10-1-1972

Sir Walter in Yorkshire

Gerald W. Spink

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol10/iss2/5

This Article is brought to you by the Scottish Literature Collections at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Studies in Scottish Literature by an authorized editor of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact dillarda@mailbox.sc.edu.
Sir Walter in Yorkshire

An early Yorkshire correspondent of Scott was William Cleator of Cropton Lodge, near Pickering, who first wrote to him in March 1802 expressing the pleasure he had derived from the Border Minstrelsy and asking him if he was acquainted with an old fragmentary ballad *Jack o' Milk*; he offered to send a Copy; if Scott had not seen the poem, it would be 'somewhat singular' that an Englishman should first bring it to his notice. But Scott had already seen a copy and greatly doubted its authenticity, nor were his doubts removed after further correspondence with Cleator.¹

Of more vital import was Scott's association with John Bacon Sawrey Morriss (1772 - 1843), the forthright yet cultured squire of Rokeby.² Mr. and Mrs. Morriss were friends of Lady Louisa Stuart, who wrote to Scott from London to introduce them. He replied in June 1808 that he would be delighted to receive them at Ashestiel, 'where we have plenty of pigeon-holes to put such friends into as can be contented with goat's whey, narrow quarters, and Selkirkshire mutton'. To Joanna Baillie he reported favourably on his visitors, 'a very pleasant English family'; Morriss's erudition was impressive but not overbearing.³

Skene observes that Scott took care not to seat Morriss in the low alcove under the stairs which served as annex to the small dining-room when guests were numerous; the squire was absent-minded; had he, as was his wont, stood up to act the part he was describing, a catastrophe would have occurred.⁴

Writing to Scott in September 1808 Morriss recalls the splendid hospitality and asks Scott to make 'our best respects to the heroic shades that haunt the battlements of Newark and the banks of Yarrow; they


2. A noted classical scholar whose views on a supposed site of Troy involved him in controversy; a co-founder of the Travellers' Club; thrice a Conservative M.P. The so-called Rokeby Venus, since 1905 in the National Gallery, was purchased by him in Italy for £300.


have given me such a respect for cowstealing, that if you feel inclined
to make a Raid into Rokeby you may do it with perfect impunity'.

In the following year Scott paid his first visit to Rokeby, which
enthralled him. He wrote to George Ellis in July that it was 'one of
the most enviable places I have ever seen, as it unites the richness and
luxuriance of English vegetation with the romantic variety of glen,
torrent and copse, which dignifies our northern scenery. . . . The banks
of the 'Tees resemble, from the height of the rocks, the Glen of Roslin,
so much and justly admired. 'Scott makes a similar comparison in the
second canto of Rokeby. Moved by the stern beauty of Teesdale, he is
nevertheless unable to forget 'Roslin's magic glade'.

Scott encouraged Morritt to write an article for the Quarterly Re-
view and was vexed when it was rejected: on the other hand he was
delighted with The Curse of Moy: A Highland Tale which the quire
offered him in 1809, and included it in the Border Minstrelsy. Scott
was candid enough to say that 'it has occasional roughness in the
measure yet no more than the usual license of the antique ballad readily
admits.' He hoped that Morritt would compose something for the
English Miscellany of 1810, but the work appeared without such a con-
tribution. In a letter of November 1809 Morritt admitted he had
promised some translations from Metastasio, but after seeing other
versions he regarded his own as 'not worth publishing', despite Scott's
description of the rendering of Ti Soverai dì mi as 'exquisitely beauti-
ful'.

Many are the items which feature in the Correspondence. It is known
that Scott invited friends including Morritt to send him acorns to
supply Abbotsford with its future oaks, though it is perhaps less known
that the initial experiment did not altogether fulfill its purpose. Scott
informed Morritt in July 1811 of his intention 'to sow a bank instead of
planting it', and received the following reply from Muncaster Castle,
where Morritt was a guest:

'You say you want good acorns to sow at your cottage, and
mean to get them from the South. Now I have a quantity from
some estates of mine in the West Riding of Yorkshire from
whence I got them for my own woods at Rokeby, where we are

5. NLS MS 3877, f.124.
9. NLS MS 3878, f.216; Letters, II, 225.
SIR WALTER IN YORKSHIRE

too cold for them to ripen well, but those I got are very good. I will therefore send you any quantity you want . . . . I shall think with great pleasure that they may hereafter remind you of your friends here, when they rise on the banks of the Tweed."

Thanking his friend, Scott replied that he would sow the acorns with his own hands. ‘We will promise ourselves a Morritt grove when the fit time shall come round.”

On the 8th December 1811 Morritt wrote that he would send the acorns via Leith and confirmed this on New Year’s Day following; they had been sent off from Hull aboard the ‘Neptune’ under Capt. John White:

‘I shall be glad to hear that the acorns escape from the mice . . . . . I hope they will live to show that they are worth their breeding and be as long and advantageously remembered by future poets as Pope’s Willow or Shakespeare’s Mulberry.”

In April 1814, Scott was able to report good progress of the oaks, according to measurements made. But many years later he revealed that this early promise was not maintained. Thus in an essay On Planting Waste Lands he referred to his own experiment:

‘We may be blamed . . . . . for not having said something upon the subject of planting woods from the acorn, instead of the nursery. We have heard this recommended by great authority, which, moreover, vindicated the practice of leaving nature to work her own work in her own manner . . . . . We have planted acorns on this system, and the first show of young oaklings which appeared, rose almost like “a bonny braid of wheat”. But notwithstanding this fine promise, the plantation came to nothing. If the young plants fought with each other, they must have fought what cockers call a Welsh main, for only tens were left out of hundreds and thousands. Scott adds that five or six hogsheds of acorns were lost.

Yorkshire is no less famous for her horses than for her oaks. Scott had ever an eye to a good animal, and towards the end of 1818 sought the squire’s advice about a couple of colts ‘that would match for a carriage some two years hence’. Such animals might cost £140 in Edinburgh compared with twenty-five to thirty pounds in Yorkshire. After receiving Morritt’s advice he decided to delay for about a year, then purchase a pair of fouryearolds, thus avoiding the risk of ‘death, disease and accident’ in buying younger horses. Meantime Morritt suggested

11. NLS MS 3881, f.46.
13. NLS MS 3881, f.127; 3882, f.3.
that Scott should buy some Yorkshire studs, but despite temptation Scott, after reviewing his household expenses, decided to retain his two serviceable animals.\textsuperscript{16}

The subject of education arises in several letters. Early in 1816 Scott is considering sending his son Walter to an English school 'to complete his classical education'. Morriss says his own nephew is at Winchester, which he recommends, adding information good and bad about other schools. Eventually Scott decided against the plan, despite its advantages of 'a better manner and more solid classical learning'. It will be recalled that in 1819 the young man accepted a commission in a regiment stationed in Ireland.\textsuperscript{17}

In April 1821 it was Morriss's turn to seek advice. His nephew and heir was causing him acute distress; he wonders whether the young fellow might benefit from study at St. Andrews or Aberdeen, where he might lodge in some respectable family. Scott recommended the army and by the autumn the youth was established in a Gibraltar regiment. 'It was my advice which sent him into the army', Scott proudly reports some years later in a letter to Lady Louisa Stuart; Morriss's nephew had 'got rid of all the conceit and nonsense of a young genius and is now a pleasant gentlemanlike sensible young man'.\textsuperscript{18}

Items of literary interest occur early. In December 1811 Scott asks if Morriss knows anything of 'a striking ancient Castle . . . called Coningham Castle. I once flew past it in the mailcoach when its round tower and flying buttresses had a most romantic effect in the morning dawn'. This is an early indication of Scott's attraction to the Castle that was to play its part in Ivanhoe. More immediately significant is his intimation of 'a grand project' likely to appeal to Morriss, a proposal to write 'a fourth romance in verse, the theme during the English Civil Wars of Charles I and the scene your own domain of Rokeby'.

He asks for information on Barnard Castle and Teesdale, nor does he mind whether it is 'by truth or fiction or tradition' as long as it is picturesque. In March 1812 Scott reports that he has destroyed the first Canto and would like to refresh his memory with the local scenery before continuing, but in the meantime is grateful for information supplied.\textsuperscript{19}

The Morriss entered zestfully into the spirit of the new enterprise and suggested names for the heroine, though Scott's final choice of

\textsuperscript{16} Letters, V, 184f., 210, 224.

\textsuperscript{17} Letters, IV, 185f., 229; Post-Bag (Partington), 120f.

\textsuperscript{18} NLS MSS 3892, f.101; 3893, f.179; Private Letter Books (Partington), 128f. and Letters, X, 175.

\textsuperscript{19} Letters, III, 40, 88.
'Matilda' was not theirs. They insisted that Scott should make a long stay at Rokeby, 'if possible a month at least.'

'You shall have all appliances and means to boot for your projected poem; a room to yourself, and no torments in the shape of morning visits, and we will ride not only round Rokeby but tour to Wensleydale and the Caves, and invoke the Spirits of Ingleborough and Whernside.'

A letter of September 1812 reveals that Scott had not yet arrived, much to Morriss's disappointment. He hopes that Scott will not hurry his poem to satisfy a publisher's impatience. But before the year ended Scott appeared. In October, indeed, for in that month he writes from Rokeby to James Ballantyne that his visit 'will prove of the utmost consequence to the poem . . . . . I have got quite a new stock of ideas and subjects.'

As Lockhart reports, from details supplied by Morriss, Scott eagerly explored the quarries of Brignall and the ruins of Egglestone Abbey; he even noted down 'the peculiar little wild flowers and herbs on the side of a bold crag, near his intended cave of Guy Denzil'.

Morriss was delighted with the completed Rokeby dedicated to himself, but during its composition he made some criticisms. Scott himself was not entirely happy about the earliest cantos, though in a letter of 29th November 1812 he remarked that there were 'two or three songs and particularly one in praise of Brignall banks which I trust you will consider because entre nous I like them myself.' In reply Morriss hoped that Scott would not allow the character of Bertram to predominate; he was well portrayed as an agent of mischief, but his meditations were too familiarly expressed and the lines were not of a tone with the poem. Morriss thought too that some of the dialogues held up the narrative.

Scott, replying on 10th December, was grateful for advice that would receive every attention, but declared that some of the faults were so interwoven with the story that they must remain. As we know, time was pressing; Rokeby was published under the date 1813, but actually emerged before the end of 1812.

Scott's mention of Brignall Banks reminds us that a few years later he was enchanted to learn that the estate of Brignall had been added to Rokeby. Morriss had written in January 1818 that thanks to the magnanimity of his uncle his property had been greatly extended:

'As a poet you would rejoice in this, for I now possess in fact Guy Denzil's cave, and all the topography of your romance.'

20. NLS MSS 3882, f.162; 3883, f.81; Letters, I, 421.
22. Letters, III, 204f.
In his reply a few days later Scott observes that his own Abbotsford is as yet humble; when he wishes to realise what beauty is, he has 'only to come to Rokeby, and enjoy your present and my own future'. By 1822, however, progress had been made at Abbotsford, and in February of that year Scott made the following request to the squire:

'You must do a thing for me—I want to have your own arms—the simple coat—and the Rokeby arms—neatly drawn for the following purpose. I have made at one extremity of my new building a tower or rather turret the parapet of which I mean to finish after the manner of the Mortham parapet which I have always admired and from the love and regard which I bear to the place and its owner. I want to have your own coat and that of Rokeby sculptured on two shields—the turret being octagonal will have a shield on each face and each shall bear the arms of some valued freind or relation after the manner of the olden time'.

The Tower of the Shields was indeed completed, but Morriss's coat of arms never appeared on its intended shield, nor did those of other friends appear on similar shields. Dr. James C. Corson, Honorary Librarian of Abbotsford very kindly gave this information. He adds:

'Before the plan could be carried out the financial crisis fell on Scott and the shields remain in their blank state. There are also blank shields on the peach house at the top of the walled garden'.

It appears that Morriss was Scott's guest during the visit of George IV to Edinburgh in August 1822. In September Scott writes to William Stuart Rose telling him of the arrival of the poet Crabbe and noting that 'Morriss was also present during a considerable part of these solemnities'. About the same time Morriss himself writes to Scott with the most delightful memories of the visit he made, accompanied by his nieces:

'We have talked of nothing but Scotland and the King's visit and my girls' heads are fairly turned with all we have seen and done and with nothing more than the exhibition of real live chieftains and clansmen at your house. . . . . . We shall long remember Scotland with pleasure and always with kindness and affection'.

Morriss was one of the select few to whom Scott confided the secret of his authorship of Waverley and was one of the first to read the earliest part of the novel, which Scott did not expect to be popular in

23. NLS MS 3889, f.1; Letters, V, 47f.
25. Letters, VII, 231; NLS MS 3895, f.81.
the South, though he hoped that Morritt, 'an adopted Scotchman', would find amusement in it. On 14th July 1814 the latter wrote to Scott with considerable praise of the first volume; a week later, having received the remainder, he implored Scott to admit his authorship. He ventures some criticism, too; he is disappointed with the all too easy replacement of Flora as a future partner for Waverley; she 'is too lovely to be so soon forgotten, even tho she were inexorable.'

Writing again in August, Morritt agrees that Scott was right to preserve his anonymity; Scott has convinced him. His enthusiasm for the novel is as great as ever, but he makes one or two further criticisms. He refers to the waterfall scene in chapter twenty-two, where Scott had compared Flora to 'one of those lovely forms which decorate the landscapes of Claude', Morritt declares:

'Claude's figures are reckoned notoriously bad . . . . . Perhaps, however, you have seen a Claude with beautiful figures introduced as has happened to me. There are a few, in which he employed other artists, who drew better figures to insert them in his foregrounds'.

He suggests that Scott might substitute 'Poussin' for 'Claude' and thus 'not only exalt the real beauty of your nymphs but also escape a host of minute critics, who are unable to find any faults but such as these'. Later editions of Waverley reveal that Scott accepted his friend's recommendation.27

Scott's association with Morritt continued through the later life of the two friends. A proposed visit to Rokeby in 1825 was postponed, largely owing to a misdirection of letters on Scott's return from Ireland; it was made in October of the following year instead. Meantime Morritt had heard with 'serious anxiety' the rumours of Scott's financial troubles and sought information, assuring his friend of 'hearts that will bleed at any real misfortune that befalls you . . . . . I have loved you and yours too long not to take the deepest and truest interest in what concerns you so much'.28

Late in May 1828 Scott was again at Rokeby. As the Journal records, Morritt was awaiting him a mile from the house. Scott describes his old friend as the possessor of 'the kindest and sweetest temper that ever guided a human bosom', a quality that was never better revealed than in the letter written by Morritt in November 1830 on hearing of Scott's intended retirial from the Court of Session. He hoped this would

27. NLS MS 3885, f.153.
28. NLS MS 3902, f.46.
mean a closer association, especially as they were 'within two days' march of each other'. Fearing that Scott might not pay the greatly desired visit, he adds: 'I could almost lose a tooth or a finger (if it were necessary) to find myself mistaken. Come, and come soon; stay long; be assured of welcome.'

Scott replied cordially. He could not come straight away as his presence was required at meetings to discuss certain Selkirk-Galashiels road alterations which he purposed to support. But he would come the next year in defiance of the 'Colossus of Roads'.

The promise was kept, but the visit of September 1831 was extremely short and occurred as part of the melancholy journey to London, Portsmouth and Italy.

This was Scott's farewell to Rokeby. Lockhart reports that after his death his much respected servant John Nicolson entered Morriss's service. It was fitting, too, that when Lockhart's monumental biography appeared it was thus dedicated:

'To John Bacon Sawrey Morriss of Rokeby Park, Esq. these Memoirs of his Friend are respectfully and affectionately inscribed'.

Scott had numerous other correspondents in Yorkshire. William Morriss of Sherwood Hall, near Ferrybridge, brother of the squire, wrote to him in January 1825 on a small matter. Of greater interest is W. K. Westly, the mysterious Leeds correspondent, whose fervent appeal secured him publication of his poem *The Vision of Belshazzar* in the *Edinburgh Annual Register*. Scott replied in September 1817 praising the poem; it had 'very considerable merit', and Mr. Ballantyne, a good judge of poetry, 'approved of yours very much'. Scott is extremely sympathetic towards Westly's sensitiveness as a struggling author, but gently twits him for his thought of turning monk in his disappointment; he begs to be excused from the charge of 'neglecting poetry which I really think has strong indications of genius'.

The same day Scott wrote to James Ballantyne requesting him to send Westly a carriage-paid copy of the *Register* along with two or three additional books.

29. NLS MS 3915. This letter is also given in the *Journal*, where it helps to supply the gap left by Scott between 5th September and 20th December 1830.


31. NLS MS 3900, f.1. The letter recommends a Mr. James Robson as agent to a company selling Scotch Wools, of which Scott was believed to be Chairman.

32. It appeared in the *Register* for 1815, published in 1817.
three guineas 'with an apology for the smallness of the sum and a quantum sufficit of praise'.

Scott's letter to the poet was misdirected to York and returned to him by the postal authorities. As for Westly's grievances, the Constable Letter Books reveal an offer to publish a poem The Carmelite at his own expense. This was in December 1816; in the following January, after a further letter from Westly the firm found they could not agree with his views and counselled him to abandon all thought of printing, since his name was unknown to the public. 33

This was not the end of the matter, for on 12th May 1824 Westly wrote to Scott again, enclosing another poem and reminding him of his earlier encouragement. 34 And years afterwards (in March 1861, again from Leeds) the tenacious poet wrote to Messrs. Blackwood begging to submit 'an almost literal translation from the original, in Russian, by Nicholas Gogol, of a Novel, entitled "The Adventures of Chichikoff", or "The Dead Souls" . . . . '. Westly admits he is 'a stranger', but recommends himself as the author of the poem on Belshazzar which Scott had inserted in the Register. 35

The Catalogue of the Blackwood Papers optimistically describes Westly as 'Poet and Translator', but apart from the above details there appears to be no evidence of his poetic work or translations. In 1843, however, a W. K. Westly, a flax machinist of Leeds gave forth a book entitled An Account of a New Flax Roving Frame, on the title-page of which he is described as 'inventor and patentee of the spiral comb or screw gill, for preparing flax, wool, silk, and other fibrous substances'. 36

In October 1824 Scott was in correspondence with Alaric Alexander Watts (1797-1864), who from 1822 to 1825 was Editor of The Leeds Intelligencer. Addressing a letter to Park Square, Leeds, Scott regrets earlier failure to acknowledge a poetic volume, for 'the elegance both of expression and conception in your poetry entitles it to rank very highly'. 37

33. Letters, IV, 516ff; NLS MS 789, pp. 669, 702f.
34. NLS MS 3898, f.167; Letters, VIII, 469.
35. NLS MS 4165.
36. This information offering a possible identification of Scott's correspondent I owe to the kindness of Mr. A. B. Craven, City Librarian of Leeds, who additionally indicates from searches in directories that a William King Westley (or Westley), flax spinner and weighing-machine maker lived at various Leeds houses between 1830 and 1861.
37. Letters, VIII, 393f., Watts' Poetical Sketches had first appeared in 1822.
Watts edited for Hurst and Robinson *The Literary Souvenir or Cabinet of Poetry and Romance* for the year 1825; a few lines from Scott adorn the title-page and included in the text is his Epilogue for a tragedy entitled *Mary Stuart* and 'intended to have been spoken by Mrs. H. Siddons', dated 1824 in Scott's poetic works, hence quite a novelty at the time. The volume contains Scott's autograph, the first of a whole series illustrating an article on autographs.

Scott's letters and *Journal* are replete with references to those 'Yorkshire Tykes', the publishers Hurst and Robinson. The Yorkshire origin of this firm is discussed in A.A. Watts' biography of his father, the above-mentioned Alaric, and further developed by Mr. Frank Beckwith in an article 'The Leeds Library and Sir Walter Scott'. The dominant personality in the firm was Joseph Ogle Robinson (1787-1837), originally a Leeds bookseller in partnership with his sister, with whom he owned *The Leeds Intelligencer*. Dissatisfied with the limited sphere of his activities Robinson migrated to London, and associated with Thomas Hurst, brother to John, one of Longman's partners. They bought up the firm of Boydell in 1819 and established their own business in Cheapside, where they produced high quality works before their collapse. Robinson retained some Yorkshire characteristics and possessed some excellent qualities, in the opinion of Alaric Watts, who found in him a kind friend and considerate master. He urged Watts as Editor of his Leeds paper to be more guarded in his references to persons, though this caution need not apply to comments about the Editor of the rival newspaper! Robinson was summed up as 'one of those men whom the world calls enterprising when they succeed, and culpably rash when they fail'.

As a firm Hurst and Robinson recognised the value of Scott's name and were disappointed when informed that his Lives of the Novelists were not to be advertised as his work, as is evident from letters to John Ballantyne in 1820 and Messrs. Blackwood in 1824. Before the crash relations between Scott himself and the 'Tykes' were cordial enough. On the 10th March 1822 Scott sought from them information which might assist him in preparing lives of Le Sage and Sterne; a letter from the firm dated 23rd January 1824 informs Scott of books which had some time before been despatched to Ballantynes for his use, and includes a suggestion that 'a mercantile view' of the Novelists Library should be considered. The firm had for several years been selling a series of


39. NLS MSS 1808, ff.9, 16, 24; 4012, f.206.
volumes, one of which already contained items that Ballantyne proposed to include in his ninth volume.

Surely, they thought, it would be better to bring forward ‘such Authors as have not been included in any other Collection of Novels, in order to give an interest to the Work before it is become so voluminous as to deter many from purchasing it’.

The matter was left to Scott’s discretion. As a sign of goodwill the firm add that they ‘have the honor to publish a Portrait of His Majesty from Sir Thos Lawrence’s Picture and beg you will allow us the honor of presenting you with a choice Proof impression.”

Perhaps the only unkind references Scott ever made to Yorkshire occurred at the time of his catastrophe. He could scarcely be blamed, for the downfall of Hurst and Robinson precipitated his own disaster. To his son Walter he declared on 24th December 1825 that ‘the wily Yorkshire tyke Hurst made his situation appear more pinched than it was, to get as much assistance as he could from Constable’. To Lockhart in April 1826 he praised lawyer John Gibson for thwarting Robinson in the Woodstock negotiations. Hurst and Robinson had hoped to publish the novel, whose sale might have assisted them in their troubles, but thanks to Gibson and his associates, Longmans published Woodstock. Scott thus sums up the matter in his Journal:

‘Hurst and Robinson, the Yorkshire tykes, have failed after all their swaggering, and Longman and Co. take Woodstock. But if Woodstock and Napoleon take with the public, I shall care little about their insolvency, and if they do not, I don’t think their solvency would have lasted long’.

A more pleasant note in the Journal refers to a much younger correspondent in Yorkshire. Under the date 10th December 1825 Scott observes that he has answered a letter from a schoolboy ‘who writes himself Captain of Giggleswick School (a most imposing title)’. Scott entreats him ‘not to commence editor of a magazine to be entitled the “Yorkshire Muffin”. I think, at seventeen years old’. Scott has not got the title of the proposed magazine right, nor has it as yet been possible to trace his letter to the editor, but fortunately the Captain’s beautifully written appeal to Scott is preserved in the National Library of Scotland.

Dated 5th December 1825 it reads as follows:

‘Sir,

I have long been a warm, though humble admirer of your talents and abilities, but it is not without some fear of being

40. Letters, VII, 94f.; NLS MS 3895, f.40.
41. Letters, IX, 345, 496; Journal, 24th April 1826.
42. MS 3901, f.189.
thought presumptuous that I venture to address you. A youth of
17, who has taken upon himself to conduct a Magazine, can have
no pretensions to merit the contributions of such eminent literary
men as yourself. I am the Captain of Giggleswick School, have
but little money, and less assistance, and should feel myself very
much honoured and gratified by a few lines on any subject. Our
work is to come out on the 1st day of February, and will be
entitled the Yorkshire Magazine and Provincial Repository.

I am, Sir,
Your very humble and obdt. Servant,
George Woods.

P. S. An immediate answer would very much oblige.'

It is of interest to record that this enterprising young editor was
highly successful in later life in a different sphere of activity. Mr.
O. J. T. Rowe, Headmaster of Giggleswick School kindly informs me
that Woods was born in 1800, was a pupil at the School in the 1820s
and obtained a Scholarship at University College, Oxford, where he
graduated with first-class Honours. Later he became Headmaster of
Gainsborough Grammar School, Chaplain to the British Embassy at
Vienna; Rector of Sully; Rural Dean and Chancellor of the Diocese of
Llandaff. He died in 1895.

Scott's writings abound in references to Yorkshire, especially in the
novels, for apart from Rokeby there are few traces in the verse. In
Marmion the Scottish King is reminded that among redoubtable oppo-
onents, should he invade England he will find Yorkshiremen 'stern
of mood'; in The Bold Dragoon (1812) Wellington's success against
the French in Spain is largely attributed to the 'swords of Sheffield
steel' and the horses that 'were in Yorkshire bred'; in Halidon Hill
(1822) Edward III humorously describes his Yorkshire archers as
'loitering knaves' more intent on theft than on joining the vanguard,
though he is later assured that they have 'gained the meadow'.

Rokeby itself is probably most remembered for the songs which
Scott liked and hoped that Morritt would also like, for the story itself
makes hard reading today. Yet the poem remains as a noble tribute to
some of the grandest scenery in the North Riding, witness the magnifi-
cent description of the Greta's tumultuous course towards the Tees.

References in the novels bear testimony to Scott's many journeys
by coach or on horse-back to and from England, on which he had
frequent opportunities of travelling through the North and West Rid-
ings; he was well acquainted with the Great North Road and with the
south-eastern route from Scotland via Carlisle, Penrith and Bowes Moor,
or was he a stranger to the southern zone of the West Riding ap-
proached via the Peak District and Sheffield.
His interest in York was keen and may have been stimulated by his friendship with the Rev. Charles Baillie, or Baillie-Hamilton (1764-1820) who was installed Archdeacon of Cleveland in 1806. Thus Scott, writing to Henry Weber in York, says in a letter of March 1816 that he will be very glad to have the fruit of Weber's researches in the Minster Library. 'Should you find the access difficult, I might be able, I should think, to assist it, through my friend Archdeacon Baillie'.

Yet Mr. C. B. L. Barr, Sub-Librarian-in-Charge of the Minster Library suggests (in a most informative account) that the Archdeacon's connection with the Library was slight; he paid his fee on Installation, but does not appear to have greatly used his privilege, though in 1813 he was sufficiently interested to present a catalogue of the Library of the late John, Duke of Roxburghe, dated 1812. Mr. Barr further indicates that Baillie-Hamilton's duties seldom required attendance in York; he could have spent most of his time at his Rectory in Middleton-in-Teesdale.

However that might be, Scott was himself in York as early as May 1807, having travelled by a circuitous route by Liverpool, Lichfield and Sheffield. He was there again during his tour to the Continent in July 1815, when he travelled with John Scott of Gala, Alexander Pringle of Whitebank and Robert Bruce, afterwards Sheriff of Argyle. It is unfortunate that Scott himself does not refer to the Yorkshire part of his tour in Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk, but copious details are given in a manuscript account by Bruce and in Scott of Gala's Journal of a Tour to Waterloo and Paris, in company with Sir Walter Scott, published in 1842.

The party left Edinburgh on Friday 28th July, reaching York on the 29th. 'On the morning of Sunday we went to the Minster to hear the Cathedral service which is there performed in great perfection, and to see the building which is certainly remarkably fine', though Lincoln appeared later to impress the travellers even more favourably. They reached that city after first going to Hull, thence crossing the Humber. Eventually they reached Harwich, but as they sailed from here on 4th August they cannot have had much time for close inspection of English towns. Yet it is noteworthy that Scott's references to Yorkshire in general and York in particular increase after 1815. Waverley had already been published, but in that novel Scott had been content to mention a minor incident near Boroughbridge, when Waverley travel-

43. Letters, IV, 187f.
44. Letters, I, 361.
45. NLS MS 991.
ling south joined the 'Northern Diligence', in which coach was seated a suspected rebel in slouched hat who proved to be a humble Quaker from Leeds.⁴⁶

In *The Antiquary* of 1816 we not only discover that Lovel (later acknowledged as heir to the Earl of Glenallan) had been educated in Yorkshire; we find the antiquary engaged in correspondence with a literary friend about the Saxon horn preserved in York Minster. The friend was no less a person than Dr. Jonas Dryasdust, F. A. S., residing in the Castlegate and to whom Scott later dedicated *Ivanhoe*.

Attempts have been made to identify Dryasdust. A natural choice was William Alexander, the Quaker bookseller whose shop was in Castlegate and who died in 1841. But Mr. O. S. Tomlinson, City Librarian of York, kindly refers me to an article by a local historian,⁴⁷ who suggests that Dryasdust was Dr. William White, a physician who likewise lived in the Castlegate and who compiled a private register of public events. After his death in 1790 this was placed by his sister at the disposal of Hargrove, whose *History of York* appeared in 1818. Mr. Tomlinson adds that White himself was a Quaker, was a member of the Medical Society at Edinburgh and the author of several publications listed in the *British Museum Catalogue*.⁴⁸

The impact of York upon Scott is even more evident in *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818). In the course of her long journey south Jeanie Deans halts for almost a day at York. She is perhaps not referring to York alone when, writing to her father, she mentions 'a sort of chosen people' who have 'kirk without organs that are like ours, . . . where the minister preaches without a gown', but in a letter to Reuben Butler she quaintly describes York as a town with 'mair medicines than wad cure a' Scotland', some of which might benefit himself.

She is befriended by Mrs. Bickerton, landlady of the Seven Stars in Castlegate, proud to be a Scot yer admitting that the English make good husbands, 'witness my poor man, Moses Bickerton, as is i' the kirkyard'. Scott observes that Mrs. Bickerton had herself acquired some Yorkshire traits; thus when summoning Dick Ostler she addresses him 'in a tone of authority that showed she was (at least by adoption) Yorkshire too'. Her influence prevailed beyond the city, for thanks to her recommendation Jeanie was comfortably accommodated at The Swan, Ferrybridge and thence provided with transport to Tuxford.

⁴⁶ *Waverley*, Chapter 61.
⁴⁷ T. P. Cooper, in the *Yorkshire Herald*, York, 17th June 1921.
⁴⁸ Where he is recorded as 'F.S.A., of York', a further suggestive feature.
Late in 1817 Rob Roy had already appeared, and here too we are given a glimpse of an inn with a characteristic host, that 'outspoken Yorkshire tyke' Jonathan Brown, ruddy-faced landlord of the Black Bear, Darlington, in which Francis Osbaldistone first meets Rob Roy under the name Campbell. Yet if Jonathan was frank, open and hospitable, he was astute enough to have political opinions 'of that liberal description which quarrelled with no good customer'.

Then, in 1819, came Ivanhoe, the most Yorkshire of the Waverley novels, much of whose action takes place in 'that pleasant district of merry England which is watered by the river Don'. Scott was familiar with the region as it was in his own day, having made one of his journeys through it in 1815 on his return from Waterloo; Pringle and Bruce were no longer with him, but accompanied by Scott of Gala he travelled north via Dunstable, Leamington, the Peak District and Sheffield, where they slept on 19th September and where Sir Walter acquired the planter's knife of which he was so proud.

The journey continued through Wakefield, Leeds and Ripon, where a day's stop was made to visit the Minster and Fountain's Abbey, a break not without consequence in the writing of Ivanhoe. In his Journal Scott of Gala observes that the Clerk of Copmanhurst was associated with Fountain's, and draws attention to Scott's own identification of that jolly hermit with Friar Tuck, 'the Curtil Friar of Fountain's Abbey'.

The castles of Ivanhoe have always aroused interest. York speaks for itself, but Torquilstone and Templestowe invite speculation. Thus W. A. Atkinson identifies the former as Tickhill Castle on the route from Sheffield to the north; he makes suggestions for Templestowe which are ingenious if not convincing. He defends Scott for his opinion that the keep of Conisborough Castle was Saxon, since he was following the general belief of his time. This is not held today, though it is not impossible that the Keep occupied a site that was originally Saxon.

It does not appear to be known precisely when Scott first saw or visited Conisborough, though it was certainly no later than 1811 that he saw it, since he mentions his fleeting glimpse in a letter to Morriss already noted. There was a tradition at Sprotbrough near Doncaster

49. Chapter four. In the ninth chapter Scott refers back to the incident as having occurred in Northallerton.

50. In May 1830, when his son was stationed in Sheffield, Scott sent him his old hunting knife as a pattern for a new one. (Letters, XI, 361).

51. In a note to Ivanhoe, Chapter 16.

52. The Scenes of Ivanhoe, National Review, April 1922.
that Scott and a friend spent a couple of nights here at The Boathouse before *Ivanhoe* was written; an arm-chair in the inn was long referred to as 'Sir Walter's chair'. It is tempting to believe a suggestion that Conisborough and Spotborough were visited on the return from Waterloo, but John Scott's *Journal*, which dwells on similar places of interest elsewhere, fails to mention such a visit.

We do, however, know that Scott's interest in the Castle never waned, for in 1830 he recommended his son Walter stationed in Sheffield to visit this 'great curiosity', asking him to make a sketch of Conisborough for Skene, who wanted it for some drawings intended for the *Waverley novels*.

Towards the end of his novel Scott unites Ivanhoe with Rowena in a ceremony which takes place 'in the most august of temples, the noble Minster of York', a truly fitting climax, even though the edifice could hardly have been the great cathedral which Scott visited in 1815.

From *Ivanhoe* to *The Monastery* is to go from the sublime to the ridiculous in allusions to Yorkshire; in the final chapter of the latter Captain Sawarthe Bolton reveals the origins of the ludicrous Sir Pierce Shafon, whose 'mother's father was but a tailor, old Overseitch of Holderness'. But unlike the East Riding, the North Riding is magnificently represented in *The Abbot*, where we encounter Adam Woodcock, falconer of Avenel, whose father was a 'bluff Yorkshireman' and who himself was 'born at the foot of Roseberry Topping'. He holds tenaciously to his opinions on his subject, but bears not the least resentment after a quarrel with Roland Graeme, and indeed befriends him, advising him thus: 'Hear every man's counsel, and keep your own'. In Edinburgh he cautiously allows Roland to present a letter addressed to the Earl of Murray rather than appear himself, though in justice he does not think Roland will come to harm in the great presence.

Adam would be less interesting were he depicted merely as a model of caution. He throws this aside when it suits him; he plays the Abbot of Unreason with supreme abandon; he loves 'the potle-pot' and on a drunken occasion invited really serious trouble by chanting a ditty containing irreverent references to the Pope.

As we have reached 1820 it is not inappropriate to mention *Pontefract Castle* printed for Fearman in a supposed fourth series of *Tales of my Landlord* and attributed to Jedediah Cleishbotham, Fearman arguing that this name was fictitious, belonging to no one, and that he was en-

titled to use it, doubtless believing that after Ivanhoe another work with a Yorkshire setting would have a ready sale. A full account of this spurious undertaking is given by W. M. Parker, in 'A Scott Imitation'.

In The Pirate (1821) we discover the factor Triptolemus Yellowley, son of Jasper; the latter, like Adam Woodcock had been 'born at the foot of Roseberry Topping' (Scott repeats the exact phrase). Jasper was a 'hearty Yorkshire yeoman' who had migrated to Scotland and wedded Barbara Clinkscale. But their son fails to show the mettle of his ancestral pastures when he allows a Shetland poney to tip him into a stream. Triptolemus is less uproarious than Adam Woodcock in his cups, for he merely croaks forth 'a Yorkshire harvest-home ballad, which his father used to sing when he was a little mellow'.

Recollections of Yorkshire inns occur in St. Ronan's Well (1823). Thus Meg Dods' cooking at the Cleikum was so good that it emulated that of Yorkshire; her cock-a-leeky and savoury minced collops 'rivalled in their way even the veal cutlets of our old friend Mrs. Hall, at Ferrybridge'. And Scott, describing the 'heavy loutish shuffle' of the bulky Baronet Sir Bingo Binks, states that he had 'very nearly attained that most enviable of all carriages, the gait of a shambling Yorkshire osler'. In this novel, too, Lord Etherington has estates in Yorkshire and writes to his friend Captain Jekyl, resident in Harrogate.

In The Two Drovers of 1827 Scott required an English friend, and later enemy, worthy of his Highlander Robin Oig M'Combich: he created him in the character of Harry Wakefield who, like his name, is a product of the West Riding and in the gallery of Scott's Yorkshiremen second only to Adam Woodcock of the North Riding. Wakefield is depicted as a powerful wrestler 'able to give a bellyful to any amateur of the pugilistic art'; a frequenter of Doncaster races, 'betting his guineas, and generally successfully'; present whenever possible at cockfights. Yet a steady fellow, persevering in his work, despite a certain irascibility.

Even as late as 1829 we find references to Yorkshire and in the most unlikely of places. In Anne of Geierstein the elder Philipson, in reality the Earl of Oxford, is shown a remarkable bow, a Geierstein trophy greatly treasured, which he recognises by mark and initials as a bow made by Matthew of Doncaster, who lived at least a hundred years before the events of the novel, a man 'remarkable for the great toughness and strength of the weapons which he made'. Nor is this all. Arthur,

55. In The Scotsman, 14th April 1933.
56. Chapter One.
the Earl's son, has little reason to like the redoubtable Rudolph Donnerhugel, but in a discussion on men and horses he is in all fairness compelled to commend Rudolph's judgment:

'Thou hast spoken on that as if thou hadst been born in a district called Yorkshire, which men call the merriest part of merry England'.

It is clear from these late comments that the unpleasantness of his dealings with the 'swaggering tykes' Hurst and Robinson had not destroyed Scott's old affection for the English county that he seemed to admire above all others and which indeed had given him one of his greatest friends.

_Edinburgh_

57. _Anne of Geierstein_, Chapters IV and X.