, was published in June 1827. Its contents are equal to thirteen volumes of the Waverley Novels in their original form. The first and second editions produced the enormous sum of £18,000. Regarding the “Life of Bonaparte” there is a characteristic entry in Scott’s “Journal,” dated September 6, 1826, referring to some suggestions of James Ballantyne:—

“I had a letter from Jem Ballantyne—plague on him!—full of remonstrance, deep and solemn, upon the carelessness of ‘Bonaparte.’ _The rogue is right, too._ But as to correcting my style to the ‘Jemmy jemmy linkum feedle’ tune of what is called fine writing, I’ll be d——d if I do.”

Scott also at this time superintended the first collection of his Prose Miscellanies, published in six vols. 8vo, several articles being remodelled and extended to adapt them for a more permanent existence than had been originally thought of.

The First Series of “Chronicles of the Canongate” was published in November 1827, but the work did not meet with the favour awarded to his previous writings, and Sir Walter was much discouraged. Yet the wondrous power and fertility of his genius remained undiminished, and the First Series of “Tales of a Grandfather” followed in December. It met with a heartier reception than any other of his works since “Ivanhoe,” and years only add to its popularity. The “Chronicles of the Canongate,” Second Series, three vols. 8vo, and “Tales of a Grandfather,” Second Series, three vols. 18mo, were both published in 1828. In this year was also published “Religious Discourses by a Layman,” being signed by “W.S.” These were originally written by Sir Walter Scott to aid a young candidate for the ministry in the Kirk of Scotland.

“The Fair Maid of Perth” was finished in March, and published in April of the same year. “Anne of Geierstein” appeared about the middle of May 1829. The Third Series of “Tales of a Grandfather” appeared this year; and Scott’s remaining labours were: In 1829—“History of Scotland,” Vol. I.; Waverley Novels, Vols I. to VIII., with new Introductions and Notes (monthly). In 1830—“Doom of Devorgoil” and “Auchindrane”; “Essays on Ballad Poetry”; “Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft”; “Tales of a Grandfather,” Fourth Series; “History of Scotland,” Vol. II. In 1831—“Count Robert of Paris” and “Tales of My Landlord,” Fourth Series.

When the publishing of the Waverley Novels passed into the hands of Cadell, about 1825-26, and the issue of the author’s own edition commenced in 1829—this being playfully distinguished by Scott himself as “the _Magnum_”—the sale again proved large. The legends, family traditions, and historical facts which formed the groundwork of the novels were now added by the author himself, and attracted anew the public attention. Cadell began this edition with 7000, raised the estimate to 10,000, and then to 12,000, while the ultimate circulation rose to about 35,000 a month—a figure then unprecedented. This, it should be remembered, was probably done on the hand-press, as the printing-machine was making slow headway, and must have greatly taxed the resources of the printing-house. The publication arrangements of the novels and other works mentioned in this chapter were variously and sometimes jointly made by Constable, Blackwood, Longman, Murray, John

Ballantyne, and latterly by Cadell.

Since that time many editions of Scott's Poetical and Prose Works have passed through the Ballantyne Press. One of the most important is the Border Edition of the Waverley Novels in forty-eight volumes, edited with additional Introductions and Notes by Mr. Andrew Lang, illustrated with many etchings, and published by John C. Nimmo, London. This edition has now passed into the hands of Messrs. Macmillan & Co.

CHAPTER VII

THE "GREAT UNKNOWN"

The Waverley Novels long continued to be spoken of as the works of the "Great Unknown,"—the titles of the successive novels simply showing that they were by the "Author of 'Waverley.'" The designation was first conferred upon Scott by James Ballantyne. It was never publicly discarded until the Theatrical Fund dinner on February 23, 1827, when the author, in reply to the toast of his health, in which the secret was divulged,[28] uttered these memorable words: "I certainly did not think, in coming here to-day, that I should have the task of acknowledging, before three hundred gentlemen, a secret which, considering it was communicated to more than twenty people, has been remarkably well kept.... I am willing, however, to plead _guilty_—nor shall I detain the Court by a long explanation why my confession has been so long deferred. Perhaps caprice might have a considerable share in the matter. I have now to say, however, that the merits of these works, if they had any, and their faults, are all imputable to myself."

[Illustration: THE "GREAT UNKNOWN"

By permission of CHARLES E. S. CHAMBERS, Esq.]

During much of this period of secrecy James Ballantyne had the almost exclusive task of corresponding with the author, who had thus the advantage not only of his professional talents, but also of his critical abilities; and it is admitted that the works of his friend and patron are indebted to him for many judicious emendations, as Scott's inattention to not unimportant details rendered such assistance necessary. In early life Scott wrote a legible hand, though being—

"A clerk foredoomed his father's soul to cross,
Who pens a stanza when he should engross,"

his verses displayed more character than his chirography. In regard to this Mr. Andrew Lang, in his Introduction to the Border Edition of "Waverley," says: "About Shakespeare it was said that he 'never blotted a line.' The observation is almost literally true about Sir Walter. The pages of his manuscript novels show scarcely a retouch or erasure, whether in the 'Waverley' fragment of 1805 or the unpublished 'Siege of Malta' of 1832. The handwriting becomes closer and smaller; from thirty-eight lines to the page in 'Waverley,' he advances to between fifty and sixty in 'Ivanhoe.' The few alterations are usually additions."

Professor Saintsbury observes: "Scott was always a rapid worker, but it was only now, under the combined stimulus of the new-found gift, the desire for more land and a statelier Abbotsford, and the pressure of the affairs of Ballantyne & Co., that he began to work at the portentous rate which, though I do not believe that it at all injured the quality

of his production, pretty certainly endangered his health." The only systematic check on Scott's rapid production was that introduced by James Ballantyne, who read his proofs, and frequently saved him from oversights and inconsistencies. In this connection the following entry is to be found in Scott's "Journal," June 22, 1828—no doubt when he was in failing health:—"Had a note from Ballantyne complaining of my manuscript, and requesting me to read it over. I would give £1000 if I could; but it would take me longer to read than to write. I cannot trace my _pieds de mouche_ but with great labour and trouble; so e'en take your own share of the burden, my old friend; and, since I cannot read, be thankful I can write."

When the manuscript or "copy" was transcribed the original was preserved with great care. As the novels were frequently begun to be set in type before they were fully written, only a few compositors were required to keep pace with author and amanuensis; and it is remarkable that there was not an instance of treachery during all the years these precautions were resorted to, although various amanuenses were employed at different times. Double proof-sheets were regularly printed. One was forwarded to the author by Ballantyne, and the alterations which it received from Scott were copied by him upon the other proof-sheet for the use of the printers; so that even the corrected proofs of the author were never seen in the printing-office. In this way the curiosity of such eager inquirers as made minute investigations was baulked, though the authorship was an "open secret" with many of the compositors.

The following Notice, however, shows that sheets of the work in hand must have been finding their way out of the printing-office:—

"NOTICE

"Having reason to believe that the Workmen in the PRINTING OFFICE AT PAUL'S WORK are in the habit of Abstracting Sheets of New Books in the progress of Printing,—more especially those of the Original Works of the Author of 'Waverley,'—Notice is hereby given, that the most effectual steps are taken to detect those offending in this manner; and the utmost Punishment of the Law will be executed on those proved guilty of so flagrant an offence.

"255 HIGH STREET, _20th April 1822_."

It is an unwritten tradition that such knowledge of anonymous authorship is never carried outside the printing-house, although the manuscript might be well enough known to the compositors; and there have been instances in which attempts to pry into secrets of this nature have been made. Though suspected and sometimes taxed with the authorship of the novels, before the fact was made publicly known, Scott's invariable reply to those who asked his reason for concealment was that it was his humour. The author, in his works of fiction, displayed wonderful skill and resource, and no one understood better how to turn the public favour to a thrifty advantage. He knew the value of the incognito after the publication of "Waverley," and made excellent use of it, while his denials were intended rather as rebuffs to persons asking questions they had no right to ask than as conveying a false impression. He may also have wished to escape the annoyance of having productions known to be his made the topic of discussion in his presence.

So well was the secret kept, however, that even William Blackwood and John Murray did not know who the author was, though they had their surmises, as appears from the following under the date of February 1816: "Mr. Blackwood, like Mr. Murray, was anxious to have a share in the business of publishing the works of Walter Scott, especially the

novels teeming from the press by ‘The Author of “Waverley.”’ Although Constable and the Ballantynes were necessarily admitted to the knowledge of their authorship, to the world at large they were anonymous, and the author still remained unknown. Mr. Murray had, indeed, pointed out to Mr. Canning that ‘Waverley’ was by Walter Scott; but Scott himself trailed so many red herrings across the path, that publishers as well as the public were thrown off the scent, and both Blackwood and Murray continued to be at fault with respect to the authorship of the Waverley Novels.” Again, a few months after: “The controversy still continued as to the authorship. ‘For these six months past,’ wrote Blackwood (6th June 1816), ‘there have been various rumours with regard to Greenfield being the author, but I never paid much attention to it; the thing appeared to me so very improbable.... But from what I have heard lately, I now begin to think that Greenfield may probably be the author.’ On the other hand, Mr. Mackenzie called upon Blackwood, and informed him that ‘he was now convinced that Thomas Scott, Walter’s brother in Canada, writes all the novels.’ The secret, however, was kept for many years longer.”[29]

In Sinclair’s “Old Times and Distant Places,” a characteristic story is related by Mr. Guthrie Wright, one of Scott’s friends: “I called one day,” he says, “at the Edinburgh Post Office, and began to read in the lobby a letter from Lady Abercorn, in which she gave an answer to some arguments I had stated to her in proof that Sir Walter was the author of ‘Waverley’; while thus employed I stumbled on Sir Walter himself. He immediately inquired about whom I was reading so busily. ‘About _you_,’ I replied, and put the letter into his hands. I soon observed him blush as red as scarlet, and recollected that Lady Abercorn in her letter had said, ‘I am quite sure you are wrong, for Sir Walter Scott declared to me _upon his honour_ that he was not the author of “Waverley.”’ On reading this, Sir Walter exclaimed, ‘I am sure I never said so, I never pledged my honour—she is quite mistaken.’ Then, perceiving that he had thus betrayed himself, he stammered out some unintelligible sentence, and then continued: ‘Well, Mr. Wright, it is a very curious question, who can be the author of these novels. Suppose we take a walk round the Calton Hill, and lay our heads together to find him out.’ We proceeded arm-in-arm, and I said, ‘I think that we can soon so completely hedge in the author that he cannot escape us.’ ‘Well, then,’ said Sir Walter, ‘how would you hedge him in?’ I replied, ‘You will agree with me that the author of “Waverley,” whoever he may be, must be a lawyer?’ ‘True, it is evident he must be a lawyer.’ ‘You will also admit that he must be an antiquary?’ ‘No doubt he must be an antiquary.’ ‘He must also be of Jacobite connections?’ ‘Certainly, he must have Jacobite propensities.’ ‘He must also have a strong turn for poetry?’ ‘Yes, he must be something of a poet.’ I next assigned some reasons why he must be rather more than forty years of age, and then added, ‘Now, among our friends in the Parliament House, let us consider how many there are who, besides being lawyers, poets, antiquaries, and of Jacobite connections, are rather more than forty years of age.’ ‘Well,’ says Sir Walter, ‘what do you think of Cranstoun?’ I gave reasons for setting aside Lord Cranstoun’s pretensions, adverting particularly to his want of humour; and then Sir Walter, seeing that he himself must inevitably come next, unloosed his arm and said, ‘Mr. Wright, the author of “Waverley,” whoever he may be, gets people to buy his books without a name; and he would be a greater fool than I think he is, were he to give a name. Good morning.’”

So decided was Scott on this matter of anonymity that the legal form, dated 1818, conveying to Messrs. Constable & Co. the existing copyrights, contained a clause by which they were bound, under a penalty of £2000, never to divulge the author’s name during his lifetime; and a similar clause appeared in another legal instrument in 1821. There was no necessity for the manuscripts being re-written by James Ballantyne and others, unless it were to prevent the “Great Unknown” from being identified. The handwriting of Scott was eminently readable and easily

followed, and so was that of his various amanuenses; and this for the compositor was a great boon.[30]

Subsequent to transcription and publication, the “Waverley” manuscripts were either sent back to Scott himself or placed in charge of his intimate friend, William Erskine (Lord Kinnedder). After the latter’s death the manuscripts and correspondence were carefully sealed up and returned by Erskine’s trustees to Sir Walter, and these, along with others, were afterwards widely dispersed by private arrangement or at public sales.

In 1823, four years prior to the public acknowledgment of the authorship of the Waverley Novels, Scott presented a number of his manuscripts to Constable. This gift was made on the morning after the first Bannatyne Club dinner, when the publisher received a letter from Scott begging his “acceptance of a parcel of MSS., which I know your partialities will give more value to than they deserve; and only annex the condition that they shall be scrupulously concealed during the author’s life.” Among those sent were manuscripts which had been in Lord Kinnedder’s possession, and also a few more from Abbotsford; but, before this, Constable had already in his possession the manuscripts of several of Sir Walter’s poems,—of “Rokeby,” “Marmion,” “Don Roderick,” “Waterloo,” “Lord of the Isles”; and also of the “Life of Swift.” That of the “Lay” was unfortunately not preserved, as it had not been thought important, till after the publication of “Marmion,” that such should be kept; but John Ballantyne long possessed the manuscript of “The Lady of the Lake,” and it was to him that Constable was indebted for “Rokeby.” The poet Hogg, referring to the manuscript of “Marmion,” says it was “a great curiosity, being all written off-hand on post-letters from Ashestiel, Mainsforth, Rokeby and London.”

On the death of Constable in 1827 the various manuscripts of Scott’s works in his possession were claimed by the creditors on Sir Walter’s estate and also by Sir Walter himself. The matter having been referred to arbitration, it was decided that the condition originally attached was no longer of any avail, and the author of the Waverley Novels then said, “If they are not mine, I do not wish to interfere in the matter in the slightest degree.” The trustees accordingly sent the manuscripts to Mr. Evans, at that time the principal literary auctioneer in London, and they were put up for sale in August 1831. “The sale-rooms of Mr. Evans,” says a literary journal of the day, “were crowded by the curious to witness the sale of the original manuscripts of the Waverley Novels.” They did not realise anything like the prices expected. The whole amount obtained for the manuscripts of the Constable lot was only £317, and it was believed that rumours of the large sums such manuscripts would be likely to fetch had deterred many prospective purchasers from attending the sale. For instance, it may be mentioned that the manuscript of “Waverley” was bought by Mr. Wilks, M.P., for £18, and re-sold a few days after to Mr. Hall for £42. The latter subsequently gave a small portion of it to Cadell, and this portion afterwards found its way to Abbotsford. The main part of “Waverley,” however, was presented, in September 1850, by Mr. Hall to the Advocates’ Library at Edinburgh, where it may now be seen.[31] The manuscript of “Rob Roy” was another purchase of Mr. Wilks, for £50, and at his death it was bought by Cadell for £82, the latter afterwards presenting it to Lockhart.

[Illustration: FACSIMILE OF A PAGE OF THE MS. OF “WAVERLEY”]

Shortly after their publication many of the Waverley Novels were pirated in Germany. A copy of one, picked up at a bookstall in Edinburgh some years ago, bears the title: “The Monastery, a Romance. By the Author of ‘Waverley.’ In Four Volumes. Zwickau, printed for the Brothers Schumann. 1824.” It is actually in two volumes—1 and 2 being together, but each

of the four has separate title and steel frontispiece. There was also published, in 1825, a German romance called “Walladmor,” which was impudently ascribed to Sir Walter Scott. Presumably the long-continued anonymity regarding the authorship of the Waverley Novels encouraged the publisher of this book to hope for a successful sale.[32]

CHAPTER VIII

COMMERCIAL TROUBLES AND SUCCESSES—“THE WEEKLY JOURNAL”

Sir Walter Scott in his eagerness to purchase land for his Abbotsford estate, and to fill the mansion with antiquarian and historical curios, brought together with persevering industry and at great cost, was continually in need of money to carry out his plans. Abbotsford eventually became a show-place, and at the same time a kind of hotel, where the greatest men of Europe were proud to be received and to partake of his hospitality. In 1820 Scott received the baronetcy for which he longed, as an aristocratic badge for the new Border family he had the desire to found; and soon after he figured as director of the pageantry in welcoming George IV. to Scotland. The sums which he spent in these ways were great; nor could he have reconciled himself to such outlays, except from the conviction that his genius was a mine upon which he could draw whenever he pleased. For much of this expenditure he resorted to Constable, who, acting as a sort of literary broker, took the author’s genius and popularity in pledge for advances to him. It would have been better for all concerned had Constable, as well as the Ballantynes, been less accommodating on these occasions, for it was, no doubt, the command of ready money that induced Scott to launch out into extravagant schemes. His purchases of land were the talk of the whole district around Melrose and Selkirk, and it was a common saying among the rustics, “that they would wish for no ampler fortune than just the length and breadth of themselves in land within half a mile of the Shirra’s house.” Some in the neighbourhood shook their heads doubtfully over it all, and one adjacent proprietor, whose property Scott envied, told him that “he wouldna be surprised if he lived to see the craws bigging in the braw lum-heads.” But author, printer, and publisher seemed alike intoxicated with the success of the Waverley Novels, and the nature of their dealings was perhaps without parallel in literary commerce. Not to speak of the extravagant remuneration for books already before the public, and of advances for books in progress, it afterwards appeared that large sums were drawn for works which, if contemplated, were at least not begun. To add to all these difficulties, Scott was led by a feeling of gratitude to grant Constable counter-acceptances, in order to relieve him from those embarrassments of which he himself was the chief cause. The complications of all these transactions, precipitated by a commercial panic, brought on at last a complete crash. At the end of January 1826, the firm of Archibald Constable & Co. was declared bankrupt; shortly after, the failure of James Ballantyne & Co. was announced; and with these houses that of Hurst, Robinson & Co., of London, was hopelessly involved. The market was stocked with the dishonoured bills of the firms, and confidence in the great publishing houses was ended. Scott himself was involved in something like £130,000, between publishers and printers.

In all this Scott, not James Ballantyne, played the leading part. In a letter of October 15, 1815, referring to the failure of his brother’s bookselling business, and equally applicable to this new imbroglio, the printer writes to Scott: “I am singularly and hopelessly ignorant in these matters; but I fancy the truth is that, owing to the bad success of the bookselling speculation, and the injudicious drafts so long made on

the business that throve, I am, _de jure et de facto_, wholly dependent on you." It would appear that James Ballantyne was right in this—that the trouble arose not through any incompetence on the printer's part, but mainly through the setting up of the firm of John Ballantyne & Co., and the speculations of the publishing firms.

"Scott was always incurring expenses, often heavy expenses, for other people. Thus, when Mr. Terry, the actor, became lessee and manager of the Adelphi Theatre, London, Scott became his surety for £1250, while James Ballantyne became his surety for £500 more, and both these sums had to be paid by Scott after Terry's failure in 1828. Such obligations as these, however, would have been nothing when compared with Sir Walter's means, had all his bills on Constable been duly honoured, and had not the printing firm of Ballantyne & Co. been so deeply involved with Constable's house, that it necessarily became insolvent when he stopped."[33]

Scott's share of the large sum involved by the failure was ultimately paid in full by himself and his representatives, while the other firms paid their creditors about ten per cent. of the amount due. It must be kept in mind, however, so far as Constable's house was concerned, that their property appears to have been foolishly sacrificed by forced sales of copyrights and stock.

The printing-office at Paul's Work in those days was as complete in all its arrangements as any one of the inimitable volumes which issued from it; and no printed book was put into the binder's hands till the sheets were thoroughly dry and the ink was fully "ripened." The business was vigorous, and, as we have seen, in 1822 no fewer than 145,000 volumes issued from the Ballantyne Press, all from the pen of Scott—an extraordinary number of volumes in those days of hand-presses; and this leaves out of reckoning work done for other authors and publishers.

The manager of the working departments—Mr. Hughes being now more in connection with the counting-room—was Daniel M'Corkindale. He never spoke above a whisper, nor stirred out of his quiet manner, and yet, under his control, every man and boy performed his task with despatch and the regularity of clockwork. M'Corkindale was part and parcel of that office—visit it at what hour of the day or night you pleased, there you found him; and even on a Sunday he would take the key and flit noiselessly among the untenanted case-frames and silent presses. James Hogg called him the honest and indefatigable M'Corkindale. After thirty years of faithful service, he died in March 1833, two months after his master.

Mr. James Bertram, editor of the _North Briton_, published in 1893 "Memories of Books and Authors," which contained the following notice of the Ballantyne Press in 1837-38: "I had often occasion to visit Paul's Work, where my friend, Mr. R. H. Patterson, afterwards editor of the _Edinburgh Advertiser_, was one of the 'readers.' Ballantyne's was an office in which many 'characters' were to be found, including 'the Major,' Mr. Cartwright, an accomplished printer's-reader; Mr. Christie, one of the foremen; and William Tofts, one of the machinists. These men had all known Sir Walter, Mr. Lockhart, Mr. Constable, Mr. Blackwood, Professor Wilson, and others of the bright spirits of _Maga_. One of the old 'pigs'[34] of the house delighted to tell us stories about Sir Walter, 'stories that Mr. Lockhart kent naething ava aboot.' He maintained that he knew who wrote the novels 'almost as soon as the master' (Mr. James Ballantyne). When asked how that came about, he would tell his best tale with a sufficient amount of importance; and although it was credited in the office, I cannot guarantee its accuracy. 'I had just begun (he would say) to a new sheet of "Guy Mannering" one night a while after twelve—we were working late in the press-room at that

time—and all the compositors had left, when in comes Mr. Ballantyne himself, with a letter in his hand and a lot of types. “I am going to make a small alteration, Sandy,” he said, “just unlock the forme, will you? I’ll not keep you many minutes.” Well, I did as I was bidden, and Mr. B., looking at the letter, altered three lines on one page and one line on another. “That will do now, I think, Sandy,” were his words; “but first pull a sheet till I see.” The master then looked carefully over the two pages and said, “Bring me the printed sheets—they’ll have to be destroyed,” and off he went, never thinking that he had left the letter lying on my bank. I had barely time to get a glimpse at it, when back came Mr. Ballantyne, but I kent the hand weel, and the signature, and it was “Walter Scott.” I had a great lang ballant (ballad) in Sir Walter’s ain hand o’ write at hame, so that I was nae stranger to it. I would hae likit to see what the difference was that was made in the sheets, but he made me carry them up to his room. So you see, gentlemen, I kent the grand secret, when it _was_ a secret.’”

On William Tofts’ death in 1859 the following notice appeared in the _North Briton_: “Mr. Tofts was, in some respects, a remarkable man. He had been associated with the mechanical department of the printing trade for nearly half a century, and during that period had witnessed many eventful changes. When he first went, as a boy, to learn the pressman’s trade, the neat hand-presses now in use were not known, and printing by steam was not even dreamt of. The presses then in use were of cumbrous construction, and in place of rollers, the ink was distributed over the surface of the types by means of pads, with which the formes were dabbed over. The work of improvement had begun, however, and printing by means of hand-presses was shortly afterwards brought to the state of perfection in which we now find it.

[Illustration: OLD WOODEN PRESS AT PAUL’S WORK

Used by Ballantyne in Printing the Waverley Novels]

“Mr. Tofts was engaged in the office of the Messrs. Ballantyne in the palmy days of the Waverley Novels, and printed off several of the impressions of that immortal series of fictions. He well remembered Sir Walter Scott, who made frequent visits to the office where Mr. Tofts, then a very young man, was engaged; and he had also vivid recollections of Jeffrey, Lockhart, Sydney Smith, and the other great guns of the _Edinburgh Review_. He was the first man who superintended a steam printing-machine in Scotland—it was, if we remember rightly, on the first introduction of one of these valuable aids to book-making in Messrs. Ballantyne’s establishment. He also had the distinction of inaugurating a steam machine for printing _Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal_.”

In appearance James Ballantyne was a gentleman of the old school. It was a treat to see him do the honours of his own house in St. John Street, whether in the drawing-room before dinner, showing the proof-sheets of Scott’s poems or novels, bound up with the marginal correspondence between the critic-printer and the author, or after dinner, pressing his guests to a particular glass of Burgundy, “a present from his friend Sir Walter.” The prop of his existence was his connection with Scott; the happiest moments of his life were those that he spent—while the Waverley Novels were appearing in rapid and dazzling succession—amid a small circle of friends, when the eagerly-expected volumes were produced, a week or a fortnight before they were issued to the general public. James Ballantyne read them aloud with his best emphasis and expression, and for this duty he was admirably qualified, being a good elocutionist, and possessed of a melodious voice. There was to the listeners a certain gratification in forestalling the rest of the world—in being able to tell their friends mysteriously that there was a great treat awaiting them. There was much pleasure also in discussing the merits of the work, with

timid allusions to the veiled author, whose name was never mentioned. And amid the circle sat James, the founder of the feast, happy in the happiness he was creating.

Lockhart gives a vivid description of one of these evenings: “To be present at one of these scenes,” he writes, “was truly a rich treat.... When the cloth was drawn, the burly preses rose, and spouted with a sonorous voice the formula of Macbeth:—

“‘Fill full!
I drink to the general joy of the whole table!’

This was followed by ‘The King—God bless him!’ and second came ‘Gentlemen, there is another toast which never has been nor shall be omitted in this house of mine—I give you the health of Mr. Walter Scott, with three times three!’... Then James rose once more, every vein on his brow distended, his eyes solemnly fixed upon vacancy, to propose, not as before in his stentorian key, but with bated breath, in the sort of whisper by which a stage conspirator thrills the gallery—‘Gentlemen, a bumper to the immortal Author of “Waverley”!’ The uproar of cheering, in which Scott made a fashion of joining, was succeeded by deep silence; and then Ballantyne proceeded to lament the obscurity in which his illustrious but too modest correspondent still chose to conceal himself from the plaudits of the world—to thank the company for the manner in which the _nominis umbra_ had been received—and to assure them that the Author of ‘Waverley’ would, when informed of the circumstance, feel highly delighted, ‘the proudest hour of his life,’ &c. The name of the forthcoming novel would then be given, and success to it pledged in another bumper.”[35]

For a number of years James Ballantyne conducted and printed the _Edinburgh Weekly Journal_, with a degree of spirit and good taste which the public did not fail to appreciate. This paper began originally in 1744, and was edited, about 1767, by William Smellie, well known in the printing profession and first editor of the “Encyclopædia Britannica.” In 1806 the paper was exposed for sale, when Mr. Blackwood and another offered £1830 for it, but it became the property of James Ballantyne and Walter Scott for £1850, and under their joint ownership was one of the most influential papers of the time.[36]

“Christopher North,” in an early number of _Blackwood’s Magazine_, characterised the _Journal_ as “one of the best principled and best written newspapers in Scotland.” During James Ballantyne’s editorship it was noted also for its theatrical criticisms, the work of the editor, who had previously contributed similar articles to the _Edinburgh Evening Courant_. His brother John looked after the musical notices, being considered one of the best critics of the day in this special direction. Scott furnished many articles for its columns, such as “The Visionary,” in December 1819 and January 1820, three essays on popular doctrines or delusions of the time, afterwards collected into a pamphlet which had a large sale; and also the Malachi Malagrowther Letters, already referred to, which also appeared in pamphlet form.

James Ballantyne continued to be editor of the _Weekly Journal_ till his death in 1833. His successor was Thomas Aird, the author of many poems and prose articles which first appeared in _Blackwood’s Magazine_, and the valued friend of Thomas Carlyle; but he held the post only for a short time, being chosen editor of the _Dumfries Herald_, then newly started. The _Journal_ continued to be printed at Paul’s Work till 1844, when it was again sold. It ceased to exist in 1848, its last editor being Theodore Williams.

The following letter from Scott to Ballantyne refers to a strike among

the men, regarding some extra work in connection with the _Journal_, which they had refused to do unless at a higher rate than usual:—

“DEAR JAMES,—I heard of your mutiny. We will help you all we can, and I advise you to stand firm, and punish ringleaders. The men are fools. The work would be easily printed in London. I return two Bellendon books—‘History of James VI.,’ and ‘Melville’s Memoirs,’ borrowed from you by yours truly,

W. SCOTT.

“EDINBURGH, _Saturday_.”

Connected with Ballantyne’s editing of the _Weekly Journal_ there is the following curious story. The speech of George IV. at the banquet in the Parliament House, Edinburgh, 1822, was reported in the _Weekly Journal_; but it happens that, though that version of his Majesty’s speech appears in all the works published at the time (not newspapers), it is not his Majesty’s speech at all, but James Ballantyne’s, so far, at least, as the concluding part is concerned. A reporter belonging to the _Courant_ happened to be sitting beside Ballantyne on the occasion, and was invited by him, when the feast was over, to accompany him to St. John Street that he might look over his notes. The reporter went with him, and wrote out the royal speech in his presence. On reading the concluding sentences of the speech, Ballantyne exclaimed: “Ay, ay! his Majesty did say so; but it is not good—we will improve it!” With that he took his pen, cancelled what was written, and substituted the sentences which have always passed current as his Majesty’s. This is a tolerable specimen of Ballantyne’s ready tact in this way.[37]

On two occasions, however, the _Journal_ threw a shadow between the two friends, which must have been painful to Scott, whose warm regard for his confidential critic and trusted friend was no secret. The paper adopted the popular side during the trial of Queen Caroline, and afterwards espoused the cause of the Reform Bill. On neither of these points could Scott’s high Toryism permit him to be silent. He urged the right of control belonging to a proprietor, whilst Ballantyne replied by insisting on the right of free action by an editor. The first dispute was got over, but that on the Reform Bill had a painful end. “The two old and faithful friends parted in a tiff, and never again met.” So completely had the long friendship been broken that, when Sir Walter began his “Castle Dangerous,” about June 1831, he told Cadell the publisher about his new work, but said nothing to his old ally, and even thought of giving the book to another printer. This severity, however, was too much for his genial nature.

James Ballantyne, equally with his partner in the collapse of 1826, as told in this chapter, was a ruined man; everything he possessed—including his house, No. 3 Heriot Row, to which he had removed from St. John Street—being surrendered to his creditors. Fortunately for all concerned a trust-deed was drawn up, and he was chosen to manage Paul’s Work for the creditors at a salary of £400 a year. He was assisted by his younger brother, Alexander, and by John Hughes—son of the Mr. Hughes who came with him from Kelso; and these two afterwards became, with James’s son, John Alexander Ballantyne, the active partners in the business. To add to his misfortunes his wife died in 1829, leaving a large family. In 1816, when forty-five years of age, he had married Miss Hogarth, of Berwickshire, sister of George Hogarth, author of “A History of Music.” Their household was a happy one; Mrs. Ballantyne was an amiable woman of simple habits, and the children were pleasant and well-mannered. Her death affected him so much that for some time he was unfit for business, and his health was impaired. He was never the same buoyant, happy man again. Scott writes regarding this event: “I received the melancholy news

that James Ballantyne has lost his wife. With his domestic habits the blow is irretrievable. What can he do, poor fellow, at the head of such a family of children! I should not be surprised if he were to give way to despair." He was not able to appear at the funeral, and this circumstance evoked much sympathy.

In the same year we find him residing in Albany Street. Some time after he removed to Hill Street, and here he died on January 17, 1833. Shortly before this event, he had expressed a hope that he might yet be restored to sufficient health, to enable him to place on record all he felt and knew regarding the great and good Sir Walter, who had so recently gone before him. Accordingly, one of the last acts of his busy life, when lying on his deathbed, was to write and send to Lockhart the Memorandum of which the latter made such full use in his "Life of Scott," and in return for which he thought it not inconsistent with the courtesy of a gentleman to traduce the character of the writer.

CHAPTER IX

THE AUTHOR AND THE REVISER

On the 21st September 1832 Sir Walter Scott died, and four months later James Ballantyne followed him to that bourne "where the petty politics of terrestrial powers no longer inflame men's minds, and the sound of discord and disagreement is not heard." The following obituary notice appeared in the _Scotsman_ of January 19, 1833:—

"It is with feelings of sincere regret that we have to announce the death of our able and excellent contemporary and friend, Mr. James Ballantyne. His health for several months past has been very delicate, and he expired on Thursday at noon, rather unexpectedly by his friends, as he had fallen into a soft sleep in the morning, after a night of painful suffering from a vomiting of blood, with which he had of late been visited.

"Mr. Ballantyne has been so long and honourably distinguished in his connection with the press of Scotland, in the highest acceptation of that expression, that we cannot forbear alluding slightly to the leading points of his life and character in that connection. He began his career by establishing the _Kelso Mail_ in his native town; and it was while he was thus engaged, that, in consequence of some suggestion from Mr. Hughes, then and long after in his employment, he made some successful attempts to improve the typography of Scotland. In these the success which attended his efforts was so conspicuous as to attract the notice of some distinguished individuals, and, amongst others, that of his illustrious friend, Sir Walter Scott; and a new era in Scottish typography, as well as of Scottish literature, was ushered in by the printing of the 'Border Minstrelsy' at the Border press. Mr. Ballantyne's well-merited fame for elegance and accuracy as a printer soon extended in the marts of literature, and the encouragement which he received from the booksellers of London and Edinburgh induced him to remove to this city about the year 1802; and it is no disparagement to any of his brethren to state that, from the time that Mr. Ballantyne devoted himself to the pursuit, the art has been improved among us to the highest pitch, for nothing in typography can exceed the beauty and accuracy which have ever characterised the productions of the Ballantyne Press. These qualities are known to the whole world in the works of his illustrious friend, Sir Walter Scott, and they were the result at once of the most conscientious and scrupulous vigilance over his press, and of an exquisite taste and great intelligence which were applied to the works entrusted to his

superintendence. The intimate connection which subsisted betwixt Sir Walter and Mr. Ballantyne from their schoolboy days—the confidential nature of that connection—and the unceasing kindness which was veiled only by the shadows which darken all human friendships in the grave, were such as to associate the name of Ballantyne with that of his much-loved and honoured countryman, and to invest it with consideration and honour. During the last fifteen or sixteen years Mr. Ballantyne has been the editor, and a proprietor of the _Edinburgh Weekly Journal_, which has been uniformly distinguished for its candour, sound constitutional principles, moderation, and independence. In private life Mr. Ballantyne was amiable and gentlemanly in his demeanour, accomplished, courteous, cheerful; and to have been the intimate associate of Walter Scott, John Leyden, James Grahame, Robert Lundie, was of itself a proof not merely of his intellectual superiority, but of what is more estimable, of his moral worth. He was a dutiful son, brother, husband, father, and friend; and the affectionate qualities of his nature will be long remembered by those who moved within the circles of his friends or his friendships."

On the death of James Ballantyne his trustees examined his repositories in the printing-office, and found a number of fragmentary portions of the manuscripts of the novels, as well as numerous proof-sheets with corrections, and several manuscripts of the later novels which had been overlooked. These fragmentary leaves and proof-sheets remained in possession of the trustees till James Ballantyne's son came of age; and the latter, on formally taking up his position at the printing-office, presented some of them to friends as memorials—among others, the MS. of "Old Mortality" was presented to Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Cowan of Beeslack. The state of the business, however, led a few years after to sequestration, and the rest of the Scott relics, as well as James Ballantyne's library, were sold for behoof of the estate by Mr. Dowell of Edinburgh, in May 1848. Among the lots sold at this time were the MS. of the "Black Dwarf," and the author's proofs of the "Life of Napoleon" (nine vols.), "Woodstock," "Nigel," "Quentin Durward," "Ivanhoe," "Peveril," &c., as well as the author's interleaved copy, with many notes, of the "Letters on Demonology," &c., realising altogether £121, 13s. 6d.

These proof-sheets contained the notes and letters which passed between the author and the printer, as well as the author's corrections and additions during the progress of the books through the press. The suggestions and remarks of Ballantyne are many, and occasionally curious; and Sir Walter appears frequently to have adopted the advice of his friend, who for his occasional strictures was sometimes playfully designated "Tom Telltruth." "The proof-sheets of 'Redgauntlet' exist," says Mr. Lang in his Introduction to that novel, "and show some noteworthy points, as we see Mr. James Ballantyne's suggestions, Scott's corrections, and an occasional aside to Ballantyne.... James objects to the mixture of 'thou' and 'you' in Fairford's letter, but Scott does not make any change.... Ballantyne rather timidly suggests that Green Mantle at the fishers' dance reminds him of Di Vernon, so Scott slightly modifies her cavalier tone. James is scandalised at the mention of young advocates as 'boys.' Scott writes, 'Aye, aye!'" The printer makes a "useful suggestion, which Scott accepts, when Alan reads the wrong letter in the trial."

The author and the printer often differed, and other replies of Scott to his corrector are characteristic, as the following, which appears in one of the proofs of "Woodstock": "'Completing' wants a nominative," says James. "You certainly have had the toothache," says the author in reply; "why, it puts me in mind of the epigram when Pitt and Dundas came drunk into the House of Commons:—

"'I cannot see the Speaker, Hal, can you?'

‘Not see the Speaker! d—n me, I see two!’”

On another occasion Sir Walter says in his “Journal” (January 11, 1826): “I got proof-sheets, in which it seems I have repeated a whole passage of history which had been told before. James is in an awful stew, and I cannot blame him.... However, as Chaucer says:—

“‘There is na workeman
That can bothe worken wel and hastilie;
This must be done at leisure parfitly.’”

It must be admitted that Scott was occasionally careless, partly because he could save time by allowing others to correct his errors and inconsistencies resulting from rapid composition. For example, in “The Antiquary” he makes the sun set in the German Ocean; in the “Legend of Montrose” he uses in one place westward where it should be eastward; in “Kenilworth” the text has “In the employment both of Burleigh and Cecil,” but Burleigh and Cecil are one and the same person, and it should probably read Walsingham and Cecil; in “Anne of Geierstein” in two places Nancy is used instead of Aix.

The proof-sheets of “Peveril” were sold in London some time in the middle of last century and bought by an American. They afterwards formed part of an article in _Scribner’s Magazine_ (February 1889) on Sir Walter Scott and his works, from which several of the instances are here given:—

“_Proof._ ‘He was never visited by any doubt.’ Note by J. B. See p. 127, where this doubt is strongly expressed by him. Scott thereupon alters to—‘any permanent doubt.’

“_Proof._ ‘The cutler agreed.’ Note by J. B. He had gone downstairs in the last sentence. Scott hurries him back, and alters to ‘the cutler returns at this summons and agreed.’

“_Proof._ Motto to Heading to Chapter VIII. J. B. This motto is repeated in the next chapter. Scott alters to ‘My native land, good-night.—BYRON.’”

So it goes on throughout, and there are also such marginal remarks by Ballantyne as these: “Imperfect;” “Incomplete;” “Incorrect;” “This is inimitable in all respects;” “Capital! there is something new under the sun;” “Unintelligible and probably incomplete;” “This is almost magnificent.”

Many of the proof-sheets still existing show that the author and the printer remained the best of friends, even under the pressure of financial troubles, till the unfortunate differences arose in regard to the political views of the _Weekly Journal_. They leave no doubt that James Ballantyne by his courageous and unprejudiced criticism pointed out many an error which the reviewers would have seized upon with eagerness. Referring again to this subject, Mr. Lang, in his “Life of Lockhart,” says: “Why, one is inclined to ask, why with Lockhart at his side did Scott turn to Ballantyne for criticism? The truth probably is that in Ballantyne, comparatively uneducated and ignorant of things which one supposes everybody to know, Scott thought he had a measure of the ordinary taste, and a judge who would never veil his actual opinion, nor ‘seek for a glossy periphrase.’” “Comparatively uneducated and ignorant of things!” This is said of one who not only passed but practised as a solicitor, and whom Scott himself—surely a sufficient judge of his ability—recommended for the editorship of a proposed new paper (November 1819), as “a thoroughly well-principled, honourable man.... He writes a good enough style, and has often been happy in his opening articles.” Even stronger testimony regarding James Ballantyne and the _Weekly

Journal_ occurs in an entry in Scott's "Journal" (December 18, 1825), "for sure they cannot find a better editor."[38]

Moore[39] describes Scott's marvellous labour and power of composition, as well as the extent to which he had carried the art of book-making. "Besides writing his history of Scotland for Dr. Lardner's 'Encyclopædia,'" he observes, "he is working at the prefaces for the re-publication of the Waverley Novels, the 'Tales of a Grandfather,' and has still found time to review Tytler, which he has done out of the scraps and chips of his other works. A little while ago he had to correct some of the proofs of the History of Scotland, and, being dissatisfied with what was done, he nearly wrote it over again, and sent it up to the editor. Some time after, finding another copy of the proofs, he forgot that he had corrected them before, and he re-wrote these also and sent them up, and the editor is at this moment engaged in selecting from the two corrected copies the best parts of each."

In spite of all the printer's care and personal supervision, however, Sir Walter sometimes had the chance of giving James "a Roland for his Oliver," as the following letter testifies:—

"DEAR JAMES,—I return the sheets of 'Tales,' with some waste of 'Napoleon' for ballast. Pray read like a lynx, for with all your devoted attention things will escape. Imagine your printing that the Douglases, after James II. had dirked the Earl, trailed the royal safe-conduct at the _tail_ of a _serving man_, instead of the _tail_ of a _starved mare_."

So printed in the first edition, but corrected in subsequent editions to "a miserable cart jade."

[Illustration]

The accompanying facsimiles are from proof-sheets in the possession of Lord Rosebery, who has courteously given permission for their reproduction. One shows the title-page of a volume of the "Life of Napoleon," while the other is a page of the same work, with Sir Walter's corrections, and one of James Ballantyne's remarks. The playful missives sent by the author to his printer have been already referred to, and there is to be seen along with the MS. of "Rob Roy," and bound up with the last proof-sheet, the following note to James Ballantyne:—

"DEAR JAMES—

With great joy
I send you Roy;
'Twas a tough job,
But we're dune wi' Rob.

"I forget if I mentioned Terry in my list of friends. Pray send me two or three copies as soon as you can. And we must not forget Sir William Forbes.—Yours ever,

"W. S."

The allusion to its being a "tough job" refers to the labour of producing the book in his shattered state of health in 1817, the year of the publication of "Rob Roy."

[Illustration]

CHAPTER X

LOCKHART AND THE BALLANTYNE CONTROVERSY

Into the merits of the disputes which arose over the disastrous business transactions it is not necessary, perhaps, to enter at length. What is brought together here is mainly drawn from materials left by contemporaries of the persons immediately concerned. Recent criticism has not supported Lockhart's view that Scott was unaware how things were going, and it has never been explained how a man, so exact about his personal expenses, could have been so careless in his commercial dealings as partner in a printing firm. Lockhart was well known in literary circles to be a pungent critic, and his severity as a reviewer gained for him the name of the "Scorpion." His studiously insolent tone and his wilful misrepresentations led to the publication by James Ballantyne's trustees of "The Refutation of the Misstatements and Calumnies contained in Mr. Lockhart's 'Life of Sir Walter Scott' respecting the Messrs. Ballantyne." This was followed by "The Ballantyne Humbug Handled" from Lockhart; and this again was answered by a "Reply to Mr. Lockhart's Pamphlet. By the Authors of the Refutation."

[Illustration: JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART, LL.D.

PAINTED BY SIR FRANCIS GRANT P.R.A.]

A review of these pamphlets in _Tait's Magazine_ for 1839 states that Lockhart "had done gross and, everything considered, pitiful injustice to Mr. James Ballantyne; but, in our opinion, the case stood still worse as to Dr. John Leyden, Thomas Pringle, the Ettrick Shepherd, Alister Campbell and other men of genius, who had no sons or friendly trustees to do justice to their true characters, and defend their memories from clumsy ridicule, and wanton and unprovoked misrepresentation.... The editor of the _Quarterly_ (Lockhart) has been as condescending in the free use of abusive and insolent language, and in calling names and giving nicknames, as the veriest Grub Street author could desire; and, all the while, this vulgarity is directed against persons whom he assumes to treat as immeasurably his inferiors. The trustees, whether tradesmen or professional men, though sufficiently acute and cutting at times, have a manifest advantage over Mr. Lockhart, in never abandoning that decent propriety of language which they owed to themselves, if not to their supercilious and unceremonious adversary; while they have carefully and ably elaborated every point in Mr. Lockhart's statements, and knocked them down one by one....

"For the unfounded assertions in the earlier volumes regarding the Ballantynes, Mr. Lockhart makes a sort of _amende honorable_: 'I have been entirely mistaken, if those to whom I allude (Ballantyne's relatives), or any other of my readers, have interpreted any expressions of mine as designed to cast _the slightest imputation upon the moral rectitude_ of the elder Ballantyne. I believe James _to have been from first to last a perfectly upright man_; that his principles were of a lofty stamp—_his feelings pure even to simplicity_.'... It was sufficiently proved from the documents given in the controversy that on all occasions he (Scott) made use of James Ballantyne & Co. as the means of supplying his wants. If he wanted money, and they happened to have it, he drew it out; if not, he made use of their firm to raise it. Such was his uniform practice, from the first formation of the company to the last day of its existence."[40]

John Gibson Lockhart died at Abbotsford on the 25th November 1854, in his sixty-first year. "In a letter addressed to me," says Dr. Charles Rogers,

“a few days afterwards, Mr. Robert Chambers referred to the event in these words: ‘It is melancholy to think of Lockhart sinking at sixty—and all through heart-break. Sir Adam Ferguson feels assured that such is the remote but true cause of his death. He was perhaps the least amiable man of letters I ever knew; but these considerations make his departure somewhat touching.’

“Naturally a cynic, Lockhart was latterly prone to irritation; he possessed that unhappy temperament which magnifies trifles and distorts judgment. His perversity is in a measure illustrated by his harsh treatment of James Hogg; it was wholly unexpected by the Shepherd’s family, who supplied him with papers, and to whom his visits had (as Mrs. Hogg assured me) been frequent and cordial. But Archibald Constable and the brothers Ballantyne he cruelly wronged. By Sir Walter Scott they were loved and trusted; and his biographer had no cause to heap censures on their memory. That Sir Walter’s character might appear bright and pure, it was unnecessary that his associates should be charged with baseness.

“The detractor succeeds at the outset. Lockhart, who, as has been shown by an unprejudiced witness, Mrs. Gordon, in the life of her father (Christopher North), was not unwilling to inflict pain, succeeded in deeply wounding the families of Constable and the Ballantynes. But the day of reparation came. The Ballantynes were vindicated at once, and the censorious vehemence with which Lockhart returned to the charge invoked wide disapproval. In 1873 appeared a memoir of Archibald Constable by his son; in the third volume of that work the great bookseller obtains full and complete exculpation.”[41]

Sir Walter Scott contributed not only capital to the firm, but great literary influence, which attracted a copious supply of work to the Ballantyne Press; yet the other partners were not very far behind him in their influence upon the business. In addition to some capital, James Ballantyne brought what in many ways was as important, experience in literary matters and great talent as a practical printer, while John’s pleasant manners and social accomplishments must have gained not a few customers for the house. It cannot be denied that Sir Walter had a chief share in maintaining the firm, for he always insisted that his own works should be printed there, no matter who the publishers were; but he was also largely responsible for the collapse, owing to those unsuccessful publications previously referred to, which through his influence had been printed by the firm. Moreover, his excessive desire for family aggrandisement and his profuse baronial hospitality were extremely unfortunate for all concerned; and before the collapse came he had spent £29,000 on land alone, while his expenditure on house and grounds was estimated at £76,000.

The following observations are from one who was acquainted with all the circumstances: “It is a curious instance of Lockhart’s moral obtuseness that he could make some most painful and needless disclosures in regard to Scott himself in that Life (of Scott), to say nothing of his foul and elaborate misrepresentation of the Ballantynes throughout. To that evil deed it is necessary only to refer; for the confutation immediately published was so complete, and the establishment of the fair fame of the Ballantynes so triumphant, that their libeller had his punishment very soon. Some lovers of literature and of Scott still struggled to make out that the Ballantynes and their defenders, as tradesmen, could know nothing of the feelings, nor judge of the conduct, of Scott as a gentleman. The answer was plain: the Ballantynes were not mere tradesmen; and if they had been, Scott made himself a tradesman, in regard to his coadjutors, and must be judged by the laws of commercial integrity. The exposures made by the Ballantynes and their friends of Scott’s pecuniary obligations to them were forced upon them by Lockhart’s attacks upon their characters and misrepresentation of their conduct and affairs. The

whole controversy was occasioned by Lockhart's spontaneous indulgence in caustic satire; and the Ballantynes came better out of it than either he or his father in-law."[42]

Another of Lockhart's charges was that of professional incompetence, made not from his own knowledge, but on the conjectural statements of Robert Cadell, the partner of Constable and afterwards his supplanter in the publication of the Waverley Novels. This objection mainly rested on the assertion that James Ballantyne had not been trained as a printer, but it need count for little. Neither Caxton nor Chepman, nor yet Baskerville, all of them celebrated typographers, received the education of a printer; and of how many printer-capitalists of the present day can it be said that they have been subjected to the technical training of a skilled workman? This, however, may be better answered from some notes by Dr. Robert Chambers, a printer and a publisher,[43] who personally knew both Scott and the Ballantynes. He maintains that Scott watched closely over all the arrangements, was cognisant of the most minute transactions, and alone planned all the necessary ways and means for carrying on the business. He says further that "the printing business, which was James Ballantyne's legitimate work, was always prosperous, and we can say with equal confidence from what we have ascertained through our own experience, and that of friends, that his printing-office was decidedly the most ably and carefully managed for all ends with which its customers had to do in Edinburgh." And Mr. R. P. Gillies, in his "Recollections of Sir Walter Scott,"[44] observes regarding James Ballantyne: "A character of more sterling integrity, or more friendly disposition, never existed. As he was by no means of an over-sanguine temperament, it is possible that by following his advice the subsequent embarrassments might have been avoided."

Again, as late as 1897, the _British Weekly_, in noticing Leslie Stephen's article on Scott in the _Cornhill Magazine_ of April that year, says: "Although nothing will ever explain Scott's extraordinary recklessness, one comes nearer to an understanding when reading that Scott drew from the Ballantyne business in four years £7000 for building at Abbotsford, £5000 for his son's commission, and nearly £900 to a wine-merchant. Altogether it appears that during the four years (1822-1826) Ballantyne & Co. had paid on Scott's account £15,000 more than they had received from him."

This chapter may be concluded with Sir Walter's own testimony to James Ballantyne. In his "Journal" under date of December 18, 1825, he writes: "Ballantyne behaves like himself, and sinks his own ruin in contemplating mine. I tried to enrich him indeed, and now all—all is gone." In a letter to Lockhart, January 20, 1826, Scott again exonerates James Ballantyne from being a primary cause of his misfortunes, and says: "It is easy, no doubt, for any friend to blame me for entering into connection with commercial matters at all. But I wish to know what I could have done better.... Literature was not in those days what poor Constable has made it; and with my little capital I was too glad to make commercially the means of supporting my family.... I have been far from suffering by James Ballantyne. _I owe it to him to say that his difficulties as well as his advantages, are owing to me_." We have here the crux of the whole matter; and with this manly admission on the part of Sir Walter a painful controversy may now be allowed to rest.

[Illustration: JAMES BALLANTYNE & CO'S. PRINTING OFFICE.]

CHAPTER XI

THROUGH OLD PAUL'S WORK, CANONGATE

In the early years of last century, when the New Town of Edinburgh was beginning to show itself along the northern slopes of the valley of the Nor' Loch, beneath the Castle and the High Street, all the printing-houses were to be found either down the closes or lanes or in some blind alley approached from the High Street or the Cowgate. The precincts were frequently noisome with the dirt and rubbish of long-past years. The building itself would have a peculiar odour of its own—a combination of rancid oil, mouldy paste, and printer's ink, and few people would ever care to pass that way except on business. The printing-office would probably be located in what had at one time been a private dwelling-house, and rendered serviceable by the removal of partitioning walls, the erection of narrow winding stairs, and the joining of several apartments of neighbouring houses into one, not infrequently on varying levels.

Paul's Work was entered by a small courtyard with an iron gateway leading to a narrow door immediately below an outside stair. This stair led to the counting-room, adjoining which was the room allotted to Sir Walter Scott on his visits. The window of this room is shown in the accompanying illustration.

In those days work began at either six or seven in the morning—the "devils" having been there an hour earlier for sweeping and cleaning. There was an hour, from nine to ten, for breakfast, a healthy arrangement long since given up under the pressure of modern business, which tends more and more to fewer breaks in the day—although the removal of work-places to suburban districts may also have had much to do with this change. The workmen now make their appearance at eight, and the dinner interval is from one to two, instead of from two to three as in former days.

[Illustration: ENTRANCE TO THE OFFICES OF OLD PAUL'S WORK]

Close by the entrance-doorway sat the time-keeper, a post long held by Mr. Smith, an old grey-headed man, father of Alexander Smith the poet, author of "A Life Drama," and for some time Secretary to Edinburgh University. Passing upwards by devious stairways to what was known as the "long case-room," here one would find about thirty or forty compositors, busily dipping their fingers into cases of types—spelling, capitalising, and punctuating line after line from the manuscript or "copy" before them—amidst the joke and chaff flying among themselves, and the noisy hammering of wooden "mallets" at the imposing tables or "stones" down the centre of the room, on which the "formes" of type were being corrected and got "ready for press." A second case-room, with about twenty men, was on another, higher flat; adjoining this, in course of time, was the stereo foundry.

Beyond the long case-room, on a slightly different level, was a fairly large room, partitioned off like so many sentry-boxes, occupied by that much-maligned but indispensable class, the printer's Readers, each with his attendant satellite or "devil."

The Reader's duty is not only to see that the punctuation and the spelling are correct, but also to make a note of interrogation against any passage which appears doubtful or incomplete. Some authors profit by these unobtrusive queries; others resent them and snub the Reader.[45] Though not exactly perfect, he bestows much time and patience over his work, and the general correctness of books shows that his labour is not in vain. With all his care and anxiety, however, errors will creep in—it is a moot point whether an absolutely correct book was ever published.

It is curious, too, that the most obvious blunders are sometimes passed by a painstaking and careful Reader, as if to show that experienced watchfulness is liable to occasional defeat; for example, there is the case of one Reader who passed for press as accurate a work of reference in which were quotations from many languages, yet overlooked an error on the title-page, though there the types were even larger. Some of the “devils,” or reading-boys, whose duty it was to read the MS. aloud while the Reader marked the errors on the proofs, used to attain by long practice exceptional ability in deciphering the vilest “copy,” and the compositor occasionally availed himself of their aid in a difficulty. But since typewriting has come into general use, illegible copy is comparatively rare.

Further up the stairs, beyond the Readers’ rooms, were other case-rooms, one for the “jobbing” department and another known as “The Garret,” containing about twenty persons, where the case apprentices were trained by experienced men.

While the formes were being prepared for press, the damping-room below was called into operation. It was here that the paper to be printed was damped, in order that it might take on better the impression from the type. This process is now almost abandoned, except in the case of some special make of paper, as printing papers are now made with a texture which does not require damping. In the early days of Paul’s Work, however, it was very necessary.

The formes of type and the paper being ready, the pressmen put the formes on the press-bed, and after “making ready” the pages of type to ensure a uniform impression and colour on the printed sheet, proceeded to work off the formes. In the early days of last century, before the advent of the steam-printing machine, the work of the hand-pressmen must have been a constant strain on their physical powers. A “token” of 250 sheets per hour was the ordinary output; they had to lay the sheet of paper on the tympan and roll it under the press, pull the bar to take the impression, roll back, and lift off the printed sheet—all this for 250 times an hour for ten or twelve hours each day was no light task. In those days also, prior to the invention of the hand-roller, the ink had to be put on the formes of type by means of hand-balls or “dabbers”; and this, too, took a much longer time. The sheets of a book having been thus printed, either by hand-press or by machine, were next sent to the drying-room, and hung over horizontal bars, one above the other, being put up or taken down by means of long peels. When thoroughly dried the sheets were subjected to a smoothing process between highly-glazed boards under great pressure, and were then ready for the bookbinder.

What would a publisher of the present day say to the following? “The printing of ‘Sir Tristrem’ will be finished about the end of June; if you approve, it ought to lie two months before it is hot-pressed, and it could be published about the middle of October.”[46]

The press-room was on the ground-flat, which on the introduction of steam-printing, about 1817, became the machine-room.

In concluding this chapter mention may be made of a kind of democratic court common to every printing-house. This is called the “Chapel,” and its membership comprises all the journeymen. This “Chapel” is said to have originated in the time of William Caxton in one of the chapels at Westminster, and has thus an antiquity coeval with the beginning of printing in Britain. A Chapel meeting may be called at any time, either to preserve the employer’s property, or to settle a dispute regarding prices to be paid for special kinds of work. It is presided over by an experienced workman known as the “Father of the Chapel,” and its meetings are convened by another known as the “Clerk”; and any delinquent

found guilty by his peers of a trespass or fault may be subjected to a fine, from which sentence there is no appeal. Should he decline to submit, he may be “sent to Coventry,” a position which he will find very uncomfortable. One Chapel dispute regarding the _Weekly Journal_ has been already referred to, but a previous one in 1803 may be noticed here, as told in a letter of Sir Walter Scott to Miss Seward:—

“On my return, I find an apologetic letter from my printer, saying the third volume will be despatched in a day or two. There has been, it seems, a meeting (? mutiny) among the printers’ devils; also among the paper-makers. I never heard of authors _striking work_, as the mechanics call it, until their masters the booksellers should increase their pay; but if such a combination could take place, the revolt would now be general in all branches of literary labour.”[47]

Various other terms were in use in those early days of Paul’s Work, but of these only two need be noticed here—the “bullet” and the “qui.” Both refer to somewhat similar results—the “qui” being a contraction for _quietus est_, when a workman was suspended for lack of work, implying that he might be reinstated when work became more plentiful; the “bullet,” again, denoted a discharge on the spot, owing to some misconduct or fault, for which he was “shot” out of the office altogether.

CHAPTER XII

END OF OLD PAUL’S WORK

James Ballantyne was not in good health for some years before his death in 1833. During that time, as we have seen, he was assisted by his brother Alexander and by John Hughes, son of the Mr. Hughes who came from Kelso to Paul’s Work. John Hughes, beginning as a compositor, was afterwards taken into the counting-room to aid in the control of the business, and in this position he continued till the death of James Ballantyne. When the trustees opened Ballantyne’s will, they found a letter instructing them to continue John Hughes in that position till the testator’s son, John Alexander Ballantyne, came of age, and if the business were conducted to their satisfaction, John Hughes was then to receive a substantial interest in the firm.

For a number of years the firm of Ballantyne & Hughes was fairly successful. About the year 1850, however, it got into trouble, the causes for which were not far to seek. For one thing, a centralising movement had been going on for some time. Many literary men were finding it necessary to live in London for library and other consulting facilities, and the work naturally followed with the editors and the contributors. The _Edinburgh Review_, for example, which had been printed for a number of years at Paul’s Work, was removed to London, for the convenience of the editor.

Other causes also were at work. The population of Edinburgh and Leith about the time of Scott’s birth in 1771 was probably not more than 70,000; at his death in 1832 it was reckoned at about 140,000. Thus during his lifetime the number of inhabitants was doubled, and these had to find room elsewhere than in the crowded streets and wynds of old Edinburgh. The New Town across the valley was rapidly growing down the slopes of the northern hills of the city, and many of the wealthier inhabitants and of the old legal firms had already crossed, and other large businesses were following. This led to the withdrawal of much

work and traffic from the old town; whilst, again, the starting of the Blackwoods as printers of their own books, which began with the January number of _Maga_ in 1847, took away from Paul's Work not only that publication but also the _Journal of Agriculture_, the various editions of Alison's "History of Europe"—which kept the old office lively for a long time—and other works. _Tait's Magazine_, another Edinburgh periodical of good standing, was also taken away. All these and other similar changes, in the absence of a counter-current of local supply, were sufficient to weaken any business.

The firm, however, had foreseen the coming evil days, and made an effort to avert the serious consequences of the change in the tide of business. In 1846, a branch office was started at 3 Thistle Street, which soon became a successful little place, where a large amount of Court of Session work was done, as well as the printing for some of the Edinburgh insurance offices. John A. Ballantyne took charge of the branch business till John Hughes purchased the property and stock at Thistle Street. The former remained connected with the business at Paul's Work till his death in 1863.

Various changes took place after this. Work was increasing beyond the limits of the old Paul's Work, owing to the influence and energy of one of the partners, Mr. Edward Hanson, resident in London, who revived the connection which existed in the early days of James Ballantyne, and gave a great impetus to the printing of books in Edinburgh for London publishers. Mr. Hanson was born in Cleveland in Yorkshire, and as a youth went to Edinburgh in 1857 to enter the publishing house of Mr. James Nichol. Mr. Nichol was at the time engaged in the issue of a complete edition of the British Poets, in forty-eight volumes, edited by the Rev. George Gilfillan, and also an edition of the Standard Divines. Both of these series were printed at the Ballantyne Press, and Mr. Hanson became acquainted with Mr. John A. Ballantyne, the last of the family to enter the business. This friendship led eventually to Mr. Hanson joining the Ballantyne Press. After John A. Ballantyne's death a partnership was formed by Mr. James Cowan, M.P., Mr. J. D. Nichol, and Mr. Hanson. In 1875 Mr. Nichol retired from the firm, and was followed in 1879 by Mr. Cowan, leaving Mr. Hanson sole partner. In the financial arrangements requisite on the retirement of Mr. Cowan, Mr. Hanson was assisted by his friend Mr. Francis Logie Pirie, of Tottingworth Park, Sussex, who became and remained for some years a partner in the Press. Mr. Hanson subsequently assumed as partners his nephew, Mr. R. W. Hanson, in Edinburgh, and Mr. Charles M'Call in London, and with their assistance has materially developed the old business. A third generation of the Hanson family has recently joined the firm in the person of Mr. Edward Taylor Hanson.

[Illustration: WINDOW IN PAUL'S WORK OF THE PRESENT DAY]

As the neighbouring encroachments of the North British Railway station prevented any extension of old Paul's Work, plans were made for accommodation in better quarters. These were found at Clare House, lying between Findhorn Place and Causewayside. Many of the larger printing-offices have, within the last thirty years, removed their premises to the more commodious outskirts of the city, and Paul's Work was among the first to lead the way in this respect by its removal, in December 1870, to the Newington district.

In 1878 Mr. Hanson acquired the printing business of Saville, Edwards & Co., Chandos Street, and thus the firm secured for itself a habitat in London. He was fortunate in having for his manager Mr. Horace Hart, now Controller of the Oxford University Press. This branch removed to Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, in 1888, and there carries on the printing of several Magazines, as well as a considerable amount of Book

production. In 1905 it was converted into a private limited company under the name of Ballantyne & Co., Limited, the shares being chiefly held by the old firm. In 1908 the firm experienced a great loss in the death of Mr. M'Call. His son, Mr. C. H. M'Call, has succeeded to his position.

CHAPTER XIII

BIBLIOGRAPHY—EARLY DECADES OF PAUL'S WORK

Various causes render a bibliographical chapter a difficult matter. Lapse of time, enlargements of premises, removals, and changes of several kinds incident to an old business, have led to the loss of records which would have been of great value in a chapter of this kind. Apart from the works of Sir Walter Scott—of which we give a chronological list, we can only hope to describe a few of the books printed by James Ballantyne & Co. in the earlier decades of Paul's Work. It may be noted in passing, however, that much of the early work of Carlyle was printed there, particularly his "Miscellanies," which include the famous essay on Burns.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF SIR WALTER SCOTT'S WORKS

	Date of Publication.
The Chase, and William and Helen (translations from Bürger), Manners & Miller, Edinburgh	1796
Goetz von Berlichingen (translation from Goethe), and other Ballads, Manners & Miller, Edinburgh	1799
An Apology for Tales of Terror	Kelso 1799
Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border—Vols. I. and II.	Kelso 1802
Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border—Vol. III.	Edinburgh 1803
Sir Tristrem: by Thomas of Ercildoune (_Edited_)	1804
The Lay of the Last Minstrel	1805
Original Memoirs of the Great Civil War, being the Lives of Sir Henry Slingsby and Captain Hodgson (_Edited_)	1806
Ballads and Lyrical Pieces	1806
Marmion: a Tale of Flodden Field	1808
Memoirs of Captain George Carleton (_Edited_)	1808
Works of John Dryden (_Edited_)	1808
Memoirs of Robert Carey (_Edited_)	1808
Strutt's Queenhoo Hall: a Romance (_Edited_)	1808
State Papers and Letters of Sir R. Sadler (_Edited_)	1809
Lord Somers' Collection of Tracts (_Edited_)	1809-1815

English Minstrelsy (_Edited_) 1810

The Lady of the Lake 1810

The Vision of Don Roderick 1811

Secret History of the Court of James the First (_Edited_) 1811

Rokeby 1812

Warwick’s Memoirs of Reign of King Charles I. (_Edited_) 1812

The Bridal of Triermain; or, The Vale of St. John 1813

Works of Jonathan Swift (_Edited_) 1814

Letting of Humours Blood into the Head Vaine (_Edited_) 1814

Waverley; or, ’Tis Sixty Years Since 1814

The Border Antiquities 1814-1817

The Lord of the Isles 1815

Guy Mannering; or, The Astrologer 1815

The Field of Waterloo 1815

Memoirs of the Somervilles (_Edited_) 1815

Paul’s Letters to His Kinsfolk 1816

The Antiquary 1816

Tales of My Landlord (First Series): The Black Dwarf; Old Mortality 1816

Harold the Dauntless 1817

Rob Roy 1817

Tales of My Landlord (Second Series): The Heart of Midlothian 1818

Tales of My Landlord (Third Series): Bride of Lammermoor; Legend of Montrose 1819

The Visionary 1819

Ivanhoe 1819

The Monastery 1820

The Abbot 1820

Memoirs of the Haliburtons (_Edited_) 1820

Carey’s Poems and Triolets (_Edited_) 1820

The Novelists’ Library (_Edited_) 1821-1824

Franck’s Northern Memoirs (_Edited_) 1821

Kenilworth 1821

The Pirate 1822

Notes of Scottish Affairs; Diary of Lord Fountainhall (_Edited_) 1822

The Fortunes of Nigel 1822

Halidon Hill; a Metrical Drama in Two Acts 1822

Military Memoirs of the Great Civil War (_Edited_) 1822

Peveril of the Peak 1823

Quentin Durward 1823

St. Ronan's Well 1823

Redgauntlet 1824

Tales of the Crusaders: The Betrothed; The Talisman 1825

Provincial Antiquities of Scotland 1826

Letters of Malachi Malagrowther 1826

Woodstock; or, The Cavalier 1826

Life of Napoleon Buonaparte 1827

Chronicles of the Canongate (First Series): Highland Widow;
The Two Drovers; The Surgeon's Daughter 1827

Memoirs of Marchioness de la Rochejaquelin (_translation_) 1827

Tales of a Grandfather (First Series) 1827

Miscellaneous Prose Works (collected in 6 vols.) 1828

Religious Discourses by a Layman 1828

Chronicles of the Canongate (Second Series): Fair Maid of Perth 1828

Tales of a Grandfather (Second Series) 1828

Memoirs of George Bannatyne 1828

Anne of Geierstein 1829

Tales of a Grandfather (Third Series) 1829

History of Scotland (Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia) 1829-1830

Auchindrane; or, The Ayrshire Tragedy 1830

The Doom of Devorgoil 1830

Tales of a Grandfather (Fourth Series) 1830

Tales of My Landlord (Fourth Series): Count Robert of Paris;
Castle Dangerous 1831

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“The Defence of Order, a Poem, by Josiah Walker, M.A. Third Edition. Edinburgh. Printed by James Ballantyne, for Manners and Miller, Parliament Square; and sold in London, by Longman and Rees, Paternoster Row, and Cadell and Davies, Strand.” This book has the imprint at the end: “Printed by James Ballantyne, at the Border Press, Edinburgh. 1803.”

* * * * *

“The Poems of Ossian, Translated by James Macpherson, Esq. In Three Volumes. The Engravings by James Fittler, A.R.A., from Pictures by Henry Singleton. Vol. I. London: Published for William Miller, Albemarle Street; John Murray, Fleet Street; and John Harding, St. James Street. 1805.”

A very fine 12mo Edition of a famous and much-discussed work, with the imprint of James Ballantyne, Paul’s Work. A prior edition of the “Poems of Ossian, containing the Works of James Macpherson, Esq., in Prose and Rhyme,” with Notes and Illustrations by Malcolm Laing, in Two Volumes, 8vo, was printed by Ballantyne in 1802.

“This edition of the poems ascribed to Ossian is illustrated by notes, in which every simile, and almost every poetical image is traced to its source, thus serving as a commentary to point out the real originals from which the poems have been derived.”[48]

* * * * *

“Journal of the Transactions in Scotland, During the Contest between The Adherents of Queen Mary and Those of her Son, 1570, 1571, 1572, 1573. By Richard Bannatyne, Secretary to John Knox. Edinburgh. Printed by James Ballantyne and Co., For A. Constable and Co., Edinburgh, and J. Murray, 32 Fleet Street, London. 1806.”

Very little is known of this old chronicler, besides his connection with John Knox the Reformer and the fact that he was a man of learning. There are two MSS. of the above-named work—one in the University Library and the other in the Advocates’ Library at Edinburgh. From the latter Sir John Graham Dalzell took the volume published in 1806, which excited much interest. Shortly after that time the University MS. was discovered, and the two being collated by Pitcairn, a more complete edition was issued in 1836.

* * * * *

“The Poetical Works of Hector Macneill, Esq. A New Edition, Corrected and Enlarged. _Veritatis simplex oratio est._ In Two Volumes. Vol. I. Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co., for Mundell and Son, Manners and Miller, and A. Constable and Co., and Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, and John Murray, London. 1806.”

Hector Macneill (1746-1818) was a popular poet and song-writer. He had a varied experience in life, and showed his poetic ability by publishing in 1789, “The Harp, a Legendary Tale,” which brought him into favourable notice. His most popular poem, “Scotland’s Skaith, or The History of Will and Jean,” appeared in 1795, and its sequel, “The Waes o’ War,” was almost equally successful. All Macneill’s works are in the Scottish dialect. The copy here noted is the second edition (12mo); the first (8vo) was issued in 1801.

“The moral of Will and Jean was admirable,” says Constable (ii. 235), “and in favour of temperance at a time when such advice was at a discount; but it is rather curious and somewhat inconsistent to find the

author in the next poem of the series declaring

“I am resolved, be’t right or sinfu’,
To hae at least,—a decent skinfu’”—

of a large bottle of Jamaica rum, which accompanies a rhyming letter to his friend ‘Canty Chairlie.’”

* * * * *

“The Poetical Works of Sir David Lyndsay of The Mount, Lyon King at Arms under James V., with Prefatory Dissertations, and a Glossary. Three vols., crown 8vo. 1806. Longman and Co.”

This edition was the work of George Chalmers, a well-known Scottish antiquary, whose greatest work, “Caledonia,” displays much research and learning.

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“Historical Enquiry respecting the Harp in the Highlands of Scotland, 4to. Edinburgh: A. Constable. 1807.”

In regard to this work, reference has been already made (p. 36) to a letter of John Murray to Constable, in which the beauty of the typography is praised.

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“An Account of the Life and Writings of James Beattie, LL.D., late Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen. Including many of his Original Letters. By Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, Bart., one of the executors of Dr. Beattie. Second Edition. Vol. I. Edinburgh: Printed for Arch. Constable and Co., Edinburgh; Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, T. Cadell and W. Davies, and John Murray, London. 1807.”

James Beattie (1735-1803) first published a volume of poems and translations in 1760, which he afterwards tried to suppress, though the book had been favourably received. The work which brought him most prominently into notice was “An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth,” written to refute the scepticism of Hume; and it also gained him a Government pension of £200 a year. “The Minstrel” is Beattie’s best poem, and it will continue to be read when his philosophical productions are forgotten. His poems were again printed at Paul’s Work in 1854, in Nichol’s “British Poets.”

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“The Shipwreck, a Poem, by William Falconer, a sailor. With a Life of the Author. Edinburgh: Printed by J. Ballantyne and Co., for Alexander Mackay, High Street, Edinburgh, and John Murray, No. 32, Fleet Street, London. 1807.”

At an early age Falconer became a sailor on board a Leith merchantman, and in his eighteenth year was wrecked in the _Britannia_ off Cape Colonna, only three of the crew being saved. He was again wrecked with the _Ramilies_, when only twenty-six escaped out of a total of 734. After a period on shore, during which he published several poems, he joined the _Aurora_, and sailed for India in September 1769. The vessel touched at the Cape, but was never heard of again, and was supposed to have foundered in the Mozambique Channel. “The Shipwreck” is his best work, and is believed to embody his experiences in the wreck of the _Britannia_.

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“Poems by James Grahame. In Two Volumes. Vol. I. containing The Sabbath, Sabbath Walks, Rural Calendar, &c. Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co., for William Blackwood, South Bridge Street; and Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Paternoster Row, London, 1807.”

Two neatly-printed little volumes, each containing a Glossary of Scottish words at the end. “The Sabbath” first appeared in print in 1804, and was published anonymously. So careful was the poet regarding the authorship of this work, that he exacted a promise of secrecy from the printer of the first edition, whom he used to meet clandestinely at coffee-houses for the correction of proofs, but never twice at the same house.

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“Shakespeare’s Works, in eight vols. 8vo. 1807. Printed by James Ballantyne for Longman and Co., London.”

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“The Cottagers of Glenburnie; a Tale for the Farmer’s Ingle-neuk. By Elizabeth Hamilton, Author of The Elementary Principles of Education, Memoirs of Modern Philosophers, &c. Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co., for Manners and Miller, and S. Cheyne, Edinburgh; T. Cadell and W. Davies, Strand, and William Miller, Albemarle Street, London. 1808.”

Elizabeth Hamilton (1758-1816) was born in Belfast of Scottish parentage, and is worthy of note for her faithful pictures of lowly Scottish life, as well as for her works criticising the republicanism and scepticism of the time. The “Cottagers” passed through many editions, and is her best book.

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“Memoirs of Capt. George Carleton, an English officer; including Anecdotes of the War in Spain under the Earl of Peterborough, and Many Interesting Particulars relating to the Manners of the Spaniards in the beginning of last century. Written by Himself. Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co., for Archibald Constable and Co., Edinburgh; and J. Murray, London, 1808, 8vo.”

Originally published in London in 1728, this work was attributed to Dean Swift, but is now known to have been written by Defoe. In Boswell’s “Johnson” there is the following reference to it: “Lord Eliot: ‘The best account of Lord Peterborough that I have happened to meet with is in Captain Carleton’s Memoirs.’ Johnson said he had never heard of the book. Lord Eliot sent it to him. Johnson was about going to bed when it came, but sat up till he had read it through; and remarked to Sir Joshua Reynolds, ‘I did not think a _young lord_ could have mentioned to me a book in English history that was not known to me.’”

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“The Novels of Daniel de Foe. In Twelve Volumes. Vol. I. containing Life of Defoe and Robinson Crusoe. Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co., for John Ballantyne and Co., and Brown and Crombie, Edinburgh; and Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, London. 1810.”

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“Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances, chiefly written during the early part of the Fourteenth Century, to which is prefixed An Historical Introduction, intended to illustrate the Rise and Progress of Romantic Composition in France and England. By George Ellis, Esq. Second Edition in Three Volumes. Vol. I. London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster Row. 1811.”

The first edition of this interesting and valuable work was issued in 1805. The author was a great friend of Sir Walter Scott, who says of him that “George Ellis was the best converser I ever knew. His patience and good breeding made me often ashamed of myself, going off at score upon some favourite topic.”[49] Sir Walter addressed to Ellis the fifth canto of “Marmion,” in which the following lines occur:—

“Dear Ellis! to the bard impart
A lesson of thy magic art,
To win at once the head and heart,—
At once to charm, instruct, and mend,
My guide, my pattern, and my friend!”

George Ellis was also a contributor to “Specimens of the Early English Poets,” which ran through a number of editions.

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An edition of Miss Seward’s Poems, in three volumes, 12mo, edited by Scott, printed by James, and published by John Ballantyne in 1810. See _ante_, p. 38.

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“The Secret History of the Court of James the First: containing I. Osborne’s Traditional Memoirs. II. Sir Anthony Weldon’s Court and Character of King James. III. Aulicus Coquinariæ. IV. Sir Edward Peyton’s Divine Catastrophe of the House of Stuart. With Notes and Introductory Remarks. In Two Volumes. Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co., For John Ballantyne and Co., Edinburgh; and Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London. 1811.”

Two large 8vo volumes, about 480 pp. each, edited by Sir Walter Scott.

* * * * *

“The Chase, Field Sports, Rural Games, and Other Poems. By William Somerville. With a Life of the Author. Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co., for John Ballantyne and Co., Hanover Street, Edinburgh. 1812.”

The author of “The Chase” (1677-1742) was “a squire well-born, and six foot high.” He had a goodly estate in Warwickshire worth £1500 a year, but being of extravagant habits, he died in distressed circumstances. He was a friend of William Shenstone and Allan Ramsay.

* * * * *

“Tixall Poetry, With Notes and Illustrations, by Arthur Clifford, Esq., Editor of Sir Ralph Sadler’s State Papers. Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co., For Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London; and John Ballantyne and Co., Edinburgh. 1813.”

A beautifully printed 4to volume, with large margins, having some English-made Scotch songs among many other poems. This was one of the unfortunate speculations of Scott, which proved so disastrous to both the

printing and publishing firms; and yet, in spite of its non-success, the following was taken in hand not long after:—

“Tixall Letters, or the Correspondence of The Family Aston and their Friends during the Seventeenth Century. With Notes and Illustrations, by Arthur Clifford, Esq. In Two Volumes. London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster Row; and for Archibald Constable and Co., and John Ballantyne and Co., Edinburgh. 1815.”

There were two volumes in this latter work, of 216 pp. each in foolscap 8vo. The Letters refer generally to the first half of the seventeenth century.

* * * * *

“The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. By Edward Gibbon, Esq. In Twelve Volumes. Vol. I. A New Edition. London. Printed for Lackington, Allen, and Co., W. Stride, R. Scholey, and G. Cowie and Co., London; and for P. Hill, Doig and Stirling, and Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh. 1815. Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.”

Many editions of this great history have since been printed at Paul’s Work; one of the latest, in six volumes, for the “World’s Classics,” in 1904.

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“The City of the Plague and other Poems, by John Wilson, author of ‘The Isle of Palms,’ &c. Second Edition. Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co., for Archibald Constable and Company, Edinburgh; John Smith and Son, Glasgow; and Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London. 1817.”

“The Isle of Palms” was published in 1812, and the first edition of “The City of the Plague” in 1816.

* * * * *

The Bannatyne Club and its books took their initiative from George Bannatyne, a merchant of Edinburgh, who, during a time of great pestilence in 1568, retired to a secluded house in Forfarshire, and there employed his enforced leisure in making a collection of old Scottish poetry, which might otherwise have perished. “Bannatyne’s manuscript,” says Scott, in a Memoir written for the Club, “is in folio form, containing upwards of eight hundred pages, very neatly and closely written; and designed, as has been supposed, to be sent to press.” Allan Ramsay borrowed from it the specimens of old verse which appeared in his “Evergreen,” a Collection of Scots Poems, which he published in 1724; Lord Hailes issued another selection in 1770; and in 1772 the manuscript was presented to the Advocates’ Library by the Earl of Hyndford. In 1822 the Club was instituted for “the publication of substantial volumes illustrative of the history, antiquities, and general literature of Scotland.” Sir Walter Scott became president, and regularly took the chair at its annual meetings from 1823 till 1831. During the period of its existence till 1861, the Club published no fewer than 116 volumes, many of them printed at Paul’s Work. They were all deemed of value, and one complete set was sold in 1887 for £235. The membership at first consisted of thirty-one, but, owing to the desire of many persons of rank and literary distinction to join, it was gradually increased to one hundred in 1828, when it made a final pause. At the first annual dinner of the Club, on March 9, 1823, Scott wrote a song for the occasion to the tune of “One Bottle More,” several verses hitting off the foibles of various bibliophiles. This song was sung by James Ballantyne, and

heartily chorused by the company.

Three verses are here given:—

“Assist me, ye friends of Old Books and Old Wine,
To sing the praises of sage Bannatyne,
Who left such a treasure of old Scottish lore
As enables each age to print one volume more.
One volume more, my friends, one volume more,
We’ll ransack old Banny for one volume more.

...

John Pinkerton next, and I’m truly concern’d
I can’t call that worthy so candid as learn’d;
He rail’d at the plaid and blasphemed the claymore,
And sets Scots by the ears in his one volume more.
One volume more, my friends, one volume more,
Celt and Goth shall be pleased with one volume more.

...

As bitter as gall, and as sharp as a razor,
And feeding on herbs as a Nebuchadnezzar,
His diet too acid, his temper too sour,
Little Ritson came out with his two volumes more.
But one volume more, my friends, one volume more,
We’ll dine on roast beef, and print one volume more.”

One noble specimen of the Bannatyne Club books was the “Catalogue of the Library of Abbotsford,” presented to the members by Major Sir Walter Scott, December 1838. This Catalogue was prepared by Mr. Cochrane of the London Library.

* * * * *

“The History of the Ingenious Gentleman, Don Quixote of La Mancha. Translated from the Spanish, by Motteux. A new Edition with Copious Notes; and an Essay on the Life and Writings of Cervantes [by J. G. Lockhart]. In Five Volumes. Vol. I. Edinburgh: Printed for Hurst, Robinson and Co., London; and Archibald Constable and Co., Edinburgh. 1822.”

* * * * *

“The Works of John Home, Esq. Now first Collected. To which is prefixed an Account of his Writings. By Henry Mackenzie, F.R.S.E., &c. In Three Volumes. Vol. I. Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Co., Edinburgh; and Hurst, Robinson, and Co., London. 1822.”

John Home (1722-1808) was a clergyman in the Kirk of Scotland, who wrote several plays. His most popular play was “Douglas,” a Scottish romantic drama, in which maternal affection is depicted under novel and striking circumstances—the accidental discovery of a lost child; and Henry Mackenzie, “the Man of Feeling,” here gives his opinion that the chief scene, in which the preservation and the existence of the lost Douglas is discovered, has no equal in modern and scarcely a superior in ancient drama. The play was first performed at Edinburgh on December 14, 1756, and met with instant and brilliant success, but so violent a storm was raised by the fact of a Presbyterian minister so violating the rules of clerical propriety as to write a play, that the author had to succumb to the Presbytery and resign his ministry. It is in “Douglas” that the well-known passage occurs: “My name is Norval: on the Grampian hills my

father feeds his flock," &c.

* * * * *

"A Topographical and Historical Account of the Town of Kelso, and of the Town and Castle of Roxburgh. With a succinct detail of the occurrences in the History of Scotland connected with these celebrated places. And an Appendix, containing various official documents, &c. By James Haig. Edinburgh: Printed for John Fairbairn, Waterloo Place; and James Duncan, London. 1825. Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Co."

Demy 8vo, and illustrated with several fine steel engravings.

* * * * *

"The Poems of William Dunbar. Now first Collected. With Notes and a Memoir of his Life. By David Laing. Volume First. Edinburgh: MDCCCXXXIV. Printed for Laing and Forbes, Princes Street, Edinburgh, and William Pickering, London."

This old Scottish poet was born in East Lothian, and after his education at the University of St. Andrews became a Franciscan friar and travelled through France, England, and Scotland as a mendicant preacher. Little was known of his poems till the beginning of the eighteenth century, though several of them had been issued as tracts by the first Scottish printers, Walter Chepman and Andro Myllar, in 1508. Sir Walter Scott said: "Dunbar was unrivalled by any poet that Scotland has yet produced; he excelled in moral and humorous verse, and was peculiarly happy in using allegory in the advocacy of truth."

There is evidence that Dr. Laing had a previous edition of a portion of Dunbar's poems printed at Paul's Work in 1827; but just as the volume was completed, with the exception of the Introduction, a disastrous fire occurred in the binder's premises which destroyed the greater portion of the sheets, and only seventy-six copies (four on vellum) were actually published, not a few bearing evidence of the scorching they had sustained.[50]

* * * * *

"Constable's Miscellany," extending to seventy-six volumes, was first printed by Willison (Constable's father-in-law), and after his death, for two years by Hutchinson for Willison's heirs, and then at Paul's Work by Ballantyne & Co., who had also given occasional aid in the production of the early volumes. This series comprised books in all branches of literature, such as Lockhart's "Life of Burns," Robert Chambers's "History of the Rebellions in Scotland during the Seventeenth Century," 2 vols.; the same author's "History of the Rebellion of 1745," 2 vols.; Basil Hall's "Voyages," &c., &c. The first volume appeared on January 6, 1826. The "Miscellany" was "undoubtedly the pioneer and suggester of all the various 'Libraries' which sprang up in its wake, and which, after the inspiration and management of its projector had been withdrawn, may be said to have run it down.... 'Constable's Miscellany' also inaugurated the cloth bindings which are now universally adopted in our own and other countries."[51] The printing of the same publisher's _Edinburgh Review_, begun in October 1802, was done till 1806 by different printers—Mundell, Muirhead, Walker and Son, and Moir. In 1807 Willison's name first appears and continues till his death, when Hutchinson comes in for two years; and from 1827 till its removal to London it was printed at the Ballantyne Press.

It is impossible to mention a tithe of the other books which have passed through the Ballantyne Press during the century and more that has elapsed

since its origin, and all that can be attempted here is a reference to the outstanding publications which have been printed at Paul's Work. These include several editions of the Waverley Novels, Shakespeare, Browning, Dickens, Thackeray, Bret Harte, Besant and Rice, Charles Reade, Mrs. Gaskell, Charlotte Brontë, Thomas Hardy, Mrs. Sewell, and others; various editions of Ruskin's Works, including the great Library Edition of thirty-eight volumes—one of the finest works printed at the Press; Walpole's "History of England"; Maunder's "Dictionaries"; Chisholm's "Gazetteer of the World"; "The Armorial Families"; "Chronicles of the Atholl and Tullibardine Families" for the Duke of Atholl; "Military History of Perthshire," edited by the Marchioness of Tullibardine; Nuttall's "Dictionary" and "Encyclopædia" and "Dictionary of Quotations"; volumes of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," the Temple Classics, the Chandos Classics, and Lansdowne Poets; Trübner's Oriental and Philosophical Libraries of about 200 octavo volumes; editions of Henry's "Commentary" and of Hymn-books and Church Praise; Bagster's Bibles and "Daily Light" and Prayer-books; Latin and Greek text-books, Art books, works of Travel and Biography, school-books of all kinds; The Journal of the Iron and Steel Institute; The Records of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, of the Champlain Society of Toronto, and of various other learned Societies.

[Illustration]

APPENDIX

A pleasant and memorable chapter in the history of the Ballantyne Press is its connection with the Edinburgh International Exhibition of 1886, held in the West Meadows. The position occupied by Paul's Work relative to the literary history of Edinburgh since the beginning of last century, as well as other considerations, induced the firm to make an exhibit of ancient printing materials and of Early Bibles and other books in the Old Edinburgh buildings of that Exhibition; and to show a working model, so to speak, of an early printing-house. This was considered to be a very attractive feature of the Exhibition, and the following account of it appeared in the Scotsman of September 15, 1886.

"THE BALLANTYNE PRESS IN 'OLD EDINBURGH'

"Passing through the Nether Bow Port, and keeping to the left, visitors to the Exhibition will come upon the reproduction of an old house in Dickson's Close, now improved away, and supposed to have been originally the work of Robert Mylne, the builder of the modern portion of Holyrood, and peculiar from its upper storeys and open galleries projecting for several feet beyond the basement—a not uncommon feature of the architecture of olden times. This house, or a near neighbour to it in the same 'land,' was at one time the abode of David Allan, the Scottish Hogarth. Above the door is an old-fashioned swinging signboard showing 'Ye Ballantyne Presse, 1796,' while the windows are adorned with stained glass. Here Messrs. Ballantyne, Hanson & Co., Paul's Work, have gathered together a goodly display of the old implements of the 'prenters,' ancient Bibles and other books, as well as a number of other curios.

"Prominent among the typographical antiquities is a venerable

wooden hand-press, nearly two centuries old, and substantially identical with those used in the early stages of the art. This press is worked by a genial and chatty representative of Caxton, in a neat sixteenth-century costume. He is engaged printing off sundry jobs, using the old-fashioned hand-balls or ‘dabbers’ for putting the ink on the types, a method of inking which came in with the art, and which was superseded by the modern ‘roller’ only about fifty years ago. Within the cases on the counter of this old curiosity shop are to be seen ancient composing-sticks, type moulds, punches, matrices, &c., for casting types. In the cases are also a number of relative curiosities, lent for exhibition by the Oxford University Press, and originally the property of the celebrated Dr. Fell. Among these is a small quarto book, printed in 1700, containing the Lord’s Prayer in upwards of 200 languages. Here also is a parcel of Icelandic type, given to the Oxford Press by Francis Junius about 1677, and some music type of the seventeenth century.

“In one case is a proof-sheet of the ‘Life of Napoleon,’ by Sir Walter Scott, with the author’s corrections. One page of this proof-sheet, which is the property of the Earl of Rosebery, has a characteristic remark by James Ballantyne, the printer, in reference to one of Sir Walter’s footnotes. It was to be expected from the connection the Ballantynes had with Scott that some relics of the author of the Waverley Novels would be shown, and here are to be seen the chair and desk reserved for his use in Paul’s Work when he came to correct his proofs or transact business.

“Around the walls are also to be seen a number of pictures, among these being a copy by Maris of Raeburn’s portrait of Scott; a proof copy of the well-known engraving of Scott and his contemporaries; Caxton in Westminster Abbey; old views of Edinburgh, one of them dated 1579, &c. A remarkably fine etching shows the bookselling shop of Jacob van Liesvelt at Antwerp in the sixteenth century. Liesvelt was condemned and beheaded at Antwerp, because in the annotations of a Bible he had edited and printed, it was said that ‘the salvation of mankind proceeds from Christ alone!’ A number of old playbills also adorn the walls, some of these having portraits framed along with them, such as that of Mackay as Bailie Nicol Jarvie, Mrs. Siddons as Lady Randolph, and Mr. Liston as Dominie Sampson. One old playbill is shown of the Kelso Theatre, printed by Ballantyne at the Border Press, before Scott induced him to remove his printing-office to Paul’s Work, Edinburgh.

“There are here a number of old newspapers—the _Kingdom’s Intelligencer_, the _Perfect Diurnal_, the _Courant_, _Caledonian Mercury_, &c. One of the _Diurnals_ contains a despatch of General Monk, dated from his headquarters at Dalkeith in August 1654; and a _Caledonian Mercury_ of August 26, 1822, contains a subscription list for the National Monument on Calton Hill, and the _menu_ for the banquet given by the municipality of Edinburgh to George IV. in Parliament House. There is also an early number of the _Scotsman_, of 1855, shown by way of contrast to the present issues of the journal.

[Illustration: DESK USED BY SIR WALTER SCOTT IN PAUL’S WORK]

“To many visitors, however, the interest in the Ballantyne Press exhibits will centre in the fine collection of Ancient

Bibles and other books which have been gathered together. The gem of this collection is a copy of the very rare ‘Mentelin’ Bible, printed about 1466—one of the earliest printed by the aid of movable type, in fine condition, with initial letters filled in by the hand, of beautiful design and colouring. The table of contents extends to eighteen pages, and is all in MS. of various colours. Another rare Bible is the Hans Lufft, or first edition of Luther’s Bible in two volumes, printed in 1534. This Bible is in its original binding of wood with brass mountings, and has a great number of woodcuts printed along with the text, which in this copy were afterwards coloured by hand expressly for the Prince Protector. The existence of this Bible was frequently denied by learned men of Germany, owing to its great rarity, caused by the destruction of most copies by the Roman Catholics. John George of Saxony was unable to obtain it for himself, and was obliged to be contented with the sight of one, then supposed to be unique. A copy of this work sold at a very high price at Lord Holland’s sale in 1860. The engravings throughout the work, and especially in the Revelation of St. John, are curious and full of anachronisms—the patriarchs and prophets being clad in the German costume of the sixteenth century. Another Lutheran Bible here is one printed at Nurnberg, in 1720, by Andrea Enolters. This is said to be one of the finest of all the ancient German Bibles, and has, besides a number of beautiful engravings of Biblical scenes, several portraits of well-known German princes. It is also in its original binding with metal ornaments. A copy of the first edition of the Paris printer Robert Stephens’ valuable Greek Testament, in two volumes, published in 1546, may also be seen. A former possessor has enriched the margins of this copy with a copious supply of Latin notes and comments in very small MS. There were other editions of this book published in 1549, 1550, and 1551. That of 1551, published at Geneva, was divided into verses as we have the Bible now, a plan which the printer Stephens was the first to put into actual use.

[Illustration: SIR WALTER SCOTT’S CHAIR IN PAUL’S WORK]

“Of a more purely local interest, however, is a copy of another Bible we find here, that of the first one printed in Scotland, with the date of 1576. This work, printed by Alexander Arbuthnot and Thomas Bassendyne, has a history of its own. It was put in type from the Genevan version, and has the well-known ‘breeches’ translation of Genesis iii. 7, and contains also the side-notes, to which King James is said afterwards to have strongly objected as ‘partial, untrue, and seditious,’ when arrangements were being made for the Authorised translation of 1611. Besides being connected with the first Bible printed in Scotland, Bassendyne’s printing-office, which was situated in a close nearly opposite John Knox’s house, is repeatedly referred to in the evidence of the accomplices of the Earl of Bothwell in the murder of Darnley, an event which took place in the lifetime of the old printer. In the deposition of George Dalgleish, one of those who were executed for their share in that crime, it is stated that, ‘efter thay enterit within the Nether Bow Port, thai zeid up abone Bassyntine’s house, on the south side of the gait, and knockit at ane dur beneth the sword slippers, and callit for the Laird of Ormestounes, and one within answerit he was not thare; and thai passit down a cloiss beneth Frier Wynd, and enterit in at the zet of the Black Friers.’ This reference clearly indicates that Bassendyne’s workshop was situated near

the Nether Bow, whence was issued the folio Bible which is here shown.

“Another Genevan or ‘breeches’ version, printed by Christopher Barker in 1586, is also in the collection, this one having the Book of Common Prayer at the beginning. There is here, too, King James’s own copy of the first edition of the Authorised Version of 1611, printed by Robert Barker in black letter. It is in fine condition, with the Royal arms on the massive outside boards, and contains the well-known and curiously elaborate genealogical tables by John Speed. Taking thought for the common people, King James is said to have given orders that a smaller and cheaper edition of the Authorised Version in Roman type should be prepared in quarto size. This was also printed by Robert Barker, and published in 1614, and is to be seen here, along with many other Bibles, some with curious bindings, and others with music to the Psalms. Several of the more important of the Bibles above mentioned have been lent for exhibition by the Rev. Dr. Ginsburg of London.

“One of the most curious black-letter books in the Ballantyne collection, and with an interesting history, is a copy of the first complete Concordance to the English Bible, written by John Marbek (or Merbecke), and printed by Richard Grafton, in 1550. This John Marbek was organist to the Royal Chapel at Windsor, and his book bears the following title: ‘A Concordance, that is to saie a worke wherein by the ordere of the letters A. B. C. ye maie redely finde any worde conteigned in the whole Bible, so often as it is there expressed or mentioned.’ Marbek, after various difficulties, had gone on with his Concordance as far as the letter L, when all his papers were seized, and he was apprehended and imprisoned. ‘He was arraigned, for that he had with his own hand gathered out of divers men’s writings certain things that were expressly against both the mass and the sacrament of the altar. He was arraigned and condemned with three others—namely, Anthony Persone, priest; Robert Testwood, singing-man; and Henry Filmer, tailor; on account of the Six Articles in the year 1544; the three last were burned at Windsor, but the innocence of Marbek gained him the King’s pardon.’

“When he was set at liberty, as his papers were not restored to him, he had his Concordance to begin again; and this, when completed, he showed to a friend, who promised to assist him in having it presented to the King, in order to have it published by his authority; but Henry VIII. died before that could be brought about, and it was accordingly dedicated to Edward VI. This folio black-letter Concordance gives a good specimen of the printer Grafton’s rebus or monogram, a _graft_ inserted into a _tun_.

“A number of other interesting curiosities, and a library of ancient books, too numerous to be detailed here, are in various cabinets and bookcases in this shop of Old Edinburgh. Many of the volumes are over 300 years old; several are in their original bindings; and all are in fair condition. Classics from the printing-presses of the Elzevirs, Stephens, Gryphius, Foulis, Ruddiman, and other printers whose names are now historical, are all to be seen, besides a goodly array of fine art and other books, the more recent productions of Messrs. Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.”—W. T. D.

THE END

[Illustration: NEW PAUL'S WORK, EDINBURGH]

FOOTNOTES

[1] "I remember it was a thing of daily occurrence, that after he had made himself master of his own lesson, I, alas! being still sadly to seek in mine, he used to whisper to me, 'Come, slink over beside me, Jamie, and I'll tell you a story.'"—James Ballantyne's "Memorandum."

[2] Afterwards published in 1801, and coldly received.

[3] Lockhart's "Life of Scott," ii. 42, 43.

[4] The Count was a native of Russian Poland, and was in early life patronised by a Polish lady, with whom he visited various countries of Europe. He resided for some time in Paris, but quitting it shortly before the Revolution came over to this country. He exhibited himself at fairs, and was a favourite with the public, to whom he recommended himself not only by his diminutive stature, but by his intelligence and genial disposition. He eventually realised enough to enable him to spend the last thirty years of his life in comfort. The Count's height was exactly 35½ inches, and his person was a model of symmetry. His remains were interred in Durham Cathedral, near those of his intimate friend, Stephen Kemble.

[5] This and the view of Kelso market-place in 1797, at page 3, are also given through the courtesy of the present proprietor of the _Mail_.

[6] Endorsed by Professor Saintsbury ("Sir Walter Scott," Famous Scots Series): "The earliest form of the 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border' is a very pretty book: it deservedly established the fame of Ballantyne as a printer."

[7] "A History of Accounting and Accountants" (T. C. and E. C. Jack, 1904).

[8] The following note gives the residents in the little street in James Ballantyne's time:—

No. 1, the old street guardian.

No. 2, Mr. Ewart and two sons, officials in the Chancery Office.

No. 3, Dr. Brunton, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages, Edinburgh University, and Mrs. Brunton, authoress of some religious novels, which had considerable popularity in their day.

No. 4, Mr. Phillips, Commissioner of Customs.

No. 5, Mr. Alexander Cowan, the well-known papermaker.

No. 6, Mr. Andrew Bogle, Secretary Royal Bank of Scotland.

No. 7, Mrs. McLeod, widow of McLeod of St. Kilda, with a large family of daughters and one son, who rose to the rank of General in the Indian Army.

No. 8, The Countess of Hyndford.

No. 9, Miss Suttie, an old lady from East Lothian.

No. 10, Mr. James Ballantyne.

No. 13, Mr. Speid, W.S., laird of Ardovie, Forfarshire.

No. 14, Mr. Andrew Ramsay, Advocate; and, later on, Mr. Alexander Ballantyne.

No. 15, Mr. Trotter, the laird of Morton Hall.

—_Derived from_ Mr. Charles Cowan's "Reminiscences" (1878).

[9] "The Book-Fancier" (1886), p. 80.

[10] Lockhart's "Life of Scott," iii. 120, 121.

[11] Lockhart's "Life of Scott," v. 218.

[12] "James Ballantyne has taken his brother Sandy into the house, I mean the firm."—"Scott's Journal," Feb. 21, 1829.

[13] See also James Ballantyne's suggestions as to the "Field of Waterloo," given on p. 67; and a fuller treatment of this topic in Chapter IX.

[14] Lockhart's "Life of Scott," ii. 201, 202.

[15] "My father never could forgive Scott his concealment of the Ballantyne partnership."—Ruskin, "Fors Clavigera," Letter liv.

[16] "Constable and his Literary Correspondents," i. 376.

[17] "The book was among the most unfortunate that James Ballantyne printed, and his brother published, in deference to the personal feelings of their partner."—Lockhart's "Life," iii. 298. See further on this point, Chapter V., p. 46.

[18] "The conclusion of the matter was that the Ballantyne publishing company found a haven in the capacious bosom of Constable, who believed in the Star of Scott, advanced some £4000, and took off the sinking ship the useless burden of the valueless books."—A. LANG.

[19] "He was a prince of booksellers.... He knew, I think, more of the business of a bookseller in planning and executing popular works than any man of his time."—Scott's "Journal," July 23, 1827.

[20] Willison was his own press-reader. He was rigid in his ideas of punctuation, and gave much trouble to the Reviewers by his finical particularity in this respect. A story is told of his having on one occasion sent Jeffrey a second proof (technically _revise_) of a portion of one of his criticisms, with a note on the margin, that "there appeared to be something unintelligible in this passage." Jeffrey returned the proof unaltered, with a note to the effect that "Mr. Jeffrey can see nothing unintelligible in this passage, unless in the number of commas, which Mr. Willison seems to keep in a pepper-box beside him, for the purpose of dusting the proof with."

[21] A complete set of the _Sale Room_ in good condition is very rare.

[22] Charles Cowan's "Reminiscences."

[23] Lockhart's "Life of Scott," vi. 67.

[24] "Perhaps the very best specimens of Scott's powers in this direction are the prefaces which he contributed much later and gratuitously to John Ballantyne's 'Novelists' Library'—things which hardly yield to Johnson's 'Lives' as examples of the combined arts of criticism and biography."—Saintsbury's "Sir Walter Scott" (Famous Scots Series).

[25] Lockhart's "Life of Scott," vi. 328, 329.

[26] "Literary Lives" (Hodder & Stoughton).

[27] "To dethrone the Scot's one-pound note, the Palladium of the ancient kingdom."—A. LANG.

[28] "Meadowbank taxed me with the novels, and to end that farce at once I pleaded guilty, so that splore is ended."—Scott's "Journal," Feb. 24, 1827.

[29] Smiles' "Life of John Murray," i. 457, 461.

[30] Many manuscripts of modern authors are execrable, and little care is taken to make what is written plain and intelligible, resulting in "errors of the press," though, owing to the vigilance of the press reader, comparatively few of these meet the eye of the public. In the preparation of their "copy" lawyers of high repute will leave technical and foreign terms in a truncated or misspelt way; divines frequently show an aversion to both punctuation marks and capitals, the omission of which would bring scorn and contempt upon the compositor and the reader. Many instances of faulty manuscripts could be cited. A few will suffice. A learned professor in a northern university wrote in such a shocking spidery hand that the men were paid a third more for putting it in type; a divine, long since gone over to the majority, wrote his sermons on any scrap of paper he got hold of—old bills, torn envelopes, &c.—and thus caused an infinity of labour in arranging these oddments in a readable way. If any particular bit got transposed from its proper place, it did not appear to matter very much; it was as well there as anywhere else. Similar to this was a famous writer, well known at Paul's Work, who, prior to his morning prowl among old bookshops, would fill his pockets with scraps of paper—envelopes and such-like—on which he noted the particulars of his daily finds; and these were afterwards sent to the printer to be arranged for a book. Another reverend writer, whose works were many and sold well, would take a quarto sheet of paper to write on—beginning with a narrow centre column for the first draft of his subject; to this would be added afterthoughts by branching lines to the centre column, till the whole sheet was full—like a rushing river gathering in fresh supplies from meandering rivulets on either side of its course. But this topic is a wide and curious one, and instances might be given where an author was unable to read his own "copy," and had to see a proof of what could be set in type before he was able to remedy an unreadable passage or supply an obscure or missing word.

[31] By permission of the Curators of the Library there is here given a facsimile of a page of "Waverley."

[32] The following note is from C. G. Leland's translation of Heine's "Pictures of Travel" (i. 258): "Of all great writers, Byron is just the one whose writings excite in me the least passion, while Scott, on the contrary, in his every book gladdens, tranquillises, and strengthens my heart. Even his imitators please me, as in such instances as Willibald Alexis, Bronikowski, and Cooper, the first of whom, in the ironic 'Walladmor,' approaches nearest his pattern, setting before our souls a poetic originality well worthy of Scott."

[33] Hutton's "Life of Scott."

[34] An old name for hand-pressmen, as "cuddie" was for the compositor: both now gone out of use.

[35] Lockhart's "Life of Scott," v. 344, 345.

[36] It may be interesting to reproduce here the statement of accounts, &c., of the paper at the time of the sale:

RECEIPTS

Sale of Newspapers	£2390
Advertisements	1055
Total	£3445

EXPENDITURE

Annual cost of stamps and paper	£1425
Printing	570
Advertisement duty	360
Clerks' salaries, office rent, &c.	250
Allowance for bad debts	230
Profits	610
Total	£3445

—_Edinburgh Newspapers, Past and Present_ (1891).

[37] Andrew's "British Journalism," &c.

[38] See also a letter of Scott to Ellis (Lockhart's "Life," iii. 145):—"An Edinburgh Annual Register, to be conducted under the auspices of James Ballantyne, _who is himself no despicable composer_."

[39] "The Greville Memoirs," i. 251.

[40] _Tait's Magazine_ (1839), pp. 657, 658, 668.

[41] "Leaves from My Autobiography." By Rev. Charles Rogers, LL.D.

[42] Miss Martineau's "Biographical Sketches," pp. 347, 348.

[43] "No man was better fit to arbitrate in this difficult dispute than Chambers was."—Claudius Clear, in the _British Weekly_, January 1907.

[44] _Fraser's Magazine_, 1835.

[45] See footnote, pp. 47-48.

[46] Letter of James Ballantyne in "Constable and his Literary Correspondents," iii. 5.

[47] Lockhart's "Life of Scott," ii. 125.

[48] "Constable and his Literary Correspondents," ii. 197.

[49] Journal, Aug. 29, 1826.

[50] In connection with this a curious fraud may be noted here. At the sale of Dr. Laing's library there was disposed of a number of odd lots of

pamphlets and papers, and amongst these a quantity of undamaged sheets of the Ballads and Poems of Dunbar. Whoever bought these was determined to make a profit out of them, for an Edinburgh “book-hunter” discovered one day in a second-hand bookseller’s shop a nicely bound gilt-top quarto volume, bearing the title “Ancient Poetry of Scotland. Edinburgh, 1508,” and having the device of Andro Myllar on it. Facing the title was “Imprinted Glasgow, 1800. Limited to 50 copies, 10 on thick paper, 1 on vellum.” The book looked tempting, and was bought; but, to the bibliophile’s disappointment, it proved most fragmentary, as it contained only a limited portion of the sheets of the Ballantyne reprint several times repeated, irrespective of consecutiveness, throughout the book, and many of the pages bore traces of the accident which befell the original work.

[51] “Constable and his Literary Correspondents,” iii. 305, 310.

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