



SCOTT MONUMENT, EDINBURGH

Photo by Sport and General Press Agency, London

LAND OF SCOTT AND BURNS

WE all feel nowadays that if we wanted to say something new about the Land of Scott and Burns we would have to be creative artists like themselves! Yet, every one of us has particular reactions of our own to that wide area of Scotland that is forever consecrated to the memory of these two great Men of Letters. These men have influenced our minds, in stories and songs and ballads, until it has become a personal thing to each of us; and we feel, justifiably enough, perhaps,

that the man in the next compartment of the train, or the man passing us in some leafy lane of fabulous fame, does not quite appreciate his privilege of association—or realise it—as much as we do! This is understandable because of the intimate, personal approach both men have had to us all. They were and are great popular figures; and they populated the rich lands, where they lived and toiled, with characters that are as immortal as themselves. We, who have read their work



BURNS'
COTTAGE,
ALLOWAY

and communed with them, would be dull, indeed, if we hadn't developed a close spiritual friendship with them.

It is of the nature of great men to be donors. They give of the very substance of their being; and the more they give the more they seem to achieve greatness. It is not, therefore, so much that Scots people have idolised their two most distinguished sons as that the two men idolised them—and gave them and their environment an endowment of such spiritual worth as will last them forever.

Edinburgh, where Sir Walter Scott was born, has endowments in plenty. No city in Europe has more. In itself, the city is a wondrous achievement in architectural "bigness"—even if it remains a comparatively small city—with numberless minute details of intimate and quiet beauty. Its pinnacles and towers, its massive castles, its tremendous modern buildings and ancient rocks and monuments, often seem to be embalmed in a grey or golden mist that

steals in from the Forth and the North Sea. It has always had the reputation of "smokiness"—"Auld Reekie" is one of its classic names—and of a sea mistiness in its more distant prospects; but there are days when Edinburgh is clear and vivid as ever crystal was: when every detail of its vast assemblage of storied buildings, castles, domes and monuments stands out in a startling clarity. Often enough must Sir Walter have seen it that way; and it is the historian's quest to visualise the town as it then was. From his writings, we know that it was not essentially different in atmosphere. And by atmosphere we do not mean a sea mistiness or the smoke from innumerable chimneys, but the spirit of the Capital of Scotland itself!

Burns found that atmosphere congenial; and it was in Edinburgh that the famous meeting between Burns and Scott took place. Both men admired each other and had intuitive knowledge of the other. And both loved Edinburgh. Burns found fame there. But he

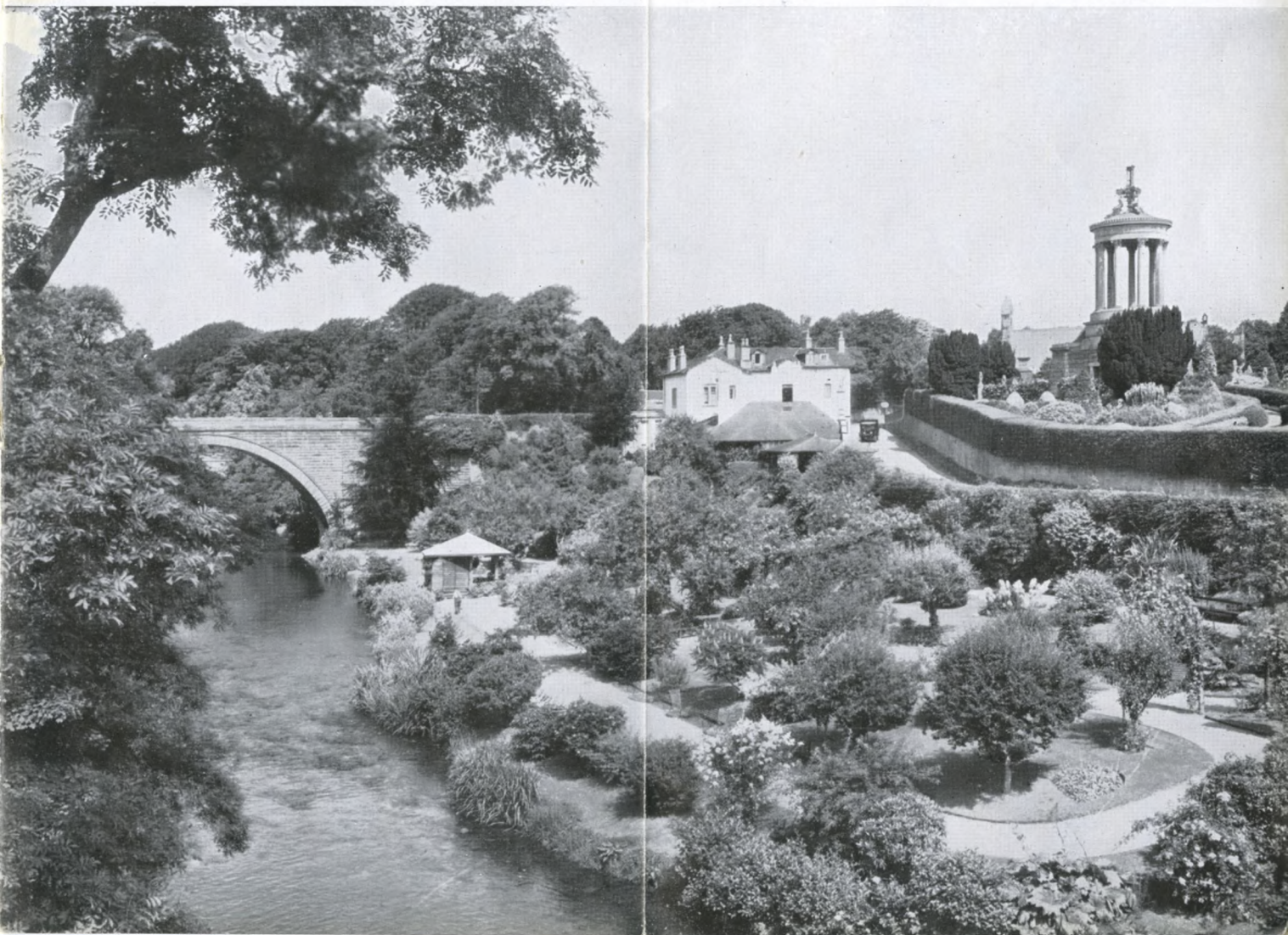
was a wayfarer from other parts. Scott belonged. And his fellow citizens, unforgetful of the other name for their beautiful town—"The Modern Athens"—dedicated to his memory one of the finest architectural features of the city, the famous "Scott Monument" that dominates Princes Street, in itself a spectacle as much as a thoroughfare, and with a subtle glamour that is of the Present, where all around is the subtler spirit of the Past abiding.

This is comprehended by the visitor who takes to the Old Town, that Scott knew, when he has seen the modern town, with its

St. Andrew's House, the seat of government to-day, and views the ancient Scottish Houses of Parliament, behind the restored St. Giles Cathedral; has visited the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the ruins of Holyrood Abbey, where Scottish kings and queens lie buried; the house where John Knox dwelt, and where he died; the famous Canongate and the olden High Street. This is the classic quarter of the town, yet it but indicates what lies, all around Edinburgh, in historic importance and fascinating interest.

Ayr had no proud relics for Robert Burns to inherit when he was born in Alloway close

BURNS' MONUMENT AND THE BANKS O' DOON, ALLOWAY





AULD BRIG O' DOON, ALLOWAY

by. Yet it was by no means a negligible little county town in his day, as abundant evidence in his writing shows. But to-day it is one of the most prosperous and go-ahead towns in Scotland. Many memorials of Burns survive: The Auld Brig, Tam o' Shanter's Inn, the Auld Brig o' Doon, and various statues and museums testify to the loving regard in which he is held. As in Edinburgh, where names from Scott's novels are encountered round almost every corner, streets and walks

in and around Ayr are christened from names out of the poet's work and life. Not only have the Burns fraternity made a museum of his cottages; they have made a museum of his heart! Visitors can stand at the spot where he and "Highland Mary" "plighted their troth" by the Fail Burn, near Tarbolton, and they can see the castle in which he was married to Jean Armour. The cottage in Castle Street, Mauchline, where his first married years were spent, is also carefully preserved.

Burns died at the early age of 37. He was therefore a young man when he spent his energies and his poetic genius in those surroundings of Ayrshire. He was familiar with the whole shire, and to-day people can retrace his footsteps everywhere in it. These associations, indeed, are cherished as living things, more important, perhaps, than the humble kitchen implements and furniture that, polished and bone-dry, are guarded in the cottages with official care.

Since his day, small towns and villages have grown into large industrial and commercial centres. But in Ayr itself, and Kilmarnock, where his poems were published, the old designs and manners have changed only by expansion, and there is no effacement of original lines. Through these two towns,

well apportioned, and with dignified streets and some splendid buildings, there survives a sense of country life—and a real feeling of rusticity and ease.

And what is said about these two towns can be said about all the rest of a wonderful chain of sea towns on Ayrshire's marvellous coast: Largs, Saltcoats, Irvine, Ardrossan, Stevenston, Troon, Prestwick, Barassie and Girvan. These are modern towns grown out of ancient villages, and they bejewel the Ayrshire coast on the estuary of the Clyde—one of the loveliest coastlines that exist in Scotland.

This coastline calls the sportsmen from all quarters. Its golf links at Troon, Prestwick, Ayr, Turnberry and Girvan are renowned, and two at least have frequently international

BURNS' HOUSE, MAUCHLINE





ELLISLAND
FARM

tournaments. Its sandy beaches, which never seem overcrowded, are the joy of sunbathers and those who mix sun with salt water! Its views are superb and ever-changing, having the sentinel Ailsa Craig for ever in sight, the great peaks of the Isle of Arran, and the distant coasts of Bute. And inland, sweetly trimmed roads pass through meadowlands of a southern softness to the high austerity and silence of the moors and hilly regions, for, though Ayrshire lacks what is the bounty of Northern Scotland, a mountainous hinterland, it derives an ample solace from the sight of the hills that lie to the back of the coast as well as in the prospect of the giants over the sea.

Burns knew this coastline well. For all his troubles and economic worries, he managed to travel about a good deal. But he finally decided to leave Ayrshire and took the road southwards, first to the farm at Ellisland, and then to Dumfries, where a few years later he was to die. He went right into the land

of Scott, the land Scott had known and loved all his life. Ellisland Farm is still standing, some seven miles from Dumfries, on the pleasant river Nith. While working this farm, he wrote some of his greatest work, the biggest of all being "Tam o' Shanter." But he didn't make much of farming, and at last he got work as an exciseman in Dumfries. Here it was, in a street called Mid Vennel, now called Burns Street, that he died.

In his youth, Burns had written:

*Ramsay and famous Fergusson
Gied Forth and Tay a lift aboon;
Yarrow and Tweed, to monie a tune
Owre Scotland rings,
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr and Doon,
Naebody sings.*

Never did anyone state a grievance to put it right with greater success than Burns

The sweetness of his lyrics is in the air about the fields and woods, the inroads of wild rose, the quiet farmsteads and rustic villages of Ayrshire. But it is also in Dumfries and the surrounding country. It was here that he re-wrote most of the old Scottish songs, priceless gifts to music, and the fame of them has gone round the world. They are an imperishable part of traditional folk song.

Edinburgh was Scott's birthplace and Capital; Tweedside was his homeland. It was in such Lowland surroundings as Burns finally knew that Scott, delving deeply into Scottish folk-lore, produced his wonderful romances and ballads that made him "The Wizard of the North." Everyone knows of the tragic economic circumstances of Abbotsford, and the supreme effort Scott made to settle matters, and how he won through.

He won through by creating some of the greatest fiction the world possesses,

*From hill and ford, from clump and brae,
A wizard's voice is heard, they say,*

In this romantic spot;

'Tis Marmion's mettled line and lay.

The martial strain of "Waverley,"

The minstrelsy of Scott.

The house stands on the banks of the Tweed, and on the other side is the flourishing town of Galashiels, one of the finest of Scottish Lowland towns, with its famous tweed mills keeping the population prosperous. The town has other side interests, not least of which is the excellent catering for pilgrims who are making their visit to the great building of Abbotsford. These visitors find

ABBOTSFORD HOUSE





THE STUDY,
ABBOTSFORD
HOUSE

Photo by Valentine, Dundee

also that Galashiels is ideally situated for exploring the scenery that Scott extolled, and for following closely on his wandering footsteps round the country.

Such explorations will tax the time of the most fortunate holidaymaker, so diverse are the walks and trips to be made. The chief places of interest are so close together that it matters little enough where one stays; they can all be visited. The journey to Abbotsford itself, of course, is the first, and it will probably be the last, at the end of the holiday. The house is pretty much as Scott knew it. A new wing has been added, and inevitable alterations have been made for preservation; but substantially it is the same. Scott himself made a sort of museum of Abbotsford, and to his collection of relics are now, naturally, added those relating to him and his family. Many of the things he gathered with such delight attract us to-day. They are heirlooms of posterity, such things as the priceless keys of Loch Leven Castle,

which were thrown into the loch on Queen Mary's escape, Montrose's sword, a drinking glass of Burns, effigies of a favourite dog, Maida, the sculptured head of Tom Purdie, his bosom friend, the gun of Rob Roy—such relics Scott loved to have around him. There is a door from the old Tolbooth, Edinburgh, skulls from the massacre cave of the Island of Eigg, in the far-away Hebrides. And there are all, or mostly all, his own personal belongings. In this house, Scott's personality remains; and whoever comes in a receptive mood finds contact with him in the very home and centre of his being.

All the way from Carlisle or from Edinburgh to this noble house, the land is of the songs and poetry and romances of Scott. Think of the places to be seen or glimpsed coming south from Edinburgh. Newbattle Abbey, Dalhousie, Borthwick, Crichton, and Lugate Castles; then those world-famed centres of a thousand stories, Darnick Tower, Cauldshiels Loch, where Scott loved to loiter, Melrose

and its Abbey, Dryburgh Abbey, and Kelso; Jedburgh, with its associations with Mary, Queen of Scots, and ancient kings; Selkirk, Moffat, and the lovely small villages of Gattonside and Newstead. There are the Tweed, the Teviot, the Yarrow and the Jed, noble rivers all, famous in sport as in story; the uplands of hill and moor; the pastoral lands, the wide sweeping woodlands; the sylvan straths and alluring byways, little used by anyone. Given days of leisure to spend in such a district, what memories could be gathered in for the recollection on winter days!

Melrose Abbey is the oldest of four that were started in the days of David the First. In the churchyard lies Tom Purdie, "the oracle of Abbotsford" already referred to. His headstone to-day is about the same as when Scott had it erected. The Abbey has changed not at all. It survives as an eloquent testimony to the early greatness of Scottish architecture and monkish piety.

Newstead is close at hand, and then there is Bemersyde, of which Thomas the Rhymer sang:

Tide, tide, whate'er betide,

They'll aye be Haigs of Bemersyde.

At Dryburgh Abbey, the most famous of the Haigs sleeps side by side with Sir Walter.

It was his wish to be buried there beside the man who had peopled his early imagination with romantic heroes. The Tweed moves murmuringly along at their feet, the immemorial trees make hush and sigh of the wind, the cloisters preserve a silence eternal as the graves themselves. Peace has fallen on that sacred shrine and it shall never be destroyed. It penetrates the heart of the visitor and stirs elemental roots of feeling.

Of Kelso Abbey, all but the transept walls and part of the tower and choir has passed into legend. The town is one of the finest in the land. It was here that Scott first achieved expression of his appreciation of Nature. We to-day can have a similar experience in appreciation, anyway, if we stand on the bridge and view the surrounding landscape. It is truly superb. The town lies amid the trees, with the rising tower of the Abbey picturesquely set off; the Tweed and Teviot meet in a cloistered green, and beyond the soft sloping banks spread out wide pastures in patchwork variety, diversified by small woods and streams. Scott attended school at Kelso, and where he lived is now called Waverley Lodge, overlooking the Tweed.

Jedburgh, with its royal associations that go back to the beginnings of Scottish history,



DRAWING ROOM,
ABBOTSFORD
HOUSE



EILDON HILLS
AND
RIVER TWEED
FROM
BEMERSYDE

Photo by A. Walker & Son, Galashiels

is only some ten miles from the old battle border. It is a closely knit, dapper little place, set brightly amid the ruins of the old, and quick with the atmosphere of the past. Mary, Queen of Scots, once lay there desperately ill after a daring dash of fifty miles to visit Bothwell, and her house is preserved by the town. In it, in 1745, Prince Charles Edward made his abode, and later in the same century, Burns stayed under its roof while visiting the district. Sir James Barrie, of our own day, slept there, and he told the Jedburgh people afterwards of a visitation by a beautiful lady with a veil!

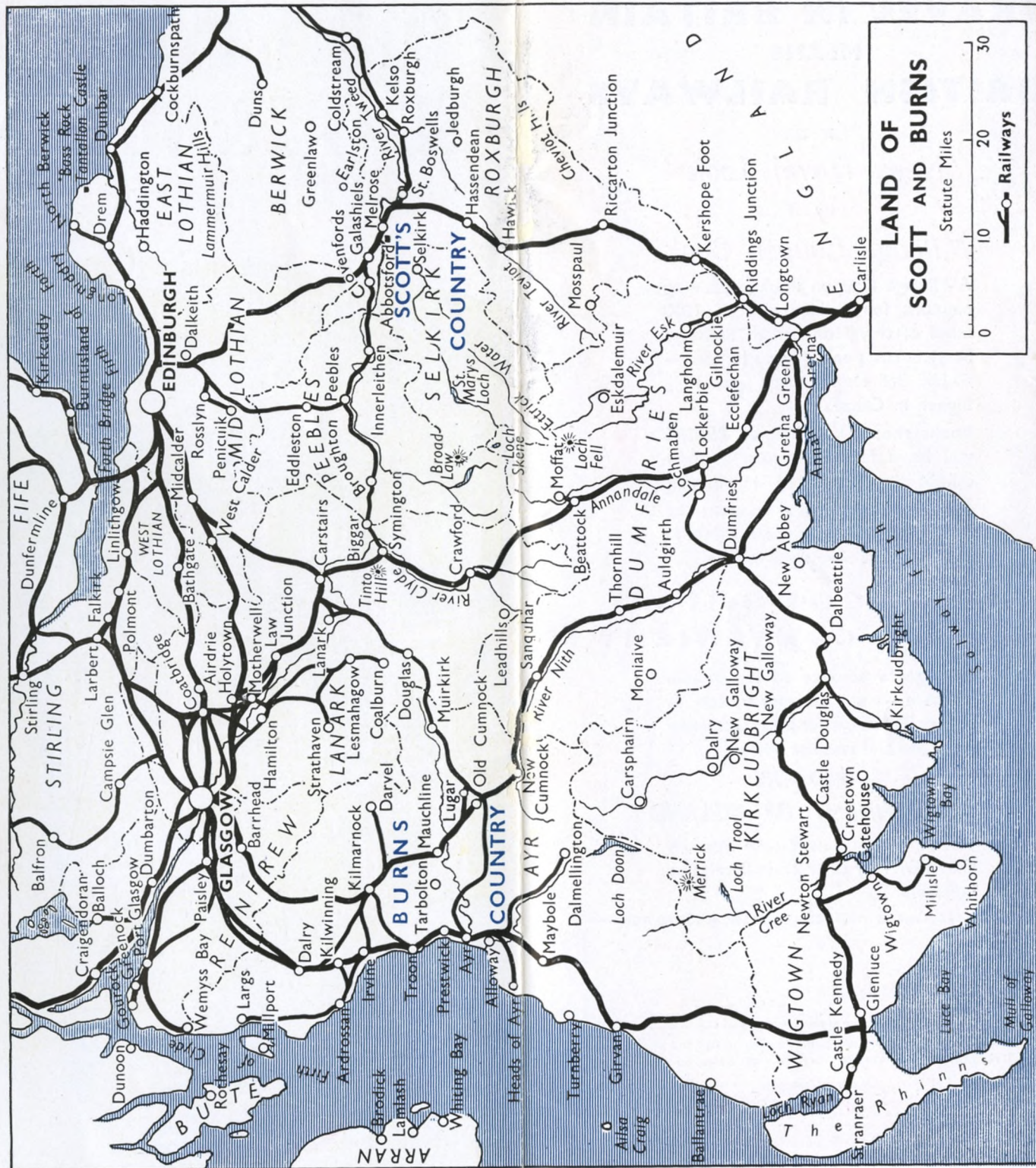
The Abbey is an enchanting place, still almost complete from its days of siege and battle. It has examples of Norman architecture and of modern designs. The wondrous bays of the choir stand entire, and lovely gardens slope gently down to the river. It is a ruin to linger in for hours and let the spirit, caught in the Present as in a cage, see through to something of old valorous days.

One will find that the whole countryside of this Land of Scott is "of a piece," as the saying goes. The loveliness of angle and aspect, continuously changing, is always reminiscent. Moffat, for instance, easily

approached from north and south, rich in memories of the Ettrick Shepherd, Christopher North, and of Burns as well as Scott, has the features of a modern spa. It is near to St. Mary's Loch, the source of the Yarrow, renowned in poetry as much as the loch itself. Here Scott went often on horseback from Abbotsford:

*Oft in my mind such thoughts awake
By lone St. Mary's silent lake,
Thou know'st well—nor fen nor sedge
Pollutes the pure lake's crystal edge,
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy
Where living things concealed might lie.*

Here is the setting of the Douglas tragedy in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," and many of Scott's noblest ballads. And here, too, a modern note may be given. "Beattock for Moffat" is the name of a short story by a great literary Scotsman of our own day, the late R. B. Cunningham Graham. It is considered one of the best short stories in modern literature, and gives a vivid picture of the Lowland Scot in these parts. Thus, even as we live, the poets and writers are adding lustre to hallowed places.



**LAND OF
SCOTT AND BURNS**

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