of Sir Tristrem, so valuable for its learned dissertations, and for that admirable imitation of the antique which appears as a continuation of the early minstrel’s work.

During that year and the preceding, the Lay was freely communicated to all the author’s friends, Wordsworth and Jeffrey among the rest; and after undergoing various changes, and receiving enthusiastic approval in several quarters from which commendation was wont to issue but sparingly, it was at length published, in the first week of 1805. The poet, now thirty-three years of age, took his place at once as a classic in English literature. Its circu­lation immediately became immense, and has since ex­ceeded that of any other English poem.

But exactly at this culminating point of the poet’s life, we must turn aside from the narrative of his literary tri­umphs, to notice a step of another kind, which proved the most important he ever took. In one of those interesting communications of 1830, which throw so much light on his personal history, he has told us, that from the moment when it became certain that literature was to form the principal employment of his days, he determined that it should at least not constitute a necessary source of his income. Few literary men, perhaps, have not nourished a wish of this sort ; but very few indeed have possessed, like Scott, the means of converting the desire into an effectual resolution. In 1805, as his biographer tells us, he was, “ independently of practice at the bar and of literary profits, in possession of a fixed revenue of nearly, if not quite, L.1000 a year.” To most men of letters this income would have appeared af­fluence ; but Scott has frankly avowed, that he did not think it such. The truth is, that his mind was already filled with the feeling which speedily became its master-passion, name­ly, the ambition, not of founding a new family (for that was too mean an aim for his pride of birth to stoop to), but of adding to his own ancestral pretensions that claim to respect which ancient pedigree does not always possess when it stands alone, but which belongs to it beyond chal­lenge when it is united with territorial possessions. The fame of a great poet, now within his reach, if not already grasped, seemed to him a little thing, compared with the dignity of a well-descended and wealthy Scottish land­holder ; and, while neither he nor his friends could yet have foreseen the immensity of those resources which his genius was afterwards to place at his disposal for the attainment of his favourite wish, two plans occurred and were executed, which promised to conduct him far at least towards the goal.

The first of these was the obtaining of one of the princi­pal clerkships in the Scottish Court of Session, offices of high respectability, executed at a moderate cost of time and trouble, and remunerated at that time by an income of about L.800 a year, which was afterwards increased to L.1300. This object was attained early in 1806, through his ministerial influence, aided by the consideration paid to his talents ; although, owing to a private arrangement with his predecessor, he did not receive any part of the emolu­ments till six years later.

The second plan was of a different sort, being in fact a commercial speculation. James Ballantyne, a schoolfellow of Scott, a man possessing a good education, and consider­able literary talent of a practical kind, having become the editor and printer of a newspaper in Kelso, had been em­ployed to print the Minstrelsy, and acquired great reputa­tion by the elegance with which that work was produced. Soon afterwards, in pursuance of Scott’s advice, he removed to Edinburgh, where, under the patronage of the poet and his friends, and assisted by his own character and skill, his printing business accumulated to an extent which his capi­tal, even with pecuniary aid from Scott, proved inadequate to sustain. An application for a new loan was met by a refusai, accompanied, however, by a proposal, that Scott

should make a large advance, on condition of being admitted as a partner in the firm, to the amount of a third share. Accordingly, in May 1805, 'Walter Scott became regularly a partner of the printing-house of James Ballantyne and Company, though the fact remained for the public, and for all his friends but one, a profound secret. “ The forming of this commercial connexion was,” says his son-in-law, “ one of the most important steps in Scott’s life. He continued bound by it during twenty years, and its influence on his literary' exertions and his worldly fortunes was productive of much good and not a little evil. Its effects were in truth so mixed and balanced during the vicissitudes of a long and vigorous career, that I at this moment doubt whether it ought, on the whole, to be considered with more of satis­faction or of regret.”

From this time we are to view Scott as incessantly en­gaged in that memorable course of literary industry whose toils advancing years served only to augment, and from which neither the duties of his two professional offices of clerk of session and sheriff, nor the increasing claims made on him by society, were ever able to divert him. He now stood deservedly high in the favour of the booksellers, not merely as a poet and man of genius, but as one possessed of an extraordinary mass of information, and of such habits as qualified him eminently for turning his knowledge to ac­count. He was therefore soon embarked in undertakings, not indeed altogether inglorious, but involving an amount of drudgery to which, perhaps, no man of equal original genius has ever condescended. The earliest of these was his edition of Dryden, which, entered upon in 1805, was completed and published in 1808.

But the list of works in which his poetical genius shone forth continued rapidly to increase amidst his multiplicity of other avocations. From the summer of 1804 till that of 1812, the spring and autumnal vacations of the court were spent by him and his family at Ashestiel, a small mansion romantically overhanging the Tweed some miles above Melrose, and rented from one of the poet’s kinsmen. In this beautiful retreat, at intervals during twelve months, was chiefly composed the magnificent poem of Marmion, which was published in the beginning of 1808. At the same place, likewise, in 1805, were composed the opening chapters of a novel which, on the disapproval of one of the author’s criti­cal friends, was thrown aside and not resumed for years.

Scott’s commercial engagements must now again be ad­verted to. In the year 1808 he took a part, perhaps as sug- gester, certainly as a zealous promoter, of a scheme which terminated in the establishment of the Quarterly Review in London, as a political and literary counterpoise to the Edin­burgh Review, the advocate of Whig opinions. But the poet had other than political grounds for embarking in this opposition. He had seriously quarrelled with the firm of Constable and Company, the publishers of the Edinburgh Review, and of several of his own earlier works ; and his wish to check the enterprising head of that house in his attempts to obtain a monopoly of Scottish literature, is openly avowed, in Scott’s correspondence at the time, as one of his principal motives for framing another scheme. His plan, as far as it was explained either to the public or to his own friends, amounted only to this : That a new pub­lishing house should be set up in Edinburgh, under the ma­nagement of John Ballantyne, a younger brother of James ; and that this firm, with the acknowledged patronage of Scott and his friends, should engage in a series of extensive literary undertakings, including, amongst others, the annual publication of a historical and literary Register, conducted on Tory principles. But, unfortunately both for Scott’s peace of mind, and ultimately also for his worldly fortunes, there was here, as in his previously-formed connection with the same family, an undivulged secret. The profits of the printing- house had been large ; Scott’s territorial ambition had been