

with Robertson-Scott's "In the Country and Out of It," I came very soon on this entry:

The account of how, in the Peak District at the end of March, a year-old collie was discovered watching by the body of its master, an octogenarian shepherd missing since mid-December, recalled to many of us the story of the fox-terrier that guarded its master's body for three months in 1805 on Helvellyn. Wordsworth and Sir Walter Scott each wrote a poem about it. That admirable little paper "Cumbria" recently had an illustration of the memorial stone with its long inscription.

I wonder how big a number that "many of us" means in New Zealand. I

had to think hard
NOVEMBER 15 before I could myself recall Words-

worth's poem, and then search for a quarter of an hour before I found it. But I have not recalled Scott's contribution yet, twenty-four hours later, and when I decided yesterday to revive my memory by studying an index to Scott's first lines, I could find no poetry of Scott's on my shelves but *Marmion*, the *Lady of the Lake*, and the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which every young poet today knows to be jingling nonsense. I have no intention of reading them again to see whether I have learnt anything or forgotten anything in 50 years, but I remember how disturbed (and secretly pleased) I was when I read what Whitman said to Traubel about Scott in one of those Camden conversations which Traubel thought would make him as famous as Boswell (as they might have done if Whitman had lived another year or two and Traubel had controlled his own ego). A habit I had once of dating my books shows that I read Whitman's tribute 46 years ago, and I was not bold enough in 1908 to say openly that I still admired Scott. I did, however, then openly worship Whitman, and his tribute to Scott gave me some dark thoughts, first about myself and then about him.

The search for the Camden conversations was successful in a few minutes, and it gives me no embarrassment at all today to quote a passage like this: "How I am indebted to Scott no one can tell—I couldn't tell it myself—but it has permeated me through and through. If you could reduce the *Leaves* to their elements you would see Scott unmistakably active at the roots." What embarrasses me is the thought that I ceased reading Scott nearly 50 years ago, and in the meantime have even elbowed him off my shelves. (To be continued)

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