decided activity of intellect, and strong symptoms of its di­version towards literary pursuits ; but now, introduced with imperfect preparation into a large and thoroughly trained class, and thrown, for the first time in his life, among a crowd of boisterous boys, his childish zeal for learning seems to have been quenched by ambition of another kind. His memory, it is true, was still remarkable, and procured for him from his master the title of historian of the class ; while he produced some school-verses, both translated and original, which were at least creditable for a boy of twelve. Even his intellectual powers, however, were less active in the pro­per business of the school than in enticing his companions from their tasks by merry jests and little stories ; and his place as a scholar scarcely ever rose above mediocrity. But his reputation stood high in the play-ground, where, possessed of unconquerable courage, and painfully eager to defeat the scorn which his physical defects excited, he is described as performing hazardous feats of agility, and as gaining pugilistic trophies over comrades who, that they might have no unfair advantage over the lame boy, fought, like him, lashed face to face on a plank. At home, his tu­tor, a zealous Presbyterian, initiated him, chiefly by means of conversation, in the facts of Scottish history, political as well as ecclesiastical, though without being able to shake those opinions which the boy had already taken up as an inheritance descending from his Jacobite ancestors ; and he pursued with eagerness, at every interval which could be stolen from the watchfulness of his elders, a course of read­ing utterly miscellaneous and undigested, and embracing much that to most minds would have been either useless or positively injurious. “ I left the High School,” says he, “ with a great quantity of general information, ill arranged, indeed, and collected without system, yet deeply impressed upon my mind, readily assorted by my power of connexion and memory, and gilded, if I may be permitted to say so. by a vivid and active imagination.”

His perusal of histories, voyages, and travels, fairy tales, romances, and English poetry, was continued with increas­ing avidity during a long visit which, in his twelfth year, he paid to his father’s sister at the village of Kelso, where, lying beneath a noble plane-tree in an antique garden, and beholding around him one of the most beautiful landscapes in Scotland, the young student read for the first time, with entranced enthusiasm, Percy’s Reliques of Ancient Poetry. This work, besides the delight which was imparted by the poems it contained, influenced his mind by giving new dig­nity, in his eyes, to his favourite Scottish ballads, which he had already begun to collect from recitation, and to copy in little volumes, several of which are still preserved at Abbotsford. “ To this period, also,” he tells us, “ I can trace distinctly the awaking of that delightful feeling for the beauties of natural objects, which has never since de­serted me. The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind, naturally rested upon and associated themselves with the grand features of the land­scape around me ; and the historical incidents or traditional legends connected with many of them gave to my admira­tion a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers’ piety or splen­dour, became with me an insatiable passion, which, if cir­cumstances had permitted, I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe.”

In November 1783, Scott became a student in the univer­sity of Edinburgh, in which, however, he seems to have at­tended no classes but those of Greek, Latin, and logic, du­ring one session, with those of ethics and universal history at a later period, while preparing for the bar. At college the scholastic part of his education proceeded even more unpros- perously than it had previously done. For science, mental,

physical, or mathematical, he displayed no inclination ; and in the acquisition of languages, for which he possessed consi­derable aptitude, he was but partially industrious or success­ful. Of Greek, as his son-in-law and biographer admits, he had in later life forgotten the very alphabet. He had indeed entered on the study with disadvantages similar to those which had formerly impeded his progress in Latin ; he had, as he informs us, petulantly resolved on despising a study in which he found himself inferior to his competi­tors ; and Professor Dalziel, irritated not only by his care­lessness, but by an essay in which he maintained that Ariosto was a better poet than Homer, solemnly pronounced of him, “ that dunce he was, and dunce would remain.” His know- ledge of Latin does not appear to have ever extended far­ther than enabling him to catch loosely the meaning of his author ; although we are informed that for some writers in that tongue, especially Lucan, Claudian, and Buchanan, he had in after life a decided predilection. About the time now under review, he also acquired French, Italian, and Spanish, all of which he afterwards read with sufficient ease ; and the German language was learned a few years later, but never critically understood.

It was some time between his twelfth and his sixteenth year that his stores of romantic and poetical reading received a vast increase, during a severe illness which long confined him to bed ; and one of his schoolfellows has given an in­teresting account of excursions in the neighbourhood of the city, during this period, when the two youths read poems and romances of knight-errantry, and exercised their invention in composing and relating to each other interminable tales modelled on their favourite books. The vocation of the romance-writer and poet of chivalry was thus already fixed. His health likewise became permanently robust. The sickly boy grew up into a muscular and handsome youth ; and the lameness in one leg, which was the sole remnant of his carly complaints, was through life no obstacle to his habits of active bodily exertion, or to his love for out-of-door sports and exercise.

The next step in his life did not seem directed towards the goal to which all his favourite studies pointed. His father, a formal though high-spirited and high-principled man, whose manners are accurately described in his son’s novel of Redgauntlet, designed him for the legal profes­sion ; and, although he always looked wishftιlly forward to his son’s embracing the highest department of it, considered it advisable, according to a practice not uncommon in Scot­land, that he should be prepared for the bar by an education as an attorney. Accordingly, in May 1786, Scott, then nearly fifteen years old, was articled for five years as an ap­prentice to his father, in whose chambers **he** thenceforth continued, for the greater part of every day, to discharge the humble duties of a clerk, until., about the year 1790, he had, with his father’s approbation, finally resolved on coming to the bar. Of the amount of the young poet’s professional industry during those years of servitude we possess con­flicting representations; but many circumstances in his habits, many peculiarities in the knowledge he exhibits in­cidentally in his works, and perhaps even much of his re­solute literary industry, may be safely referred to the pe­riod of his apprenticeship, and show satisfactorily that at all events he was not systematically negligent of his duties. Historical and imaginative reading, however, continued to be prosecuted with undiminished ardour ; summer excur­sions into the Highlands introduced him to the scenes, and to more than one of the characters, which afterwards figured in his most successful works ; while in the law-classes of the university, as well as in the juvenile debating societies, he formed, or renewed from his school-days, acquaintance with several who became in manhood his cherished friends and his literary advisers. In 1791 the Speculative Society made him acquainted with Mr Jeffrey and those other young