



# The Complete Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott: With an Introduction (Classic Reprint)

*Walter Scott Norton*

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In looking back over this century, which is now so near its close, there is none among its conspicuous figures of pleasanter aspect than that of Scott; and of all the men who have lived during its course there is not one who has contributed more largely to the pleasure of its successive generations. This is a high eulogy; no man could desire a better. To amuse men rationally, to give them wholesome entertainment, is to do them a great service; and to do this through a lifetime more successfully than any one else, is to be worthy of lasting gratitude. This is what Scott did for our Others, and has done for many of us, and will continue to do for many of our children. At this moment, more than sixty years after the last of his novels was written, two popular editions of them are in course of publication ;while his poems, ninety years after the Lay of the Last Minstrel was first published, are still the delight of youthful readers, and still charm readers of all ages by the interest of their animated narrative, the ease of their versification, and the manliness of their spirit. Scott, said Mr. Emerson, is the most lovable of men, and entitled to the worlds gratitude for the entertainment he has given to solitude, the relief to headache and heartache. But, he adds, he is not sufficiently alive to ideas to be a great man. Into the question whether Scott was a great man or not, we do not propose, says Carlyle, to enter deeply. It is, as too usual, a question about words. There can be no doubt that many men have been named and printed great who were vastly smaller than he; as little doubt, moreover, that of the specially goody a very large portion, according to any genuine standard of mans worth, were worthless in comparison with him. ...T he truth is, our best definition of Scott were perhaps even this, that he was, if no great man, then something much pleasanter

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