men whose subsequent celebrity has been to a small extent reflected on the arena of their early training.

Scott’s attempts in poetry had now become more am­bitious ; for, it is said, about the completion of his fifteenth year, he had composed a poem in four books on the Con­quest of Granada, which, however, he almost immediately burned, and no trace of it has been preserved. During some years after this time, we hear of no other literary composi­tions than essays for the debating societies.

In July 1792, being almost twenty-one years of age, he was called to the bar. Immediately after his first circuit, he commenced that series of “ raids,” as he playfully call­ed them, or excursions into the secluded border-districts, which in a few years enabled him to amass the materials for his first considerable work. His walks on the boards of the Parliament House, the Westminster Hall of Scotland, if they gained him for a time few professional fees, speedily procured him renown among his fellow-lawyers as a story­teller of high excellence; his father’s connections and his own friendships opened for him a ready admission into the best society of the city, in which his cheerful temper and his rich store of anecdotes made him universally popular ; and his German studies produced, in 1796, his earliest poeti­cal efforts that were published, namely, the translations of Burger’s ballads, Lenora and the Wild Huntsman. The same year witnessed the disappointment of a long and fond­ly-cherished hope, by the marriage of a young lady, whose image, notwithstanding, clung to his memory through life, and inspired some of the tenderest strains of his poetry.

In the summer of 1797, however, on a visit to the water­ing-place of Gilsland, in Cumberland, he became acquaint­ed with Charlotte Margaret Carpenter, a young lady of French birth and parentage, whose mother, the widow of a royalist of Lyons, had escaped to England, and there died, leaving her children to the guardianship of their father’s friend the Marquis of Downshire. A mutual attachment ensued; and, after the removal of prudential doubts, which had arisen among the connections on both sides, Scott and Miss Carpenter were married at Carlisle in December of the same year.

The German ballads, which, though they met with very little sale, had been justly praised by a few competent critics, served as the translator’s introduction to the then celebrated Matthew Gregory Lewis, who enlisted him as a contributor to his poetical Tales of Wonder ; and one cannot now but smile to hear of the elation with which the author of Wa- verley at that time contemplated the patronising kindness extended to him by the author of The Monk. Early in 1788 was published Scott’s translation of Goethe’s Goetz von Berlichingen, which, through Lewis’s assistance, was sold to a London bookseller for twenty-five guineas ; but, though favourably criticised, it was received by the public as coldly as the preceding volume. In the summer of 1799, the poet wrote those ballads which he has himself called his “ first serious attempts in verse the Glenfinlas, the Eve of St John, and the Grey Brother.

After Scott’s marriage, several of his summers were spent in a pretty cottage at Lasswade near Edinburgh, where he formed, besides other acquaintances, those of the noble houses of Melville and Buccleuch. The influence of these powerful friends, willingly exerted for one whose society was agreeable, whose birth connected him, though very re­motely, with the latter of those titled families, and who in politics was decidedly and actively devoted to the ruling party, procured for him, in the end of the year 1799, his ap­pointment as sheriff-depute of Selkirkshire, an office which imposed very little duty, while it gave him a permanent sa­lary of L.300 per annum. His father’s death had recently bestowed on him a small patrimony; his wife had an income which was considerable enough to aid him greatly; his prac­tice as a lawyer yielded, though not much, yet more than

barristers of his standing can usually boast of ; and, altoge­ther, his situation in life, if not eminent, was at least strik­ingly favourable when compared with that which has fallen to the lot of most literary men. Scott, however, now twen­ty-eight years of age, had done nothing to found a reputa­tion tor him as a man of letters ; and there appeared as yet to be but little probability that he should attach himself to literature as a profession, or consider it as any thing more than a relaxation for those leisure hours which were left un­occupied by business and the enjoyments of polite society.

In 1800 and 1801 those hours were employed in the pre­paration of the Border Minstrelsy, the fruit of his childish recollections, and of his youthful rambles and studies. The first two volumes appeared in the beginning of the next year, and the edition, consisting of eight hundred copies, was sold off before its close. This work, however, the earliest of his which can be said to have given him any general fame, yielded him about eighty pounds of clear profit ; being very far less than he must have expended in the investigations out of which it sprang. In 1803 it was completed by the publication of the third volume. Besides the value which the Minstrelsy possesses in itself, in the noble antique bal­lads, so industriously, tastefully, and yet conscientiously edited, in the curious and spiritedly-used information which overflows through all the prose annotations, and in those few original poems which gave the earliest warning of that genius which as yet had lurked unseen, the work has now a separate value and interest, as forming the most curious of all illustrations for the history of its editor’s mind and of his subsequent works. “ One of the critics of that day,” re­marks Mr Lockhart, “ said that the book contained 'the elements of a hundred historical romances ;’ and this critic was a prophetic one. No person who has not gone through its volumes for the express purpose of comparing their con­tents with his great original works, can have formed a con­ception of the endless variety of incidents and images, now expanded and emblazoned by his mature art, of which the first hints may be found either in the text of those primi­tive ballads, or in the notes which the happy rambles of his youth had gathered together for their illustration.”

But before the publication of the Border Minstrelsy, the poet had begun to attempt a higher flight. “ In the third volume,” says he, writing to his friend George Ellis in 1803, “ I intend to publish a long poem of my own. It will be a kind of romance of border chivalry, in a light-horseman sort of stanza.” This border romance was the Lay of the Last Minstrel, which, however, soon extended in plan and dimensions, and, originating as a ballad on a goblin story, became at length a long and varied poem. The first draught of it, in its present shape, was written in the autumn of 1802, and the whole history of its progress has been de­lightfully told by the author himself, and is well illustrated by his biographer.

In 1803, during a visit to London, Scott, already famili­arly acquainted with Ellis, Heber, and other literary men, and now possessing high reputation himself in virtue of the Minstrelsy, was introduced to several of the first men of the time ; and thenceforth, bland as he was in manner, and kind in heart, indefatigable and successful in his study of human character, and always willing to receive with cordiality the strangers whom his waxing fame brought about him, it is not surprising to find, that not to know personally Walter Scott, argued one’s self unknown. The toleration and kind­liness of his character are illustrated by the fact, that firm as his own political opinions were, and violently as excite­ment sometimes led him to express them, not only did he always continue on friendly terms with the chief men of the opposite party in Edinburgh, but several of them were his intimate friends and associates ; and he even was for some years an occasional contributor **to** the Edinburgh Review.

In 1804 was published his edition of the ancient poem