

and earthly seeking? Heaven pointed one way, human frailty another. 'Be mighty amidst the great,' said the former; 'be high amongst the small,' whispered the latter. He obeyed the latter, and lo the consequence! The small know him not: amidst the great he still continues mighty. The history of Scott is the history of mankind. We cannot violate the will, expressed or understood, of heaven, and be happy. We cannot sinfully indulge a single passion, and not be disappointed. The spiritual and moral laws which regulate our life are as constant and invariable as any to be found in matter. Had Scott not enlisted every hope, thought, and energy in his miserable aim at power and position, he would in all probability have been alive to-day. He was a hale and hearty man when the failure of the booksellers compelled him to those admirable and superhuman exertions which crushed and killed him. That failure would have been nothing to the poet, if the poet had not involved himself in trade in order the more rapidly to secure the purpose which he had at heart,—for which he wrote and lived. '*The spirits of the wise sit in the clouds and mock us.*' All that Scott bargained for at the outset of life he possessed for an instant before he quitted it. He cared not to be renowned,—he wished to be rich. To be spoken of as the master of prose and verse was nothing, if the term could not be coupled with that of master of Abbotsford. The dream was realised. Money came in abundance, and with it lands and increasing possessions. The mansion of the laird rose by degrees, and child after child promised to secure lands and house, as the founder would have them, in the immediate possession of a Scott. Then came, as if to complete the fabric and to ensure the victory, honours and titles fresh from the hand of Majesty itself. Nothing was wanting: all was gained, and yet nothing was acquired. The gift melted in the grasp; the joy passed away in the possession. With his foot on the topmost step of the ladder, Scott fell. His ambition was satisfied, but Providence was avenged. All that could be asked was given, but only to show how vain are human aspirations,—how less than childish are misdirected aims. Scott lived to see his property, his house and lands, in the hands of the stranger: we have lived to see his children one by one removed. Is there no lesson here?"—*April 28, 1847.*

THE END.