growing faster than his prospect of being able to feed it ; and these causes, inextricably mixed up with pique towards Constable, and kindliness for his Kelso protéges, led him into an entanglement which at length ruined both himself and his associates. By the contract of the publishing house of John Ballantyne and Company, executed in May 1808, Scott became a secret partner to the extent of one third. The unhappy issue of this affair will force itself on our no­tice at a later stage.

In the mean time we see him prosecuting for some time his career of poetical success. The Lady of the Lake, published in 1810, was followed by the Vision of Don Ro­derick in 1811 ; by Rokeby in 1812 ; and by the Bridal of Triermain, which came out anonymously in 1813. His poems may be said to have closed in 1815 with the Lord of the Isles and the Field of Waterloo; since Harold the Dauntiess, in 1817, appeared without the writer’s name, and the dramatic poems of 1822 and 1830 are quite unworthy of him. In the midst of these poetical employments he made his second and last great appearance as an editor and com­mentator of English classics, by publishing in 1814 his edi­tion of Swift.

But from 1815 till 1825, Scott’s name ceased almost en­tirely to be before the public as an avowed author ; and for those who chose to believe that he was not the writer of the Waverley Novels it must have been a question not a little puzzling, if it ever occurred to them, how this man, who wrote with such ease, and seemed to take such plea­sure in writing, was now occupying his hours of leisure. A few articles in the Quarterly Review, such works as Paul’s Letters, and annotations in occasional editions of ancient tracts, accounted but poorly for his time during ten years.

About 1813 and 1814 his popularity as a poet was sen­sibly on the decline, partly from causes inherent in his later poems themselves, and partly from extraneous causes, among which a prominent place belongs to the appearance of Byron. No man was more quicksighted than Scott in perceiving the ebb of popular favour ; and no man better prepared to meet the reverse with firmness. He put in serious execution a threat which he had playfully uttered to one of his own family even before the publication of the Lady of the Lake. “ If I fail now,” said he, “ I will write prose for life.” And in writing prose his genius discover­ed, on its first attempt, a field in which it earned triumphs even more splendid than its early ones in the domain of poetry.

The chapters of fiction begun at Ashestiel in 1805, which had already been resumed and again thrown aside, were once more taken up, and the work was finished with mira­culous rapidity ; the second and third volumes having been written during the afternoons of three summer weeks in 1814. The novel appeared in July of that year, under the title of Waverley, and its success from the first was unequivocal and unparalleled. Although we cannot here give a cata­logue of Scott’s works, yet in truth such a list of the no­vels and romances does in itself present the most surprising proof, both of his patient industry, and of the singularly equa­ble command which he had at all times over his mental re­sources. In the midst of occupations which would have taken away all leisure from other men, the press poured forth volume after volume, in a succession so rapid as to de­prive of some part of its absurdity one of the absurd sup­positions of the day, namely, that more persons than one were concerned in the novels. Guy Mannering, the second of the series, in 1815, was followed in 1816 by the Antiquary and the First Series of the Tales of My Landlord. Rob Roy appeared in 1817 ; the Second Series of the Tales in 1818 ; and in 1819 the Third Series and Ivanhoe. Two romances a-year now seemed to be expected as the due of the public. The year 1820 gave them the Monastery and the Abbot; 1821, Kenilworth and the Pirate; the Fortunes of Nigel,

coming out alone in 1822, was followed in 1823 by no fewer than three works of fiction, Peveril of the Peak, Quentin Durward, and St Ronan’s Well ; and the comparatively scanty number of novels in 1824 and 1825, which produced respectively only Redgauntlet and the Tales of the Cru­saders, is accounted for by the fact that the author was en­gaged in preparing a large historical work.

It is impossible even to touch on the many interesting details which Scott’s personal history presents during these brilliant years; but it is indispensable to say, that his dream of territorial acquisition was realized with a splen­dour which, a few years before, he himself could not have hoped for. The first step was taken in 1811, by the pur­chase of a small farm of a hundred acres on the banks of the Tweed, which received the name of Abbotsford, and in a few years grew, by new purchases, into a large estate. The modest dwelling first planned on this little manor, with its two spare bed-rooms and its plain appurtenances, expanded itself in like manner with its master’s waxing means of expenditure, till it had become that baronial castle which we now reve­rentially visit as the minstrel’s home. The hospitality of the poet increased with his seeming prosperity ; his morn­ings were dedicated to composition, and his evenings to so­ciety ; and from the date of his baronetcy in 1820 to the final catastrophe in 1826, no mansion in Europe, of poet or of nobleman, could boast such a succession of guests illustri­ous for rank or talent, as those who sat at Sir Walter Scott’s board, and departed proud of having been so honoured. His family meanwhile grew up around him ; his eldest son and daughter married ; most of his early friends continued to stand by his side ; and few that saw the poet in 1825, a hale and seemingly happy man of fifty-four, could have guessed that there remained for him only a few more years (years of mortification and of sorrow), before he should sink into the grave, struck down by internal calamity, not by the gentle hand of time.

And yet not only was this the issue, but, even in the hour of his greatest seeming prosperity, Scott had again and again been secretly struggling against some of the most alarming anxieties. On details as to his unfortunate com­mercial engagements we cannot here enter. It is enough to say, that the printing company of which he was a partner, which seems to have had considerable liabilities even be­fore the establishment of the publishing house, was now in­extricably entangled with the concerns of the latter, many of whose largest speculations had been completely unsuc­cessful ; that, besides this, both firms were involved to an en­ormous extent with the house of Constable ; and that large sums, which had been drawn by Sir Walter as copyright- money for the novels, had been paid in bills which were still current, and threatening to come back on him.

In the beginning of 1826, Constable’s house stopped pay­ment ; and the failure of the firm of Ballantyne, for a very large sum, followed instantly and of course. Probably even the utter ruin which this catastrophe brought upon Scott, was not more painful to him than the exposure which it necessarily involved, of those secret connections, the exist­ence of which even his most confidential friends could till now have at most only suspected. But if he had been im­prudent, he was both courageous and honourable ; and in no period of his life does he appear to such advantage, as when he stood, as now, beggared, humbled, and covered with a load of debt from which no human exertions seemed able to relieve him. He came forward without a day’s de­lay, and refused to be dealt with as an ordinary bankrupt, or to avail himself of those steps which would have set him free from the claims of his creditors, on surrendering his property to them. He insisted that these claims should, so far as regarded him, be still allowed to subsist; and he pledged himself that the labour of his future life should be unremittingly devoted to the discharge of them. He did