

ever went to Ilium to view the ground after a perusal of the *Iliad*. No one in Shakespeare's day even went to Inverness and Cawdor Castle after hearing *Macbeth*. No sooner, however, had Scott written his *Lady of the Lake* with its glorified pictures of the highlands, than a torrent of "trippers" began to pour into the region. Great hotels, steamboats, stages, excursions, all the details of the midsummer madness came as by magic. In half a century the torrent has not abated. The newsboy of the Loch Katrine boat sold, on the day we crossed, nearly a bushel of *The Lady of the Lake* bound in tartan. And is this most ordinary of islands the isle of our boyhood dreams? And is this the cliff on which Fitz-James rung his horn? And this the silver strand? Perish the thought. The old words of Bentley, who criticised Pope's translation, flash to mind, "A very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but it's not Homer." "A very pretty landscape, Mr. Scott, but it is not equal to that in the *Lady of the Lake*." Who ever crossed Loch Katrine and went home to the old poem with a changed mental picture of its scene? To-night as I read again the opening cantos, there come to me, not the scene that I saw in the actual highlands, but the glorified old pictures that I painted in my boyhood. It is asking too much of a poet to furnish romance that shall prove upon inspection to be reality. Hawthorne declared that the House of the Seven Gables was not a real house, but a castle in the air. Thousands go every summer, so the guide told me, to ride into Glen Doone, where Lorna was won by the great John Ridd, but no lover of the novel ever came out of the valley the same man as before he entered. Why this eternal attempt to shackle romance to the cold facts of real estate? The poet and the novelist use terrestrial geography only so far as it suits their purpose, and we have no right to expect that the reality shall equal the dream.

The traveled man is a disillusioned man, and when the rainbows have all departed it is time to die. Hawthorne was right. I began to suspect it when I stood looking at the waterfall in Glen Doone. By the time I had reached Stratford-on-Avon I was sure of it.

To the American, at least, the birthplace of Shakespeare is the literary centre of England. He approaches it with bowed head, Irving's *Sketch Book* in hand. If he is like myself he has painted a mental picture of a little hamlet with thatched cottages backed by broad meadows "enchained in the silver links of the Avon."