LETTER VIII.

DEAR AUNT E.:--

You wanted us to write about our visit to Melrose; so here you have it.

On Tuesday morning Mr. S. and C---- had agreed to go back to Glasgow for the purpose of speaking at a temperance meeting, and as we were restricted for time, we were obliged to make the visit to Melrose in their absence, much to the regret of us all. G---- thought we would make a little quiet run out in the cars by ourselves, while Mr. S. and C---- were gone back to Glasgow.

It was one of those soft, showery, April days, misty and mystical, now weeping and now shining, that we found ourselves whirled by the cars through this enchanted ground of Scotland. Almost every name we heard spoken along the railroad, every stream we passed, every point we looked at, recalled some line of Walter Scott's poetry, or some event of history. The thought that he was gone forever, whose genius had given the charm to all, seemed to settle itself down like a melancholy mist. To how little purpose seemed the few, short years of his life, compared with the capabilities of such a soul! Brilliant as his success had been, how was it passed like a dream! It seemed sad to think that he had not only passed away himself, but that almost the whole family and friendly circle had passed with him--not a son left to bear his name!

Here we were in the region of the Ettrick, the Yarrow, and the Tweed. I opened the Lay of the Last Minstrel, and, as if by instinct, the first lines my eye fell upon were these:--

"Call it not vain: they do not err
  Who say, that when the poet dies,
Mute nature mourns her worshipper,
  And celebrates his obsequies;
Who say, tall cliff and cavern lone
For the departed bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill;
That flowers in tears of balm distil;
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave."

"Melrose!" said the loud voice of the conductor; and starting, I looked up and saw quite a flourishing village, in the midst of which rose the old, gray, mouldering walls of the abbey. Now, this was somewhat of a disappointment to me. I had been somehow expecting to find the building standing alone in the middle of a great heath, far from all abodes of men, and with no companions more hilarious than the owls. However, it was no use complaining; the fact was, there was a village, and what was more, a hotel, and to this hotel we were to go to get a guide for the

places we were to visit; for it was understood that we were to "do" Melrose, Dryburgh, and Abbotsford, all in one day. There was no time for sentiment; it was a business affair, that must be looked in the face promptly, if we meant to get through. Ejaculations and quotations of poetry could, of course, be thrown in, as William, of Deloraine pattered his prayers, while riding.

We all alighted at a very comfortable hotel, and were ushered into as snug a little parlor as one's heart could desire.

The next thing was to hire a coachman to take us, in the rain,--for the mist had now swelled into a rain,--through the whole appropriate round. I stood by and heard names which I had never heard before, except in song, brought into view in their commercial relations; so much for Abbotsford; and so much for Dryburgh; and then, if we would like to throw in Thomas the Rhymer's Tower, why, that would be something extra.

"Thomas the Rhymer?" said one of the party, not exactly posted up. "Was he any thing remarkable? Well, is it worth while to go to his tower? It will cost something extra, and take more time."

Weighed in such a sacrilegious balance, Thomas was found wanting, of course: the idea of driving three or four miles farther to see an old tower, supposed to have belonged to a man who is supposed to have existed and to have been carried off by a supposititious Queen of the Fairies into Elfland, was too absurd for reasonable people; in fact, I

made believe myself that I did not care much about it, particularly as the landlady remarked, that if we did not get home by five o'clock "the chops might be spoiled."

As we all were packed into a tight coach, the rain still pouring, I began to wish mute Nature would not be quite so energetic in distilling her tears. A few sprinkling showers, or a graceful wreath of mist, might be all very well; but a steady, driving rain, that obliged us to shut up the carriage windows, and coated them with mist so that we could not look out, why, I say it is enough to put out the fire of sentiment in any heart. We might as well have been rolled up in a bundle and carried through the country, for all the seeing it was possible to do under such circumstances. It, therefore, should be stated, that we did keep bravely up in our poetic zeal, which kindly Mrs. W. also reënforced, by distributing certain very delicate sandwiches to support the outer man.

At length, the coach stopped at the entrance of Abbotsford grounds, where there was a cottage, out of which, due notice being given, came a trim, little old woman in a black gown, with pattens on; she put up her umbrella, and we all put up ours; the rain poured harder than ever as we went dripping up the gravel walk, looking much, I inly fancied, like a set of discomforted fowls fleeing to covert. We entered the great court yard, surrounded with a high wall, into which were built sundry fragments of curious architecture that happened to please the poet's fancy.

I had at the moment, spite of the rain, very vividly in my mind Washington Irving's graceful account of his visit to Abbotsford while this house was yet building, and the picture which he has given of Walter Scott sitting before his door, humorously descanting on various fragments of sculpture, which lay scattered about, and which he intended to immortalize by incorporating into his new dwelling.

Viewed as a mere speculation, or, for aught I know, as an architectural effort, this building may, perhaps, be counted as a mistake and a failure. I observe, that it is quite customary to speak of it, among some, as a pity that he ever undertook it. But viewed as a development of his inner life, as a working out in wood and stone of favorite fancies and cherished ideas, the building has to me a deep interest. The gentle-hearted poet delighted himself in it; this house was his stone and wood poem, as irregular, perhaps, and as contrary to any established rule, as his Lay of the Last Minstrel, but still wild and poetic. The building has this interest, that it was throughout his own conception, thought, and choice; that he expressed himself in every stone that was laid, and made it a kind of shrine, into which he wove all his treasures of antiquity, and where he imitated, from the beautiful, old, mouldering ruins of Scotland, the parts that had touched him most deeply.

The walls of one room were of carved oak from the Dunfermline Abbey; the ceiling of another imitated from Roslin Castle; here a fireplace was wrought in the image of a favorite niche in Melrose; and there the ancient pulpit of Erskine was wrought into a wall. To him, doubtless,

every object in the house was suggestive of poetic fancies; every carving and bit of tracery had its history, and was as truly an expression of something in the poet's mind as a verse of his poetry.

A building wrought out in this way, and growing up like a bank of coral, may very possibly violate all the proprieties of criticism; it may possibly, too, violate one's ideas of mere housewifery utility; but by none of these rules ought such a building to be judged. We should look at it rather as the poet's endeavor to render outward and visible the dream land of his thoughts, and to create for himself a refuge from the cold, dull realities of life, in an architectural romance.

These were thoughts which gave interest to the scene as we passed through the porchway, adorned with petrified stags' horns, into the long entrance hall of the mansion. This porch was copied from one in Linlithgow palace. One side of this hall was lighted by windows of painted glass. The floor was of black and white marble from the Hebrides. Round the whole cornice there was a line of coats armorial, richly blazoned, and the following inscription in old German text:

"These be the coat armories of the clanns and chief men of name wha keepit the marchys of Scotland in the old tyme for the kynge. Trewe men war they in their tyme, and in their defence God them defendyt."

There were the names of the Douglases, the Elliots, the Scotts, the Armstrongs, and others. I looked at this arrangement with interest,

because I knew that Scott must have taken a particular delight in it.

The fireplace, designed from a niche in Melrose Abbey, also in this room, and a choice bit of sculpture it is. In it was an old grate, which had its history also, and opposite to it the boards from the pulpit of Erskine were wrought into a kind of side table, or something which served that purpose. The spaces between the windows were decorated with pieces of armor, crossed swords, and stags' horns, each one of which doubtless had its history. On each side of the door, at the bottom of the hall, was a Gothic shrine, or niche, in both of which stood a figure in complete armor.

Then we went into the drawing room; a lofty saloon, the woodwork of which is entirely of cedar, richly wrought; probably another of the author's favorite poetic fancies. It is adorned with a set of splendid antique ebony furniture; cabinet, chairs, and piano--the gift of George IV. to the poet.

We went into his library; a magnificent room, on which, I suppose, the poet's fancy had expended itself more than any other. The roof is of carved oak, after models from Roslin Castle. Here, in a niche, is a marble bust of Scott, as we understood a present from Chantrey to the poet; it was one of the best and most animated representations of him I ever saw, and very much superior to the one under the monument in Edinburgh. On expressing my idea to this effect, I found I had struck upon a favorite notion of the good woman who showed us the

establishment; she seemed to be an ancient servant of the house, and appeared to entertain a regard for the old laird scarcely less than idolatry. One reason why this statue is superior is, that it represents his noble forehead, which the Edinburgh one suffers to be concealed by falling hair: to cover such a forehead seems scarcely less than a libel.

The whole air of this room is fanciful and picturesque in the extreme. The walls are entirely filled with the bookcases, there being about twenty thousand volumes. A small room opens from the library, which was Scott's own private study. His writing table stood in the centre, with his inkstand on it, and before it a large, plain, black leather arm chair.

In a glass case, I think in this room, was exhibited the suit of clothes he last wore; a blue coat with large metal buttons, plaid trousers, and broad-brimmed hat. Around the sides of this room there was a gallery of light tracery work; a flight of stairs led up to it, and in one corner of it was a door which the woman said led to the poet's bed room. One seemed to see in all this arrangement how snug, and cozy, and comfortable the poet had thus ensconced himself, to give himself up to his beloved labors and his poetic dreams. But there was a cold and desolate air of order and adjustment about it which reminds one of the precise and chilling arrangements of a room from which has just been carried out a corpse; all is silent and deserted.

The house is at present the property of Scott's only surviving daughter, whose husband has assumed the name of Scott. We could not learn from our informant whether any of the family was in the house. We saw only the rooms which are shown to visitors, and a coldness, like that of death, seemed to strike to my heart from their chilly solitude.

As we went out of the house we passed another company of tourists coming in, to whom we heard our guide commencing the same recitation, "this is," and "this is," &c., just as she had done to us. One thing about the house and grounds had disappointed me; there was not one view from a single window I saw that was worth any thing, in point of beauty; why a poet, with an eye for the beautiful, could have located a house in such an indifferent spot, on an estate where so many beautiful sites were at his command, I could not imagine.

As to the external appearance of Abbotsford, it is as irregular as can well be imagined. There are gables, and pinnacles, and spires, and balconies, and buttresses any where and every where, without rhyme or reason; for wherever the poet wanted a balcony, he had it; or wherever he had a fragment of carved stone, or a bit of historic tracery, to put in, he made a shrine for it forthwith, without asking leave of any rules. This I take to be one of the main advantages of Gothic architecture; it is a most catholic and tolerant system, and any kind of eccentricity may find refuge beneath its mantle.

Here and there, all over the house, are stones carved with armorial

bearings and pious inscriptions, inserted at random wherever the poet fancied. Half way up the wall in one place is the door of the old Tolbooth at Edinburgh, with the inscription over it, "The Lord of armeis is my protector; blissit ar thay that trust in the Lord. 1575."

A doorway at the west end of the house is composed of stones which formed the portal of the Tolbooth, given to Sir Walter on the pulling down of the building in 1817.

On the east side of the house is a rude carving of a sword with the words, "Up with ye, sutors of Selkyrke. A.D. 1525." Another inscription, on the same side of the house, runs thus:--

"By night, by day, remember ay
The goodness of ye Lord;
And thank his name, whose glorious fame
Is spread throughout ye world.--A.C.M.D. 1516."

In the yard, to the right of the doorway of the mansion, we saw the figure of Scott's favorite dog Maida, with a Latin inscription--

"Maidæ marmorea dormis sub imagine, Maida,
Ad januam domini: sit tibi terra levis."

Which in our less expressive English we might render--

At thy lord's door, in slumbers light and blest,
Maida, beneath this marble Maida, rest:
Light lie the turf upon thy gentle breast.

One of the most endearing traits of Scott was that sympathy and harmony which always existed between him and the brute creation.

Poor Maida seemed cold and lonely, washed by the rain in the damp grass plat. How sad, yet how expressive is the scriptural phrase for indicating death! "He shall return to his house no more, neither shall his place know him any more." And this is what all our homes are coming to; our buying, our planting, our building, our marrying and giving in marriage, our genial firesides and dancing children, are all like so many figures passing through the magic lantern, to be put out at last in death.

The grounds, I was told, are full of beautiful paths and seats, favorite walks and lounges of the poet; but the obdurate pertinacity of the rain compelled us to choose the very shortest path possible to the carriage. I picked a leaf of the Portugal laurel, which I send you.

Next we were driven to Dryburgh, or rather to the banks of the Tweed, where a ferryman, with a small skiff waits to take passengers over.

The Tweed is a clear, rippling river, with a white, pebbly bottom, just like our New England mountain streams. After we landed we were to walk

to the Abbey. Our feet were damp and cold, and our boatman invited us to his cottage. I found him and all his family warmly interested in the fortunes of Uncle Tom and his friends, and for his sake they received me as a long-expected friend. While I was sitting by the ingleside,--that is, a coal grate,--warming my feet, I fell into conversation with my host. He and his family, I noticed, spoke English more than Scotch; he was an intelligent young man, in appearance and style of mind precisely what you might expect to meet in a cottage in Maine. He and all the household, even the old grandmother, had read Uncle Tom's Cabin, and were perfectly familiar with all its details. He told me that it had been universally read in the cottages in the vicinity. I judged from his mode of speaking, that he and his neighbors were in the habit of reading a great deal. I spoke of going to Dryburgh to see the grave of Scott, and inquired if his works were much read by the common people. He said that Scott was not so much a favorite with the people as Burns. I inquired if he took a newspaper. He said that the newspapers were kept at so high a price that working men were not able to take them; sometimes they got sight of them through clubs, or by borrowing. How different, thought I, from America, where a workingman would as soon think of going without his bread as without his newspaper!

The cottages of these laboring people, of which there were a whole village along here, are mostly of stone, thatched with straw. This thatch sometimes gets almost entirely grown over with green moss. Thus moss-covered was the roof of the cottage where we stopped, opposite to Dryburgh grounds.

There was about this time one of those weeping pauses in the showery sky, and a kind of thinning and edging away of the clouds, which gave hope that perhaps the sun was going to look out, and give to our persevering researches the countenance of his presence. This was particularly desirable, as the old woman, who came out with her keys to guide us, said she had a cold and a cough: we begged that she would not trouble herself to go with us at all. The fact is, with all respect to nice old women, and the worthy race of guides in general, they are not favorable to poetic meditation. We promised to be very good if she would let us have the key, and lock up all the gates, and bring it back; but no, she was faithfulness itself, and so went coughing along through the dripping and drowned grass to open the gates for us.

This Dryburgh belongs now to the Earl of Buchan, having been bought by him from a family of the name of Haliburton, ancestral connections of Scott, who, in his autobiography, seems to lament certain mischances of fortune which prevented the estate from coming into his own family, and gave them, he said, nothing but the right of stretching their bones there. It seems a pity, too, because the possession of this rich, poetic ruin would have been a mine of wealth to Scott, far transcending the stateliest of modern houses.

Now, if you do not remember Scott's poem, of the Eve of St. John, you ought to read it over; for it is, I think, the most spirited of all his ballads; nothing conceals the transcendent lustre and beauty of these

compositions, but the splendor of his other literary productions. Had he never written any thing but these, they would have made him a name as a poet. As it was, I found the fanciful chime of the cadences in this ballad ringing through my ears. I kept saying to myself--

"The Dryburgh bells do ring,
And the white monks do sing
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame."

And as I was wandering around in the labyrinth, of old, broken, mossy arches, I thought--

"There is a nun in Dryburgh bower
Ne'er looks upon the sun;
There is a monk in Melrose tower,
He speaketh word to none.

That nun who ne'er beholds the day,
That monk who speaks to none,
That nun was Smaylhome's lady gay,
That monk the bold Baron."

It seems that there is a vault in this edifice which has had some superstitious legends attached to it, from having been the residence, about fifty years ago, of a mysterious lady, who, being under a vow never to behold the light of the sun, only left her cell at midnight.

This little story, of course, gives just enough superstitious chill to this beautiful ruin to help the effect of the pointed arches, the clinging wreaths of ivy, the shadowy pines, and yew trees; in short, if one had not a guide waiting, who had a bad cold, if one could stroll here at leisure by twilight or moonlight, one might get up a considerable deal of the mystic and poetic.

There is a part of the ruin that stands most picturesquely by itself, as if old Time had intended it for a monument. It is the ruin of that part of the chapel called St. Mary's Aisle; it stands surrounded by luxuriant thickets of pine and other trees, a cluster of beautiful Gothic arches supporting a second tier of smaller and more fanciful ones, one or two of which have that light touch of the Moorish in their form which gives such a singular and poetic effect in many of the old Gothic ruins. Out of these wild arches and windows wave wreaths of ivy, and slender harebells shake their blue pendants, looking in and out of the lattices like little capricious fairies. There are fragments of ruins lying on the ground, and the whole air of the thing is as wild, and dreamlike, and picturesque as the poet's fanciful heart could have desired.

Underneath these arches he lies beside his wife; around him the representation of the two things he loved most--the wild bloom and beauty of nature, and the architectural memorial of by-gone history and art. Yet there was one thing I felt I would have had otherwise; it seemed to me that the flat stones of the pavement are a weight too heavy and too cold to be laid on the breast of a lover of nature and the

beautiful. The green turf, springing with flowers, that lies above a grave, does not seem, to us so hopeless a barrier between us and what was warm and loving; the springing grass and daisies there seem, types and assurances that the mortal beneath shall put on immortality; they come up to us as kind messages from the peaceful dust, to say that it is resting in a certain hope of a glorious resurrection.

On the cold flagstones, walled in by iron railings, there were no daisies and no moss; but I picked many of both from, the green turf around, which, with some sprigs of ivy from the walls, I send you.

It is strange that we turn away from the grave of this man, who achieved to himself the most brilliant destiny that ever an author did,--raising himself by his own unassisted efforts to be the chosen companions of nobles and princes, obtaining all that heart could desire of riches and honor,--we turn away and say, Poor Walter Scott! How desolately touching is the account in Lockhart, of his dim and indistinct agony the day his wife was brought here to be buried! and the last part of that biography is the saddest history that I know; it really makes us breathe a long sigh of relief when we read of the lowering of the coffin into this vault.

What force does all this give to the passage in his diary in which he records his estimate of life!--"What is this world? a dream within a dream. As we grow older, each step is an awakening. The youth awakes, as he thinks, from childhood; the full-grown man despises the pursuits of

youth as visionary; the old man looks on manhood as a feverish dream. The grave the last sleep? No; it is the last and final awakening."

It has often been remarked, that there is no particular moral purpose aimed at by Scott in his writings; he often speaks of it himself in his last days, in a tone of humility. He represents himself as having been employed mostly in the comparatively secondary department of giving innocent amusement. He often expressed, humbly and earnestly, the hope that he had, at least, done no harm; but I am inclined to think, that although moral effect was not primarily his object, yet the influence of his writings and whole existence on earth has been decidedly good.

It is a great thing to have a mind of such power and such influence, whose recognitions of right and wrong, of virtue and vice, were, in most cases, so clear and determined. He never enlists our sympathies in favor of vice, by drawing those seductive pictures, in which it comes so near the shape and form of virtue that the mind is puzzled as to the boundary line. He never makes young ladies feel that they would like to marry corsairs, pirates, or sentimental villains of any description. The most objectionable thing, perhaps, about his influence, is its sympathy with the war spirit. A person Christianly educated can hardly read some of his descriptions in the Lady of the Lake and Marmion without an emotion of disgust, like what is excited by the same things in Homer; and as the world comes more and more under the influence of Christ, it will recede more and more from this kind of literature.

Scott has been censured as being wilfully unjust to the Covenanters and Puritans. I think he meant really to deal fairly by them, and that what he called fairness might seem rank injustice to those brought up to venerate them, as we have been. I suppose that in Old Mortality it was Scott's honest intention to balance the two parties about fairly, by putting on the Covenant side his good, steady, well-behaved hero, Mr. Morton, who is just as much of a Puritan as the Puritans would have been had they taken Sir Walter Scott's advice; that is to say, a very nice, sensible, moral man, who takes the Puritan side because he thinks it the right side, but contemplates all the devotional enthusiasm and religious ecstasies of his associates from a merely artistic and pictorial point of view. The trouble was, when he got his model Puritan done, nobody ever knew what he was meant for; and then all the young ladies voted steady Henry Morton a bore, and went to falling in love with his Cavalier rival, Lord Evandale, and people talked as if it was a preconcerted arrangement of Scott, to surprise the female heart, and carry it over to the royalist side.

The fact was, in describing Evandale he made a living, effective character, because he was describing something he had full sympathy with, and put his whole life into; but Henry Morton is a laborious arrangement of starch and pasteboard to produce one of those supposititious, just-right men, who are always the stupidest of mortals after they are made. As to why Scott did not describe such a character as the martyr Duke of Argyle, or Hampden, or Sir Harry Vane, where high birth, and noble breeding, and chivalrous sentiment were all united with

intense devotional fervor, the answer is, that he could not do it; he had not that in him wherewith to do it; a man cannot create that of which he has not first had the elements in himself; and devotional enthusiasm is a thing which Scott never felt. Nevertheless, I believe that he was perfectly sincere in saying that he would, "if necessary, die a martyr for Christianity." He had calm, firm principle to any extent, but it never was kindled into fervor. He was of too calm and happy a temperament to sound the deepest recesses of souls torn up from their depths by mighty conflicts and sorrows. There are souls like the "alabaster vase of ointment, very precious," which shed no perfume of devotion because a great sorrow has never broken them. Could Scott have been given back to the world again after the heavy discipline of life had passed over him, he would have spoken otherwise of many things. What he vainly struggled to say to Lockhart on his death bed would have been a new revelation, of his soul to the world, could he have lived to unfold it in literature. But so it is: when we have learned to live, life's purpose is answered, and we die!

This is the sum and substance of some conversations held while rambling among these scenes, going in and out of arches, climbing into nooks and through loopholes, picking moss and ivy, and occasionally retreating under the shadow of some arch, while the skies were indulging in a sudden burst of emotion. The poor woman who acted as our guide, ensconcing herself in a dry corner, stood like a literal Patience on a monument, waiting for us to be through; we were sorry for her, but as it was our first and last chance, and she would stay there, we could not

help it.

Near by the abbey is a square, modern mansion, belonging to the Earl of Buchan, at present untenanted. There were some black, solemn yew trees there, old enough to have told us a deal of history had they been inclined to speak; as it was, they could only drizzle.

As we were walking through the yard, a bird broke out into a clear, sweet song.

"What bird is that?" said I.

"I think it is the mavis," said the guide. This brought up,--

"The mavis wild, wie mony a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest."

And also,--

"Merry it is in wild green wood,
When mavis and merle are singing."

A verse, by the by, dismally suggestive of contrast to this rainy day.

As we came along out of the gate, walking back towards the village of Dryburgh, we began, to hope that the skies had fairly wept themselves

out; at any rate the rain stopped, and the clouds wore a sulky, leaden-gray aspect, as if they were thinking what to do next.

We saw a knot of respectable-looking laboring men at a little distance, conversing in a group, and now and then stealing glances at us; one of them at last approached and inquired if this was Mrs. Stowe, and being answered in the affirmative, they all said heartily, "Madam, ye're right welcome to Scotland." The chief speaker, then, after a little conversation, asked our party if we would do him the favor to step into his cottage near by, to take a little refreshment after our ramble; to which we assented with alacrity. He led the way to a neat, stone cottage, with a flower garden before the door, and said to a thrifty, rosy-cheeked woman, who met us, "Well, and what do you think, wife, if I have brought Mrs. Stowe and her party to take a cup of tea with us?"

We were soon seated in a neat, clean kitchen, and our hostess hastened to put the teakettle over the grate, lamenting that she had not known of our coming, that she might have had a fire "ben the house," meaning by the phrase what we Yankees mean by "in the best room." We caught a glimpse of the carpet and paper of this room, when the door was opened to bring out a few more chairs.

"Belyve the bairns cam dropping in,"

rosy-cheeked, fresh from school, with satchel and school books, to whom I was introduced as the mother of Topsy and Eva.

"Ah," said the father, "such a time as we had, when we were reading the book; whiles they were greetin' and whiles in a rage."

My host was quite a young-looking man, with the clear blue eye and glowing complexion which one so often meets here; and his wife, with her blooming cheeks, neat dress, and well-kept house, was evidently one of those fully competent

"To gar old claes look amaist as weel as new."

I inquired the ages of the several children, to which the father answered with about as much chronological accuracy as men generally display in such points of family history. The gude wife, after correcting his figures once or twice, turned away with a somewhat indignant exclamation about men that didn't know their own bairns' ages, in which many of us, I presume, could sympathize.

I must not omit to say, that a neighbor of our host had been pressed to come in with us; an intelligent-looking man, about fifty. In the course of conversation, I found that they were both masons by trade, and as the rain had prevented their working, they had met to spend their time in reading. They said they were reading a work on America; and thereat followed a good deal of general conversation on our country. I found that, like many others in this old country, they had a tie to connect them with the new--a son in America.

One of our company, in the course of the conversation, says, "They say in America that the working classes of England and Scotland are not so well off as the slaves." The man's eye flashed. "There are many things," he said, "about the working classes, which are not what they should be; there's room for a great deal of improvement in our condition, but," he added with an emphasis, "we are no slaves!" There was a, touch, of the

"Scots wha ha' wi' Wallace bled"

about the man, as he spoke, which made the affirmation quite unnecessary.

"But," said I, "you think the affairs of the working classes much improved of late years?"

"O, certainly," said the other; "since the repeal of the corn laws and the passage of the factory bill, and this emigration to America and Australia, affairs have been very much altered."

We asked them what they could make a day by their trade. It was much less, certainly, than is paid for the same labor in our country; but yet the air of comfort and respectability about the cottage, the well-clothed and well-schooled, intelligent children, spoke well for the result of their labors.

While our conversation was carried on, the teakettle commenced singing most melodiously, and by a mutual system of accommodation, a neat tea table was spread in the midst of us, and we soon found ourselves seated, enjoying some delicious bread and butter, with the garniture of cheese, preserves, and tea. Our host before the meal craved a blessing of Him who had made of one blood all the families of the earth; a beautiful and touching allusion, I thought, between Americans and Scotchmen. Our long ramble in the rain had given us something of an appetite, and we did ample justice to the excellence of the cheer.

After tea we walked on down again towards the Tweed, our host and his friends waiting on us to the boat. As we passed through the village of Dryburgh, all the inhabitants of the cottages seemed to be standing in their doors, bowing and smiling, and expressing their welcome in a gentle, kindly way, that was quite touching.

As we were walking towards the Tweed, the Eildon Hill, with its three points, rose before us in the horizon. I thought of the words in the Lay of the Last Minstrel:--

"Warrior, I could say to thee,
The words that cleft Eildon Hill in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone."

I appealed to my friends if they knew any thing about the tradition; I thought they seemed rather reluctant to speak of it. O, there was some

foolish story, they believed; they did not well know what it was.

The picturesque age of human childhood is gone by; men and women cannot always be so accommodating as to believe unreasonable stories for the convenience of poets.

At the Tweed the man with the skiff was waiting for us. In parting with my friend, I said, "Farewell. I hope we may meet again some time."

"I am sure we shall, madam," said he; "if not here, certainly hereafter."

After being rowed across I stopped a few moments to admire the rippling of the clear water over the pebbles. "I want some of these pebbles of the Tweed," I said, "to carry home to America." Two hearty, rosy-cheeked Scotch lasses on the shore soon supplied me with as many as I could carry.

We got into our carriage, and drove up to Melrose. After a little negotiation with the keeper, the doors were unlocked. Just at that moment the sun was so gracious as to give a full look through the windows, and touch with streaks of gold the green, grassy floor; for the beautiful ruin is floored with green grass and roofed with sky: even poetry has not exaggerated its beauty, and could not. There is never any end to the charms of Gothic architecture. It is like the beauty of Cleopatra,--

"Age cannot wither, custom, cannot stale
Her infinite variety."

Here is this Melrose, now, which has been berhymed, bedraggled through infinite guide books, and been gaped at and smoked at by dandies, and been called a "dear love" by pretty young ladies, and been hawked about as a trade article in all neighboring shops, and you know perfectly well that all your raptures are spoken for and expected at the door, and your going off in an ecstasy is a regular part of the programme; and yet, after all, the sad, wild, sweet beauty of the thing comes down on one like a cloud; even for the sake of being original you could not, in conscience, declare you did not admire it.

We went into a minute examination with our guide, a young man, who seemed to have a full sense of its peculiar beauties. I must say here, that Walter Scott's description in the Lay of the Last Minstrel is as perfect in most details as if it had been written by an architect as well as a poet--it is a kind of glorified daguerreotype.

This building was the first of the elaborate and fanciful Gothic which I had seen, and is said to excel in the delicacy of its carving any except Roslin Castle. As a specimen of the exactness of Scott's description, take this verse, where he speaks of the cloisters:--

"Spreading herbs and flowerets bright,

Glistened with the dew of night,
Nor herb nor floweret glistened there,
But were carved in the cloister arches as fair."

These cloisters were covered porticoes surrounding the garden, where the monks walked for exercise. They are now mostly destroyed, but our guide showed us the remains of exquisite carvings there, in which each group was an imitation of some leaf or flower, such as the curly kail of Scotland; a leaf, by the by, as worthy of imitation as the Greek acanthus, the trefoil oak, and some other leaves, the names of which I do not remember. These Gothic artificers were lovers of nature; they studied at the fountain head; hence the never-dying freshness, variety, and originality of their conceptions.

Another passage, whose architectural accuracy you feel at once, is this:--

"They entered now the chancel tall;
The darkened, roof rose high, aloof
On pillars lofty, light, and small:
The keystone that locked, each ribbed aisle
Was a fleur-de-lis, or a quatre-feuille;
The corbels were carved grotesque and grim;
And the pillars, with, clustered shafts so trim,
With, base and with capital flourished around,
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had bound."

The quatre-feuille here spoken of is an ornament formed by the junction of four leaves. The frequent recurrence of the fleur-de-lis in the carvings here shows traces of French hands employed in the architecture. In one place in the abbey there is a rude inscription, in which a French architect commemorates the part he has borne in constructing the building.

These corbels are the projections from which, the arches spring, usually carved in some fantastic mask or face; and on these the Shakspearian imagination of the Gothic artists seems to have let itself loose to run riot: there is every variety of expression, from, the most beautiful to the most goblin and grotesque. One has the leer of fiendish triumph, with budding horns, showing too plainly his paternity; again you have the drooping eyelids and saintly features of some fair virgin; and then the gasping face of some old monk, apparently in the agonies of death, with his toothless gums, hollow cheeks, and sunken eyes. Other faces have an earthly and sensual leer; some are wrought into expressions of scorn and mockery, some of supplicating agony, and some of grim, despair.

One wonders what gloomy, sarcastic, poetic, passionate mind has thus amused itself, recording in stone all the range of passions--saintly, earthly, and diabolic--on the varying human face. One fancies each corbel to have had its history, its archetype in nature; a thousand possible stories spring into one's mind. They are wrought with such a

startling and individual definiteness, that one feels as about Shakspeare's characters, as if they must have had a counterpart in real existence. The pure, saintly nun may have been some sister, or some daughter, or some early love, of the artist, who in an evil hour saw the convent barriers rise between her and all that was loving. The fat, sensual face may have been a sly sarcasm on some worthy abbot, more eminent in flesh than spirit. The fiendish faces may have been wrought out of the author's own perturbed dreams.

An architectural work says that one of these corbels, with an anxious and sinister Oriental countenance, has been made, by the guides, to perform duty as an authentic likeness of the wizard Michael Scott. Now, I must earnestly protest against stating things in that way. Why does a writer want to break up so laudable a poetic design in the guides? He would have been much better occupied in interpreting some of the half-defaced old inscriptions into a corroborative account. No doubt it was Michael Scott, and looked just like him.

It were a fine field for a story writer to analyze the conception and growth of an abbey or cathedral as it formed itself, day after day, and year after year, in the soul of some dreamy, impassioned workman, who made it the note book where he wrought out imperishably in stone all his observations on nature and man. I think it is this strong individualism of the architect in the buildings that give the never-dying charm, and variety to the Gothic: each Gothic building is a record of the growth, character, and individualities of its builder's soul; and hence no two

can be alike.

I was really disappointed to miss in the abbey the stained glass which gives such a lustre and glow to the poetic description. I might have known better; but somehow I came there fully expecting to see the window, where--

"Full in the midst his cross of red
Triumphant Michael brandished;
The moonbeam kissed the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement the bloody stain."

Alas! the painted glass was all of the poet's own setting; years ago it was shattered by the hands of violence, and the grace of the fashion of it hath perished.

The guide pointed to a broken fragment which commanded a view of the whole interior. "Sir Walter used to sit here," he said. I fancied I could see him sitting on the fragment, gazing around the ruin, and mentally restoring it to its original splendor; he brings back the colored light into the windows, and throws its many-hued reflections over the graves; he ranges the banners along around the walls, and rebuilds every shattered arch and aisle, till we have the picture as it rises on us in his book.

I confess to a strong feeling of reality, when my guide took me to a

grave where a flat, green, mossy stone, broken across the middle, is reputed to be the grave of Michael Scott. I felt, for the moment, verily persuaded that if the guide would pry up one of the stones we should see him there, as described:--

"His hoary beard in silver rolled,
He seemed some seventy winters old;
A palmer's amice wrapped, him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
His left hand held his book of might;
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his knee:
High and majestic was his look,
At which, the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled, was his face:
They trusted his soul had gotten grace."

I never knew before how fervent a believer I had been in the realities of these things.

There are two graves that I saw, which correspond to those mentioned in these lines:--

"And there the dying lamps did burn
Before thy lone and lowly urn,

O gallafit chief of Otterburne,

And thine, dark knight of Liddesdale."

The Knight of Otterburne was one of the Earls Douglas, killed in a battle with Henry Percy, called Hotspur, in 1388. The Knight of Liddesdale was another Douglas, who lived in the reign of David II., and was called the "Flower of Chivalry." One performance of this "Flower" is rather characteristic of the times. It seems the king made one Ramsey high sheriff of Teviotdale. The Earl of Douglas chose to consider this as a personal affront, as he wanted the office himself. So, by way of exhibiting his own qualifications for administering justice, he one day came down on Ramsey, vi et armis, took him off his judgment seat, carried him to one of his castles, and without more words tumbled him and his horse into a deep dungeon, where they both starved to death. There's a "Flower" for you, peculiar to the good old times. Nobody could have doubted after this his qualifications to be high sheriff.

Having looked all over the abbey from, below, I noticed a ruinous winding staircase; so up I went, rustling along through the ivy, which matted and wove itself around the stones. Soon I found myself looking down on the abbey from a new point of view--from a little narrow stone gallery, which threads the whole inside of the building. There I paced up and down, looking occasionally through the ivy-wreathed arches on the green, turfy floor below.

It seems as if silence and stillness had become a real presence in these

old places. The voice of the guide and the company beneath had a hushed and muffled sound; and when I rustled the ivy leaves, or, in trying to break off a branch, loosened some fragment of stone, the sound affected me with a startling distinctness. I could not but inly muse and wonder on the life these old monks and abbots led, shrined up here as they were in this lovely retirement.

In ruder ages these places were the only retreat for men of a spirit too gentle to take force and bloodshed for their life's work; men who believed that pen and parchment were better than sword and steel. Here I suppose multitudes of them lived harmless, dreamy lives--reading old manuscripts, copying and illuminating new ones.

It is said that this Melrose is of very ancient origin, extending back to the time of the Culdees, the earliest missionaries who established religion in Scotland, and who had a settlement in this vicinity. However, a royal saint, after a while, took it in hand to patronize, and of course the credit went to him, and from, him Scott calls it "St. David's lonely pile." In time a body of Cistercian monks were settled there.

According to all accounts the abbey has raised some famous saints. We read of trances, illuminations, and miraculous beatifications; and of one abbot in particular, who exhibited the odor of sanctity so strongly that it is said the mere opening of his grave, at intervals, was sufficient to perfume the whole establishment with odors of paradise.

Such stories apart, however, we must consider that for all the literature, art, and love of the beautiful, all the humanizing influences which hold society together, the world was for many ages indebted to these monastic institutions.

In the reformation, this abbey was destroyed amid the general storm, which attacked the ecclesiastical architecture of Scotland. "Pull down the nest, and the rooks will fly away," was the common saying of the mob; and in those days a man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the carved work.

Melrose was considered for many years merely a stone quarry, from which materials were taken for all sorts of buildings, such as constructing tolbooths, repairing mills and sluices; and it has been only till a comparatively recent period that its priceless value as an architectural remain has led to proper efforts for its preservation. It is now most carefully kept.

After wandering through the inside we walked out into the old graveyard, to look at the outside. The yard is full of old, curious, mouldering gravestones; and on one of them there is an inscription sad and peculiar enough to have come from the heart of the architect who planned the abbey; it runs as follows:--

"The earth walks on the earth, glittering with gold;
The earth goes to the earth sooner than it wold;

The earth, builds on the earth, castles and towers;
The earth, says to the earth, All shall be ours."

Here, also, we were interested in a plain marble slab, which marks the last resting-place of Scott's faithful Tom Purdie, his zealous factotum. In his diary, when he hears of the wreck of his fortunes, Scott says of this serving man, "Poor Tom Purdie, such news will wring your heart, and many a poor fellow's beside, to whom my prosperity was daily bread."

One fancies again the picture described by Lockhart, the strong, lank frame, hard features, sunken eyes, and grizzled eyebrows, the green jacket, white hat, and gray trousers--the outer appointments of the faithful serving man. One sees Scott walking familiarly by his side, staying himself on Tom's shoulder, while Tom talks with glee of "our trees," and "our bukes." One sees the little skirmishing, when master wants trees planted one way and man sees best to plant them another; and the magnanimity with which kindly, cross-grained Tom at last agrees, on reflection, to "take his honor's advice" about the management of his honor's own property. Here, between master and man, both freemen, is all that beauty of relation sometimes erroneously considered as the peculiar charm of slavery. Would it have made the relation any more picturesque and endearing had Tom been stripped of legal rights, and made liable to sale with the books and furniture of Abbotsford? Poor Tom is sleeping here very quietly, with a smooth coverlet of green grass. Over him is the following inscription: "Here lies the body of Thomas Purdie, wood forester at Abbotsford, who died 29th October, 1829, aged sixty-two

years. Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things." Matt. xxv. 21.

We walked up, and down, and about, getting the best views of the building. It is scarcely possible for description to give you the picture. The artist, in whose mind the conception of this building arose, was a Mozart in architecture; a plaintive and ethereal lightness, a fanciful quaintness, pervaded his composition. The building is not a large one, and it has not that air of solemn massive grandeur, that plain majesty, which impresses you in the cathedrals of Aberdeen and Glasgow. As you stand looking at the wilderness of minarets and flying buttresses, the multiplied shrines, and mouldings, and cornices, all incrusted with carving as endless in its variety as the frostwork on a window pane; each shrine, each pinnace, each moulding, a study by itself, yet each contributing, like the different strains of a harmony, to the general effect of the whole; it seems to you that for a thing so airy and spiritual to have sprung up by enchantment, and to have been the product of spells and fairy fingers, is no improbable account of the matter.

Speaking of gargoyles--you are no architect, neither am I, but you may as well get used to this descriptive term; it means the water-spouts which conduct the water from the gutters at the eaves of these buildings, and which are carved in every grotesque and fanciful device that can be imagined. They are mostly goblin and fiendish faces, and look as if they were darting out of the church in a towering passion, or

a fit of diabolic disgust and malice. Besides these gargoyles, there are in many other points of the external building representations of fiendish faces and figures, as if in the act of flying from the building, under the influence of a terrible spell: by this, as my guide said, was expressed the idea that the holy hymns and worship of the church put Satan and all his forces to rout, and made all that was evil flee.

One remark on this building, in Billings's architectural account of it, interested me; and that is, that it is finished with the most circumstantial elegance and minuteness in those concealed portions which are excluded, from public view, and which can only be inspected by laborious climbing or groping; and he accounts for this by the idea that the whole carving and execution was considered as an act of solemn worship and adoration, in which the artist offered up his best faculties to the praise of the Creator.

After lingering a while here, we went home to our inn or hotel. Now, these hotels in the small towns of England, if this is any specimen, are delightful affairs for travellers, they are so comfortable and home-like. Our snug little parlor was radiant with the light of the coal grate; our table stood before it, with its bright silver, white cloth, and delicate china cups; and then such a dish of mutton chops! My dear, we are all mortal, and emotions of the beautiful and sublime tend especially to make one hungry. We, therefore, comforted ourselves over the instability of earthly affairs, and the transitory nature of all

human grandeur, by consolatory remarks on the present whiteness of the bread, the sweetness of the butter; and as to the chops, all declared, with one voice, that such mutton was a thing unknown in America. I moved an emendation, except on the sea coast of Maine. We resolved to cherish the memory of our little hostess in our heart of hearts, and as we gathered round the cheery grate, drying our cold feet, we voted that poetry was a humbug, and damp, old, musty cathedrals a bore. Such are the inconsistencies of human nature!

"Nevertheless," said I to S----, after dinner, "I am going back again to-night, to see that abbey by moonlight. I intend to walk the whole figure while I am about it."

Just on the verge of twilight I stepped out, to see what the town afforded in the way of relics. To say the truth, my eye had been caught by some cunning little tubs and pails in a window, which I thought might be valued in the home department. I went into a shop, where an auld wife soon appeared, who, in reply to my inquiries, told me, that the said little tubs and pails were made of plum tree wood from Dryburgh Abbey, and, of course, partook of the sanctity of relics. She and her husband seemed to be driving a thriving trade in the article, and either plum trees must be very abundant at Dryburgh, or what there are must be gifted with that power of self-multiplication which inheres in the wood of the true Cross. I bought them in blind faith, however, suppressing all rationalistic doubts, as a good relic hunter should.

I went up into a little room where an elderly woman professed to have quite a collection of the Melrose relics. Some years ago extensive restorations and repairs were made in the old abbey, in which Walter Scott took a deep interest. At that time, when the scaffolding was up for repairing the building, as I understood, Scott had the plaster casts made of different parts, which he afterwards incorporated into his own dwelling at Abbotsford. I said to the good woman that I had understood by Washington Irving's account, that Scott appropriated bona fide fragments of the building, and alluded to the account which he gives of the little red sandstone lion from Melrose. She repelled the idea with great energy, and said she had often heard Sir Walter say, that he would not carry off a bit of the building as big as his thumb. She showed me several plaster casts that she had in her possession, which were taken at this time. There were several corbels there; one was the head of an old monk, and looked as if it might have been a mask taken of his face the moment after death; the eyes were hollow and sunken, the cheeks fallen in, the mouth lying helplessly open, showing one or two melancholy old stumps of teeth. I wondered over this, whether it really was the fac-simile of some poor old Father Ambrose, or Father Francis, whose disconsolate look, after his death agony, had so struck the gloomy fancy of the artist as to lead him to immortalize him in a corbel, for a lasting admonition to his fat worldly brethren; for if we may trust the old song, these monks of Melrose had rather a suspicious reputation in the matter of worldly conformity. The impudent ballad says,--

"O, the monks of Melrose, they made good, kail

On Fridays, when they fasted;
They never wanted beef or ale
As long as their neighbors' lasted."

Naughty, roistering fellows! I thought I could perceive how this poor Father Francis had worn his life out exhorting them to repentance, and given up the ghost at last in despair, and so been made at once into a saint and a corbel.

There were fragments of tracery, of mouldings and cornices, and grotesque bits of architecture there, which I would have given a good deal to be the possessor of. Stepping into a little cottage hard by to speak to the guide about unlocking the gates, when we went out on our moonlight excursion at midnight, I caught a glimpse, in an inner apartment, of a splendid, large, black dog. I gave one exclamation and jump, and was into the room after him.

"Ah," said the old man, "that was just like Sir Walter; he always had an eye for a dog."

It gave me a kind of pain to think of him and his dogs, all lying in the dust together; and yet it was pleasant to hear this little remark of him, as if it were made by those who had often seen, and were fond of thinking of him. The dog's name was Coal, and he was black enough, and remarkable enough, to make a figure in a story--a genuine Melrose Abbey dog. I should not wonder if he were a descendant, in a remote degree, of

the "mauthe doog," that supernatural beast, which Scott commemorates in his notes. The least touch in the world of such blood in his veins would be, of course, an appropriate circumstance in a dog belonging to an old ruined abbey.

Well, I got home, and narrated my adventures to my friends, and showed them my reliquary purchases, and declared my strengthening intention to make my ghostly visit by moonlight, if there was any moon to be had that night, which was a doubtful possibility.

In the course of the evening came in Mr. ----, who had volunteered his services as guide and attendant during the interesting operation.

"When does the moon rise?" said one.

"O, a little after eleven o'clock, I believe," said Mr. ----.

Some of the party gaped portentously.

"You know," said I, "Scott says we must see it by moonlight; it is one of the proprieties of the place, as I understand."

"How exquisite that description is, of the effect of moonlight!" says another.

"I think it probable," says Mr. ----, dryly, "that Scott never saw it by

moonlight himself. He was a man of very regular habits, and seldom went out evenings."

The blank amazement with which this communication was received set S---- into an inextinguishable fit of laughter.

"But do you really believe he never saw it?" said I, rather crestfallen.

"Well," said the gentleman, "I have heard him charged with never having seen it, and he never denied it."

Knowing that Scott really was as practical a man as Dr. Franklin, and as little disposed to poetic extravagances, and an exceedingly sensible, family kind of person, I thought very probably this might be true, unless he had seen it some time in his early youth. Most likely good Mrs. Scott never would have let him commit the impropriety that we were about to, and run the risk of catching the rheumatism by going out to see how an old abbey looked at twelve o'clock at night.

We waited for the moon to rise, and of course it did not rise; nothing ever does when it is waited for. We went to one window, and went to another; half past eleven came, and no moon. "Let us give it up," said I, feeling rather foolish. However, we agreed to wait another quarter of an hour, and finally Mr. ---- announced that the moon was risen; the only reason we did not see it was, because it was behind the Eildon Hills. So we voted to consider her risen at any rate, and started out in

the dark, threading the narrow streets of the village with the comforting reflection that we were doing what Sir Walter would think rather a silly thing. When we got out before the abbey there was enough light behind the Eildon Hills to throw their three shadowy cones out distinctly to view, and to touch with a gloaming, uncertain ray the ivy-clad walls. As we stood before the abbey, the guide fumbling with his keys, and finally heard the old lock clash as the door slowly opened to admit us, I felt a little shiver of the ghostly come over me, just enough to make it agreeable.

In the daytime we had criticized Walter Scott's moonlight description in the lines which say,--

"The distant Tweed is heard, to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave."

"We hear nothing of the Tweed, at any rate," said we; "that must be a poetic license." But now at midnight, as we walked silently through the mouldering aisles, the brawl of the Tweed was so distinctly heard that it seemed as if it was close by the old, lonely pile; nor can any term describe the sound more exactly than the word "rave," which the poet has chosen. It was the precise accuracy of this little item of description which made me feel as if Scott must have been here in the night. I walked up into the old chancel, and sat down where William of Deloraine and the monk sat, on the Scottish monarch's tomb, and thought over the words

"Strange sounds along the chancel passed,
And banners wave without a blast;
Still spake the monk when the bell tolled one."

And while we were there the bell tolled twelve.

And then we went to Michael Scott's grave, and we looked through the east oriel, with its

"Slender shafts of shapely stone,
By foliage tracery combined."

The fanciful outlines showed all the more distinctly for the entire darkness within, and the gloaming moonlight without. The tall arches seemed higher in their dimness, and vaster than they did in the daytime. "Hark!" said I; "what's that?" as we heard a rustling and flutter of wings in the ivy branches over our heads. Only a couple of rooks, whose antiquarian slumbers were disturbed by the unwonted noise there at midnight, and who rose and flew away, rattling down some fragments of the ruin as they went. It was somewhat odd, but I could not help fancying, what if these strange, goblin rooks were the spirits of old monks coming back to nestle and brood among their ancient cloisters! Rooks are a ghostly sort of bird. I think they were made on purpose to live in old yew trees and ivy, as much as yew trees and ivy were to grow round old churches and abbeys. If we once could get inside of a rook's

skull, to find out what he is thinking of, I'll warrant that we should know a great deal more about these old buildings than we do now. I should not wonder if there were long traditionary histories handed down from one generation of rooks to another, and that these are what they are talking about when we think they are only chattering. I imagine I see the whole black fraternity the next day, sitting, one on a gargoyle, one on a buttress, another on a shrine, gossiping over the event of our nightly visit.

We walked up and down the long aisles, and groped out into the cloisters; and then I thought, to get the full ghostliness of the thing, we would go up the old, ruined staircase into the long galleries, that

"Midway thread the abbey wall."

We got about half way up, when there came into our faces one of those sudden, passionate puffs of mist and rain which Scotch clouds seem to have the faculty of getting up at a minute's notice. Whish! came the wind in our faces, like the rustling of a whole army of spirits down the staircase; whereat we all tumbled back promiscuously on to each other, and concluded we would not go up. In fact we had done the thing, and so we went home; and I dreamed of arches, and corbels, and gargoyles all night. And so, farewell to Melrose Abbey.