



AUNT DAISY

brings you the

WEEKLY CHEER BUDGET

SHE VISITS FINE OLD HOME OF WELL-LOVED SIR WALTER SCOTT

It was, indeed, a beautiful drive from Dryburgh Abbey to Melrose, following the Tweed River all the way. We passed through the village of St. Boswell's, with its old, old stone cottages, the doors of the parlours opening right on to the cobble-stoned streets, and with little gardens gay with geraniums and marigolds under the windows.

These old village streets have no footpaths, and remain today just as they have always been for centuries. We have seen replicas of them in the beautiful "Clachan" at the Glasgow Exhibition—I shall be telling you all about that very soon.

St. Boswell's has still its village green where the Hunt still meets; and a little farther on, we came to Newton St. Boswell's, with its ancient sheep salesmarket.

Then we passed something more ancient still—Tremontum Monument, which dates from the time of the Roman Emperor Agricola!

Melrose Abbey

I suppose it is true to say that Melrose Abbey is the most beautiful of all the many ancient ruins in England and Scotland. It isn't possible to describe it, and even fine pictures of it can give only a suggestion of what I might call its extraordinary individuality and mysterious grandeur.

Almost every stone of the whole great Abbey seems to have its own special significance—there is a meaning in, and a story about, every corner and nook.

How did the old monks build and decorate those high walls and lofty ceilings, and get those heavy stones placed without any modern machinery? What a richness of ideas in the windows alone—the Crucifix Window, the Crown of Thorns Window, the beautiful East Window, each one carved in stone so very delicately—and still so perfect, although, of course, the glass has gone.

The stone was hewn by hand in a quarry which is just "over yonder" as the guide said, pointing; and brought over to the Abbey by those patient and persevering monks.

We had joined in here with a party of tourists, who were being shown all over Melrose by a most interesting and cultured Scottish guide.

He pointed out everything and told legends and stories about each of the high niches with little carved saints and figures still standing therein, as though sheltering from the wind and the rain, and the sunshine of the centuries; and he halted us by tombs in corners of the Abbey, while he made our blood curdle with dramatic tales of how the graves were opened at dead of night, and ancient treasures and books of wizardry stolen therefrom.

I made up my mind to re-read "The Lay of the Last Minstrel"

and "Guy Mannering," as soon as possible, for Scott tells us many of these legends in those works; and as that guide related them, they rivalled any modern "thriller."

Real And Vivid

It did not take long to drive from Melrose to beautiful "Abbotsford," the home of Sir Walter Scott, who is still so real and vivid to every Scotsman.

It seemed to me that the Scottish people feel just the same to Scott and Burns, as we do to our Royal Family—they take such an intimate and personal interest in the simplest and most natural happenings in their lives, and feel that they each have a share in these national idols.

They are surprisingly well acquainted with their works, too—just as we are with those of Shakespeare—whose wise comments are, of course, always "up to date" and appropriate in any country and in any century.

Abbotsford is still inhabited by a Sir Walter (Maxwell) Scott; for although the novelist had no son, the family has been carried on through the female line, and the baronetcy was revived to celebrate the centenary of Sir Walter. The present owner is a great-great-grandson of the great man.

During certain months of the year, the public are allowed to see through those parts of the house especially used by Sir Walter, and still preserved exactly as he left them; and most interesting it is.

The entrance to this "show part" of Abbotsford is by a long gravelled walk, under one of the sheltering walls of the beautiful gardens. One gets only glimpses of the smooth green turf, the old trees, and formal flower beds, the sun-dial and the hot-houses, for these are not open to the public.

His Treasures

The entrance hall is furnished with historic treasures which Sir Walter collected specially for it—armor brought from the Field of Waterloo; a great old fireplace from some ancient castle; a beautifully preserved Abbot's stall; some priceless carved oak panelling.

The old gentleman who "guided" us through Abbotsford might himself have stepped straight out of the Waverley novels—a small spare man, dressed in black, with deep-set eyes and a skin like parchment, who moved most reverently among the treasures and spoke so intimately about them all, and

with such authority, that one felt he must be a real family retainer.

He was strict, too, and insisted on a respectful and seemly behaviour on the part of those he was "conducting"; for some talkative and casual members of the big bus-load of tourists, who had entered just ahead of the four of us, and with whom we had been included, were sternly reproved by him in his quiet way.

They had broken into quite noisy and unseemly laughter and chatter among themselves, pointing out venerated objects and heirlooms with scant respect and making foolish "wise-cracks" about them; but they soon stopped and came shamefacedly back to the fold, when our frail little old gentleman paused in his interesting explanations, and looked gravely over at the noisy group—as we all did—saying, "Is anything the matter?"

No Reply

Of course, none of them had any reply; and so strong was his personality, that they gathered round and listened as carefully as the rest of us to his quiet voice, as he pointed out the pictures, and told us the story of the famous pair of etchings (or engravings) called the "Dish of Spurs" and "Mucklemoor Meg."

In the first, the lady of the house is shown putting upon the dinner table the "dish of spurs"—which was the customary way of intimating to the large numbers of self-invited guests who used to accumulate at the Border castles, that the larder was empty, and that somebody must go hunting for meat!

This might, or might not, be acquired in a lawful manner; and the companion picture shows "young Scott of Hawarden" standing before the wrathful owner of a fine sheep which Scott has successfully "hunted," and which is also in the picture.

The gentleman is sitting in judgment, his lady-wife beside him, and next to her, with the famous smile at its most terrific width, is the daughter—"Mucklemoor Meg," a very kindly-natured and accomplished maiden, who, by reason of her tremendous mouth and general plainness of feature, bade fair to remain forever unsought as a bride.

The father is depicted as intimating to young Scott that he may escape the proper penalty of hanging for sheep-stealing if he will but espouse "Mucklemoor Meg"—who is leaning forward eagerly, and smiling more widely than ever; while young Scott is holding up his hand and turning away, his whole attitude most eloquently declaring that he prefers death to such a marriage!

The sequel to the story is that young Scott of Hawarden did marry Meg after all, and that she made him a good wife, and that the pair were the ancestors of Sir Walter!

Later, when we were driving through Peebles back to Edinburgh, we passed the old mansion of Elbank, where "Mucklemoor Meg" lived; and also Ashiestiel Castle, the original home of Sir Walter Scott.

Sir Walter's Study

ABBOTSFORD contains a really wonderful collection of art treasures, and everything is kept in meticulous order. Sir Walter's own study is just as he left it, with his chair at his open desk in the middle of the room, a sheet of glass covering from dust his open cheque-book and quill pen—just as he laid it down.

The walls are panelled and lined with books, and a staircase in one corner leads up to the gallery which runs round the upper part of the room, and contains still more books neatly arranged on shelves, and from which a door leads to Sir Walter's bedroom.

The great library itself is on the ground floor, and has a wonderful carved ceiling. It contains 20,000 volumes!

In another large room through which we passed is an old grand piano, and the famous "Chantry Bust" of Sir Walter at the age of 49, which was placed in its niche on the day of his funeral.

In a glass-covered table, we saw the writing pad of Napoleon, and a tumbler out of which Bobby Burns once drank, and on which a poem of his is scratched with a diamond.

The drawingroom was the first in Scotland to be lit by gas—in 1824, we were told; and it is also interesting for its wall-paper, which is handpainted in a Chinese design, and in perfect condition, not even faded, though done in 1822.

THE most beautiful room is the Dining Room, with its lovely view of the River Tweed. This is the room Sir Walter loved best, and in which he was sitting peacefully in his favourite chair, listening to the murmur of the river, when he passed away.

Next week I will give you a peep into a very interesting factory, where we saw barley converted into malt. Many people are interested in malt—also in hops!

You remember the story of the old lady who was giving a bunch of flowers to every soldier in the hospital during the Great War. "And what is your favourite flower, my man?" she asked of a battered old Tommy with a twinkle in his eye. "Ops mum," came the instant reply.



"Miss Smith, are you doing anything ten treatments from today?"