

"O what a tangled web we weave ..."

Tuesday, 29 August 2006

"O, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practise to deceive!" Marmion Canto VI, st. 14

No - it isn't the confessions of your Webmaster! But it is a well known and often used quotation from the master penman Sir Walter Scott who, as you know, provided the name for our breed - the Dandie Dinmont Terrier.

In fact it's suprising where his quotations are used - "Fair, fat and forty" St. Ronan's Well, ch. 7 (1824): the medical profession have coined that one to describe a typical candidate for gallstones!

It was an eyeopener to realise he wrote this too: "Tell that to the marines—the sailors won't believe it." Redgauntlet, Vol. II, ch. 7 (1824)

Then there is "a miss is as good as a mile" Journal (December 3, 1825), "as old as the hills" The Monastery Ch 9 (1820) and those we should more often such as "Jock, when ye hae naething else to do, ye may be ay sticking in a tree; it will be growing, Jock, when ye're sleeping." The Heart of Midlothian Ch. 8 (1818) (Scott practised that one himself) and importantly "It's no fish ye're buying, it's men's lives." The Antiquary Volume I, Ch. 11.

His love and understanding of dogs is portrayed in this quotation:

"Recollect that the Almighty, who gave the dog to be companion of our pleasures and our toils, hath invested him with a nature noble and incapable of deceit." The Talisman, Ch. 24 (1825)

There is a growing online resource for Scott's quotations that you might like to explore:

http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Walter_Scott

... and finally, from the Dandie Dinmont Web and Sir Walter Scott:

"To all, to each, a fair good-night, And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light!" L'Envoy