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Scottish Proverb Books

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REVIEW ARTICLE

Scottish Proverb Books

- Henderson Andrew. *Scottish Proverbs*. New Edition by James Donald. Glasgow: Thomas D. Morison, 1881. xxiii + 202 pages. Republished by Gale Research Company, Detroit, 1969. \$12.50.
- Hislop, Alexander. *The Proverbs of Scotland*. Third Edition, revised and supplemented. Edinburgh: Alexander Hislop & Co., 1868. 367 pages. Republished by Gale Research Company, Detroit, 1968. \$16.50.
- Cheviot, Andrew. *Proverbs, Proverbial Expressions, and Popular Rhymes of Scotland*. Paisley and London: Alexander Gardner, 1896. xii + 434 pages. Republished by Gale Research Company, Detroit, 1969. \$13.75.
- Mackay, Charles. *A Dictionary of Lowland Scotch, With . . . an Appendix of Scottish Proverbs*. London: Whittaker & Co., 1888. xxxii + 398 pages. Republished by Gale Research Company, Detroit, 1968. \$18.00.
- Hazlitt, W. Carew. *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases*. London: Reeves & Turner, 1907. xxxii + 580 pages. Republished by Gale Research Company, Detroit, 1969. \$16.50.

Gale Research Company is on the way to becoming a steady purveyor of Scottish literature and folklore to libraries and scholars. Among its current titles are J. F. Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, Chambers' *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, Ford's *Children's Rhymes . . . Games . . . Songs . . . Stories*, John Cheap, the *Chapman's Library*, Logan's *Pedlar's Pack of Ballads and Songs*, Motherwell's *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern*, T. F. Henderson's *Scottish Vernacular Literature* and his edition of Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and May Rogers' *Waverley Dictionary*. With *The Collected Writings of Dougal Graham* on the way, chapbook fanciers will soon have readier access to a noted collection which was limited to 250 copies in the Glasgow edition of 1883. The purchase of Folklore Associates has added the Dick and Cook edition of *The Songs of Robert Burns* and J. L. Campbell's *Strange Things . . . Highland Second Sight* to the Gale list, which was augmented in 1968-1969 by Mackay's *Dictionary of Lowland Scotch* and by three collections of Scottish proverbs.

These last four volumes are handsomely and sturdily bound in blue

or red cloth with gold lettering on black panels and with stiff blue or black endpapers. From half title to final word they are page for page reproductions of the originals with only two additions, "Republished by Gale Research Company, Book Tower, Detroit, 1968 (or 1969)" at the bottom of the title page and "Library of Congress Catalog Number —" on its verso.

My first critical impulse was to suggest that Cheviot, the latest and the best of nineteenth-century Scottish proverb collections, would perhaps have been enough. Then the advantage of having all three reprints became clear when I recently checked the holdings of the finest university library in New Jersey, which had no copy of Henderson, Hislop, or Cheviot. Delighted as I am by this activity, I have only two bones to pick with Gale or any other reputable reprint house: price and lack of a modern introduction. The fact that I paid 12s.6d. for my copy of Andrew Henderson (1881), 7s.6d. for Alexander Hislop (1862), and 7s.6d. for Andrew Cheviot (1896) is merely nostalgic. Nor is the fact that Cheviot has been priced at one guinea in a James Thin catalogue of 1970 pertinent. Only one buyer will get that partial bargain, rebound in buckram and bearing a library stamp. The Gale figure of \$13.75 for a clean, durable, and attractive 434-page book produced in 1969 is justified if the edition is not a large one. Compared with \$16.50 for the 367-page Hislop in 1968, it is actually a downpricing.

There is less question about the other bone's demanding to be picked. As short an introduction by a contemporary scholar as two or four pages would helpfully set each reprint in a fuller context and perhaps add such basic biographical information as that Andrew Cheviot was the pseudonym of J. Hiram Watson (1852-1903). It is this fuller context which I shall now try to supply.

A zealous proverb man during more than forty years, W. Carew Hazlitt did not avoid cultural chauvinism in his *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases*:

The greater part of the sayings in this collection are also current in Scotland, having been, in the natural course of things, transplanted and localised, not always only in form, but occasionally even in substance. The Scots appear to have as few proverbs of their own as they have ballads; but the so-called proverbs of Scotland are in a very large proportion of cases nothing more than Southern proverbs Scotified; while the ballads of Scotland are chiefly ours sprinkled with northern provincialism.¹

1. Gale reprint of Hazlitt (1907), p. xxviii. Earlier editions of *English Proverbs* were 1869 and 1882, to the first of which H. G. Bohn objected in an eight-page pamphlet, *A Case of Plagiarism* (London, 1869). In a note on the passage above, Hazlitt quotes Richard Franck's allusion to "an Abomination among the Scots to lick up an English Proverb." *Northern Memoirs* (London, 1694), p. 77; written 1658 and edited by Sir Walter Scott, Edinburgh, 1821.

This was not the position of Pierre Alexandre Gratet-Duplessis, who lists Fergusson's, Ramsay's, and Kelly's collections in a bibliography of works "spécialement consacrés aux proverbes dans toutes les langues" and commends the last, "Cet ouvrage me semble donc à tous égards digne d'une estime particulière."² Indeed, believing with Sir Francis Bacon that "the Genius, Wit, and Spirit of a Nation, are discovered by their Proverbs," James Kelly had a very special purpose. His *Scottish Proverbs* (1721), though by no means the first to be published in London, were to be "Explained and made Intelligible to the English Reader."

Whether it has been more remarkable as the country of origin, of naturalization, or of transient hospitality, Scotland has been rich in proverbs. This may best be shown by listing relevant works in the order of first use, compilation, or—when brought out during the collector's lifetime—publication:

1375 (and earlier) to 1600 in Barbour's *Bruce*, Andrew of Wyntoun, James the First's *Kingis Quair*, Henry the Minstrel's *Wallace*, Scottish popular ballads, Robert Henryson, Gavin Douglas, William Dunbar, Hector Boece, Sir David Lindsay, *The Complaynt of Scotland*, Alexander Scott, John Knox, *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis*, Robert Lindsay of Pitcottie, the Asloan, Bannatyne, and Maitland Manuscripts, Alexander Montgomerie, et al.: B. J. Whiting, "Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings from Scottish Writings before 1600," *Mediaeval Studies*, XI (1949), 123-205, and XIII (1951), 87-164.

1532, Sir Adrian Fortescue, 64 proverbs and moral sentences, in Thomas Fortescue, Lord Clermont, *A History of the Family of Fortescue*, 2nd edn (London, 1880), pp. 263-65.

Second half of sixteenth century, James Beaton (1517-1603), Archbishop of Glasgow and putative forebear of a long line of Scottish proverb-collectors, who is reported by the unreliable George Mackenzie, M.D., to have left "*Scots Proverbs*, of which there have been several Editions, with Mr. Fergusson's Additions to them," the earliest seen being of Edinburgh, 1610, a date Mackenzie later changes to 1614. This I take to be a mistake for 1641, the first edition of Fergusson's collection which was often republished. Mackenzie, *The Lives and Characters of the most Eminent Writers of the Scots Nation* (Edinburgh, 1708-22), III, 460-67.³

2. *Bibliographie Parémiologique* (Paris, 1847), p. 413. Gratet-Duplessis may be supplemented by Sir William Stirling Maxwell's privately printed *Essay towards a Collection of Books relating to Proverbs* (London, 1860) and by Wilfrid Bonser's *Proverb Literature: A Bibliography of Works relating to Proverbs*, Folk-Lore Society, no. 89 (London, 1930).

3. Mackenzie's prime authority merely reports that Jacobus Betonius "scripsit multa," leaving among his manuscripts "Adagia Scotica lib. 1." *Thomae Dempsteri Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Scotorum*, ed. David Irving for the Bannatyne Club (Edinburgh, 1829), I, 126.

Second half of sixteenth century, David Fergusson (d. 1598), *Scottish Proverbs* (Edinburgh, 1641), somewhat garbled in the printing; reprinted 1924 by the Scottish Text Society with Introduction by Erskine Beveridge, who concludes that few of the 911 proverbs "bear the slightest impress of either local or national character" (p. xvii).

1585, John Maxwell's "Sum Reasownes and Prowerbes," first published in *The Paisley Magazine*, ed. William Motherwell, September 1, 1828, I, 437-46 (also see I, 379-86), and then in Motherwell's Preface to Andrew Henderson's *Scottish Proverbs* (1832), pp. xxxiv-xliv.⁴

Before 1628, James Carmichael's collection, praised by the editor, M. L. Anderson, as "the best original manuscript extant" because of its "purer Scots" and its 591 unique entries; first published from the Edinburgh University Library MS. in *The James Carmichael Collection of Proverbs in Scots* (Edinburgh, 1957), pp. 51-115.

Before 1641, 1656 proverbs, apparently "a much expanded version founded upon an unfinished manuscript copy" of Fergusson but coarser in selection and including more Scottish geographical allusions; first published in *Fergusson's Scottish Proverbs*. S.T.S., New Series, 15 (Edinburgh, 1924), pp. 1-126 (also xv-xvi).

1663, "Pappity Stampoy," *A Collection of Scotch Proverbs* (London, 1663), plagiarized from Fergusson and plundered in 1668 by R.B.⁵; brought out by the Augustan Reprint Society, no. 52 (Los Angeles, 1955), with Introduction by Archer Taylor.

1668, R.B., *Adagia Scotia; or, A Collection of Scotch Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (London, 1668).

1670, John Ray, *A Collection of English Proverbs . . . Whereunto Are Added . . . Scottish Proverbs* (Cambridge, 1670), pp. 259-96, described by Archer Taylor (1955) as "Fergusson's collection in a paritally anglicized form with minor changes and additions of uncertain origin"; with "the Scottish proverbs . . . restored to the dialect of their country" in John Belfour's revision of Ray's *Complete Collection of English Proverbs*, 5th edn (London, 1813); republished "intact" in Henry G. Bohn, *A Handbook of Proverbs* (London, 1855), pp. 226-66 for the Scottish proverbs.

Sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Morris P. Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor, 1950), the Scottish proverbs in-

4. In "John Maxwell's *Sum Reasownes and Prowerbes*," *Modern Language Notes*, LXIII (1948), 534-36, B. J. Whiting traces ten of the 232 proverbs to John Rolland's *Seuin Seages* and parallels another in Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*. The rest had previously (1926) been credited by Morris P. Tilley to George Peattie and John Lyly.

5. See F. P. Wilson, "English Proverbs and Dictionaries of Proverbs," *The Library*, series 4, XXVI (1946), 64-67.

cluded among 11,780 being drawn from the 69 proverbs of the Bannatyne MS. and other sources used by Whiting and from such seventeenth-century Scottish writers as John Row, Robert Wodrow, and William Drummond of Hawthornden.⁶

1702, Robert Blau, *The Locutions of the Latin Tongue* (Edinburgh, 1702), Latin adagia with Scots or English equivalents, including a few of distinctively "Scottish provenance" (M. L. Anderson in *Carmichael*, pp. 46-7).

1707, John Mapletoft, *Select Proverbs . . . English, Scottish, British, &c. Chiefly Moral* (London, 1707 and 1710), pp. 118-22.

1710, Samuel Palmer, Presbyterian of the Church of England, *Moral Essays on some of the most Curious and Significant English, Scotch and Foreign Proverbs* (London, 1710), no entry in "The Table of Proverbs" being inescapably Scottish in language, content, or reference.

1721, James Kelly, *A Complete Collection of Scottish Proverbs Explained and made Intelligible to the English Reader* (London, 1721), 400 pp. and unpaginated index; with dedication, introduction, and interpretative notes.

1737, Allan Ramsay, *A Collection of Scots Proverbs* (Edinburgh, 1737); also in John Ray, *Proverbial Sayings . . .* Allan Ramsay, *Scots Proverbs*, Orlando Pescetti, *Italian Proverbs*, Ferdinand Nunez, *Spanish Proverbs . . .* (n.p., 1800); in 24-page chapbook version (Glasgow, Falkirk, Kilmarnock, Stirling, and Paisley, 1802-1840); in Dr. Thomas Fuller, *Aphorisms of Wisdom . . . To which is added, Ramsay's Collection of Scottish Proverbs*, new ed. (Glasgow, 1814), pp. 250-80, and London, 1819; and in Charles Mackay's *A Dictionary of Lowland Scotch* (London, 1888, and—privately printed—Edinburgh, 1888), pp. 343-82.

1777 and 1785, *A Select Collection of Scots Poems Chiefly in the Broad Buchan Dialect* (Edinburgh, 1777 and 1785), with Fergusson's *Collection* added with separate pagination, 1-35.

1800, *Winter Evenings Pastime, Consisting of a Choice and Extensive Collection of Riddles, Charades, Conundrums, and Scots Proverbs* (Edinburgh, 1800).

1826, Robert Chambers, *The Popular Rhymes of Scotland* (Edinburgh and London, 1826), including proverbial and place rhymes.

Before 1832, Quarto MS. *Collection of Scots Proverbs*, containing 2864 items, listed in J. G. Cochrane's *Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford* (Edinburgh, 1838), p. 169 (Sir Walter Scott also owned first editions of James Kelly and Allan Ramsay and the third edition of John Ray's *Complete Collection*, London, 1737).

6. Among other dictionaries containing Scottish entries are George L. Apperson's *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (London, 1929) and William G. Smith's *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, 2nd ed. rev. (Oxford, 1948).

1832, Andrew Henderson, *Scottish Proverbs* (Edinburgh, 1832), illustrated and including William Motherwell's Preface, pp. vii-lxxxviii, which was abridged in the new edition by James Donald (London, 1876, and Glasgow, 1881).

1844, *Scottish Proverbs, Toasts, and Sentiments* (Glasgow, 1844), pp. 3-20.

1847, Robert Chambers, "Scotch Proverbs," *Chambers's Miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts*, XX, no. 174 (Edinburgh, 1847), 17-32; indebted to Allan Ramsay.

1859, Edward B. Ramsay, *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh, 1859) through 22nd ed. (Edinburgh, 1874): section on Scottish proverbs.

1862, Alexander Hislop, publisher and collector, *The Proverbs of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1862).

1889, the *People's Journal* Competition Editor, *Proverbs and Sayings Mainly Scotch* (Cupar-Fife, 1889), 3d., 62 pp.; chiefly contributed by readers, with some additions from Allan Ramsay.

1889-95, George Muirhead, *The Birds of Berwickshire, with Remarks on . . . the . . . Proverbs . . . connected with them*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1889-95).⁷

1891, Aeneas J. G. Mackay, *A Century of Scottish Proverbs and Sayings . . . Current in Fife* (Cupar-Fife [1891]), 6 d. 55 pp.

1895, M.L.M. [Marjory Lyon Miln], *Proverbs with Glossary* (Arbroath: privately printed, 1895), 211 pp.; ostensibly international in selection, but chiefly Scottish.

1896, "Andrew Cheviot" (J. Hiram Watson), *Proverbs, Proverbial Expressions, and Popular Rhymes of Scotland* (Paisley, 1896).

1899, John Spence, "Proverbs and Sayings," *Shetland Folk-Lore* (Lerwick, 1899), pp. 201-32, mostly collected about 1869.

1913, *National Proverbs: Scotland* (London, 1913), 92 pp., part of a series published by Frank Palmer.

1916, John Mowat, *Some Old Caithness Proverbs and Sayings* (Wick, 1916), 12 pp.

1948, Forbes MacGregor, *Scots Proverbs and Rhymes* (Edinburgh, 1948), illustrated by John Mackay, 48 pp.

In the following paragraphs on arrangement, country of origin, language, collectors' boasts of superiority, dedications, readers and contributors, borrowing, principles of selection, and examples of proverbs, I shall not confine myself to the recently reprinted nineteenth-century collections. Arrangement of proverbs is most frequently alphabetical,

7. Despite its title, George Henderson's *Popular Rhymes, Sayings, and Proverbs of the County of Berwick* (Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1856), is negligible on proverbs.

based on the initial word, as in Fergusson, Kelly, and Hislop, or on the key word, as in Whiting. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century collectors seldom have much patience with strict alphabetical sequence under a given letter, alternating, *ye*, *you*, *ye'll*, *your*, and *ye're* under Y, as in Ramsay. The international collections, like Mapletoft's, have a primary organization by country and a secondary one by alphabet. Kelly breaks down his proverbial phrases into categories of Threats, Flattery, Promises, Ill Wishes, and Answers to "How dee yee?" adding English and Latin parallels and an index of principal words. Kelly is also ready with explanations. We are told that "Bastard brood is ay proud" is "Spoken to bastards when they behave themselves saucily" (1818 ed., p. 42). Topical headings may be preferred, as in Andrew Henderson's progression from *Age* to *Youth*. To this Henderson appends Truisms, Miscellaneous, Weather and Seasons, Proverbial Phrases, and Useful Extracts from Tusser. Cheviot sensibly follows the alphabet under sentences, phrases, and rhymes. Henderson and Hislop have terminal glossaries; Cheviot glosses in the text, often with the help of Kelly, and provides a topical index. And the anonymous *National Proverbs: Scotland* of 1913 has no ascertainable logic of organization.

Whatever the arrangement, the proverbs are supposed to be Scottish in origin or—at least—in currency. MacGregor's confidence in the Scots' once "preeminent reputation" for proverbs ("It was said in England that no Scot could talk without using a proverb," 1948, p. 5) would seem to be warranted by the publication of Stampoy's, R. B.'s, and Kelly's Scottish proverbs in London (1663, 1668, and 1721). While informing his English readers that "The Scots are wonderfully given to this way of speaking," Kelly must admit that he finds it "impossible strictly to distinguish the *Scottish* from the *English*." Indeed, if one were to ignore the English, it would be ticklish to award priority north of the Border to "If you will have the hen's egg, you must bear her cackling" (Kelly) or to the Gaelic "Bu cheanach leam t-ubh air do ghloc."⁸ Native or naturalized, proverbs have so long been comfortably domesticated in Scotland that Sir William Stirling Maxwell, in his address to the School of Arts at Stirling on "The Proverbial Philosophy of Scotland," could stress the value of proverbs "as illustrations

8. Donald Macintosh, *A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs* (Edinburgh, 1785), p. 9 (translated as "Dear bought egg with so much cackling"). Macintosh was edited in 1819 by Alexander Campbell and was trebled in coverage in 1881 by Alexander Nicolson (the 2nd ed. of 1882 was reprinted with an ample index at Glasgow in 1951). T. D. MacDonald's *Gaelic Proverbs* (Stirling, 1926) reduces this classic offering of 3900 to 648 proverbs, topically arranged.

of our national history and character."⁹ Yet, Scottish as John Maxwell's "Lowe is w'out law" may seem, Tilley has identified it as a borrowing from George Pettie's *Petite Pallace*.

In spite of varying extents of tampering, language does give the stamp of apparent authenticity. Thus the editor, M. L. Anderson, can assert the "very great importance" of the James Carmichael MS. because it is written in "a purer Scots" than Fergusson's, which was altered in the printing, or than any other major collector's. After John Ray had incompletely Anglicized the proverbs taken from Fergusson for his seventeenth-century collection, his editor, John Belfour, in 1813, made good the "manifest injury in terseness and point" by restoring them "to the dialect of their country." So it is that "All things hath a beginning (God excepted)" can at last emerge in Bohn as "A' things hae a beginning." For the sake of his English readers, Kelly descot-ticized such words as *stane*, *bane*, *mare*, and *sare*, openly risking Scots censure for "spoiling a great deal of the briskness and vigour of the phrase." So he brought on himself the wrath of Allan Ramsay for a compilation "fou of errors, in a style neither *Scots* nor *English*" and of Motherwell and Hislop for "most barbarous" renderings. The same Kelly is much quoted by the lexicographer, John Jamieson, is considered by Dean Ramsay to have produced "an excellent work for the study of good old Scotch,"¹⁰ and is frequently drawn on by Andrew Cheviot. Of course, Allan Ramsay in his own collection is careful to restore the "*auld saws* . . . to their proper sense, which had been chiefly tint by publishers that did not understand our landwart language."

Collectors tend to justify their labors by asserting superiority over their predecessors (and creditors) in language, fullness, arrangement, etc. The Carmichael collection is a truer copy of a lost original than Fergusson's printed version. Kelly has somehow outdone Erasmus's celebrated *Adagia* by assembling over three thousand whole-sentence proverbs still in use in Scotland. Allan Ramsay is more reliable than

9. *The Proverbial Philosophy of Scotland* (Stirling, 1855), p. 4. Cp. "Proverbs Secular and Sacred," *The North British Review*, XXVIII (Feb. 1858), 145, on proverbs as a nation's "autobiography." F. P. Wilson objects to this generalization of "some writers ancient and modern": "I do not believe . . . that proverbs illuminate the national character," although they are important to philology, folk-lore, psychology, and the history of manners. "English Proverbs and Dictionaries of Proverbs," *The Library*, IV, xxvi (1946), 51. Richard Chenevix Trench is sanely cautionary about such interpretations: The country of origin of a given proverb "is almost, or oftener still altogether, impossible to determine. . . . Nations are . . . continually borrowing proverbs from one another." *On the Lessons in Proverbs*, 3rd edn (London, 1854), pp. 31-2.

10. E. B. Ramsay, *Reminiscences of Scottish Life & Character*, 22nd edn. (Edinburgh, 1874), p. 220, note; also see 3rd edn. (1859), pp. viii and 102, note.

James Kelly. When joined to Southron proverbs by Ray, whose collection became the foundation of Bohn's, Fergusson becomes in the nineteenth-century *Hand-Book of Proverbs* part of "the most comprehensive and complete volume of proverbs yet published in the English language." And in that line of British succession, Bohn yields to Hazlitt, Hazlitt to Apperson, and Apperson to Smith. Meanwhile, Henderson's work "is more ample than any that has preceded it." By "large additions" from "Scott, Galt, Hogg, and other national writers" and from living men, Hislop's "mere mechanical compilation" of Fergusson, Kelly, Ramsay, and Henderson "becomes the most extensive and systematic" to date. And Cheviot, drawing on Burns and other Scots authors as well as joining popular rhymes and proverbial expressions to proverbs "for the first time," as he mistakenly thinks, has hopefully achieved more fullness and accuracy than ever before.

Dedications were sometimes inspired by confidence in work reputably done. Their "Affectionate Countryman," James Kelly, presented his collection to James Duke of Hamilton and to the Nobility, the Gentry, and the Commonalty of Scotland; Allan Ramsay to his "Worthy Friends . . . the Tenantry of Scotland, Farmers of the Dales, and Storemasters of the Hills"; and Alexander Hislop—less inclusively—to Sir William Stirling Maxwell, "one deeply versed in proverb lore."

These dedications partly suggest the public intended. In "The Printer to the merrie, judicious and discreet Reader" of Fergusson's *Scottish Proverbs*, the buyer is told that the blanks left at the end of each letter are for penned additions, "as everie man thinks good." The preface to the enlarged edition of John Ray's *Collection* (1678) announces that users of the first edition communicated "some hundreds" of proverbs to the compiler, who added more on his own. While omitting the dedication to "the props of the nation's profit" who nourish "a' the idle and insignificant" (one is reminded of Burns and Sir David Lindsay), the 1750 edition of Ramsay seeks to broaden the appeal. The glossary is described as an "Explanation of the Words Less Frequent amongst our Gentry than the Commons." Although his third edition of 1868 boasts "upwards of 2000 additions, alterations, and corrections," Hislop solicits further contributions and suggestions from his readers. In 1896 Cheviot desires his readership to send in popular sayings for a possible new edition; and in 1913 the editors of *National Proverbs: Scotland* (p. 5) invite readers to communicate "any good and little-known Proverbs."

The best compilations are accretional, depending on the collector's own activity, on help from contemporaries, and on large borrowing from predecessors. Because of their late publication, Fortescue, Maxwell, and Carmichael are for the most part dead ends in collecting,

discovered by biographer, antiquary, and scholar. Pappity Stampoy and R. B. are book-making plagiarists who contribute nothing to the development of collections. Scottish proverbs sometimes make up sections in international compilations of a superficial type, like Mapletoft's; are limited to a geographical area, like Spence's or Mowat's, or to a special category, like Muirhead's; are mere selections, like MacGregor's; or are incidental to other collecting interests, like Chambers's *Popular Rhymes*. Whiting and Tilley engage in scholarly recapturing, are culminators rather than continuators. Among the others, the line of borrowing—or of succession—would seem to be from James Beaton or some other progenitor to Fergusson. Through his own MS. collection, Fergusson may have influenced Carmichael and the anonymous compiler of a manuscript belatedly printed in 1924. Then, through the posthumous publication of his manuscript (1641), Fergusson was the prime link in a chain that involved Pappity Stampoy, R.B., John Ray in the Scottish part of his *Collection of English Proverbs*, James Kelly, Allan Ramsay, *A Select Collection of Scots Poems*, etc., Andrew Henderson, Alexander Hislop, and Andrew Cheviot.

Some collectors might easily agree with Dr. Thomas Fuller's address "To the Reader" in *Gnomologia* (London, 1732, and later *Aphorisms of Wisdom*, Glasgow, 1814): "All that I take upon me here to do, is only to throw together a vast confused heap of unsorted things, old and new, which you may pick over and make use of, according to your judgment and pleasure." But—whether consciously or unconsciously—most men were ruled in part by principles of selection and rejection. As minister of Dunfermline, David Fergusson naturally leaned toward proverbs like "Ye wald do little for God an the devil were dead." While including "Scotish" among his *Select Proverbs*, Mapletoft exercised the Englishman's privilege of disdaining the Scots: "A Scottishman is ay wise behind-hand"; "Biting and Scarting is Scots-folks woiing." Discovering that "sober and pious persons" had been offended by impure suggestion and obscenity in his first edition, John Ray omitted most of the objectionable proverbs in 1678 and used initial letters only for "uncleanly words" referring to excrements and certain parts of the body: "For I would by no means be guilty of administering fewel to lust." Kelly tried to rule out expressions that were insignificant ("As busy as a bee in a tar barrell"), silly and useless, obscene, evil-invoking, sacrilegious, and superstitious ("It is no sonsie to meet a bare foot in the morning"). Instead he preferred sayings that were prudent, moral, "odd and comical." Of course, his vigilance relaxed when he admitted "I'll make your head as soft as your arse" and other racy bits. Allan Ramsay kept braid "coarse expressions" because they were objectionable only to "the gentle vulgar . . . mair nice than wise." So

full of "meaning, moral use, pith and beauty" are the "*wise sayings*, and observations of our forefathers" that they will improve modern conversation. "Gar your bairns get them by heart." Nearly two centuries later, M. L. Miln set out to amuse herself "and to keep alive many old Scotch proverbs." And *National Proverbs: Scotland* sacrificed commonplace sayings not only to those illustrating "the vices and virtues of the Scots" but to those "not widely known" or likely to fall into disuse. Preserving the memory of the past also motivated Forbes MacGregor, "Auld men will die and bairns will sune forget." To folk wisdom Hislop and Cheviot joined literary culture in their choices. And Sir William Stirling Maxwell and Dean Ramsay cherished those proverbs which revealed national character.

Some techniques and examples of the proverbs now stored away in books may briefly be considered. The truth is often thrust home by alliteration, as in Carmichael's items on property, "Let the langest leiver bruke all" and "Geir gettis geir, or, he that gets gets mair." In his alliterative proverbs this same James Carmichael, minister of Haddington, was no Tom Bowdler: "As kitle of her cunt as a kw of her horne." The same alliteration may be retained in mutually contradictory proverbs: "A' the speed is in the spurs" (Fergusson) and "A' the speed's no in the spurs" (Cheviot).¹¹ Other techniques of impressing proverbs on the memory may conveniently be found in Henderson: *contrast*, "Auld folks are twice bairns" and "Royer lads mak sober men" (cp. "Reckless youth maks ruefu' age"); *repetition* and *contrast*, "Rule youth weel, and age will rule itself"; *internal rhyme*, "He's auld and cauld, and ill to lie aside." This last is the sentiment of May tied to January, as in songs and poems of Ramsay and Burns that elaborate proverbial wisdom. Alliteration emphasizes the young wife's petulance in "An auld man's a bedfu' o' banes," a very different judgment from "There's beild beneath an auld man's beard" (entries under *Age* and *Youth*). Veneration is usually reserved for the hoary and anonymous lore of mankind, "That maun be true that a men say" (Ramsay, 1840 title page). Indeed, few men are named in proverbs. Among these Blind Harry and Sir David Lindsay are loved for their closeness to folk sense. "There is no sik a Word in all Wallace" (Kelly); "Ye'll no find that in Davy Lindsay" (Motherwell in Henderson).

Although collectors serve as resurrection men for a number of proverbs, the contemporaneity of many sayings has never died out. Whiting records observations on peace and war: "Now into peace, ye sould provyde for weirs" (Lindsay); "ffle ay fra stryfe a sweit thing

11. The Library of Congress copy of *A Select Collection of Scots Poems*, to which Fergusson's *Collection* is added (Edinburgh, 1785), has this inked in proverb, "A spur in the head is worth twa on the heels" (p. 5).

is peiss" (Bannatyne, Maitland, and Fortescue MSS.); and "The hetter weir, oft syis the sonner peis" (Stewart), XIII, 109, 135, 150. In 1532, Sir Adrian Fortescue was hardly aware of a woman's liberation movement or open college admissions, yet he noted, "A woman tyed in fett^r. that is an evill tresor" and "Putt many to scole, all will not be clerkes." Nor was Allan Ramsay thinking of law enforcement in our terms when he set down the proverb, "A blate cat makes a proud mouse." But of all this there must be an end, or Ramsay and Chambers will insist that "Your tongue rins aye before your wit," to which the Competition Editor of the Cupar-Fife *People's Journal* will add, "In ower muckle clavering truth is lost."

Let me only crowd in a word of gratitude for the republication of Henderson, Hislop, and Cheviot, and a hint that—if these are not to be the last—James Kelly's *Complete Collection of Scottish Proverbs* (1721) has long been in scarce supply and might well be made generally available again.

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