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## Robert Burns and the Brash and Reid Chapbooks

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## **ROBERT BURNS AND THE BRASH AND REID CHAPBOOKS**

(1992)

Because of the way in which they were produced and sold, the history of eighteenth-century Scottish chapbooks is not well known. Carried about in the pouches of itinerant chapmen, sold to the inhabitants of a humble cot, traded or bought back in on their next trip through the district to be resold a bit further down the road, the survival rate of these publications was small. Even those chapbooks printed as late as the 1840s and 1850s, when distribution was much better assured, are remarkably scarce when compared with books produced at the same period. And yet everything we know of these pamphlets leads us to believe that they were printed in very large numbers. Obviously the socio-economic group which purchased chapbooks did not form libraries, and most of the residents of the houses where books were preserved did not purchase chapbooks. Fortunately there were exceptions; Walter Scott was fascinated by them, and collected quite a number of them which are still to be found in the library at Abbotsford.

One of the most successful publishers, or booksellers as they were often called, of chapbooks was the firm of Brash and Reid. They were not printers; in fact many of their tracts were printed by the Glasgow firm of Chapman and Lang, although only two of them actually bear this imprint. Brash and Reid, also of Glasgow, was founded in 1790 and dissolved by mutual consent in 1817. The firm did an extensive business, and in 1800 issued *A Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Books, Consisting of Upwards of Ten Thousand Volumes on the Most Useful Branches of Literature, which are on Sale at their Shop in Trongate*.<sup>1</sup> James Brash

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<sup>1</sup> Information on the firms of Brash and Reid and its partners is taken from James Cameron Ewing, *Brash and Reid Booksellers in Glasgow and their*

(1758-1835), the senior partner of the firm, was “an apprentice or in the employment of” the firm of Robert and Andrew Foulis, and was later in the employ of Robert Macnair, bookbinder, and of James Duncan, bookseller, until the founding of Brash and Reid. There is divided opinion about whether James Brash was himself poetically inclined; David Laing claims that Brash published poems anonymously in the 1780s (quoted in Ewing, 3).

William Reid (1764-1831) was employed in a type-foundry and with the leading booksellers in the west of Scotland, Dunlop and Wilson. There is no doubt that Reid was well known to his contemporaries as a poet, although there does not appear to be a separate collection of his work.

By 1795 the partners began issuing eight-page chapbooks under the title *Poetry; Original and Selected* which were sold for one penny. Although the chapbooks were “published separately, without any view of forming a Collection,” once twenty-four had appeared they were issued as a volume with eight pages of prelims consisting of a title-page, prefatory note (from which the above is quoted), and table of contents. This decision was made in response to “extensive and rapid sale” and the publishers hoped they would be able to complete a second volume. In addition to the prelims, each volume was issued with an extra engraved title-page and was offered for sale, “stitched,” for two shillings, although throughout the time that new chapbooks were being produced individual numbers continued to be available for a penny. Between 1795 and 1798 four volumes of *Poetry; Original and Selected* were published, containing a total of 255 poems. Subsequent to the completion of Vol. IV, three additional numbers were published, and these were later gathered into a supplemental volume which also contained twenty-one chapbooks reprinted from the original four volumes.<sup>2</sup>

Although the word “original” features prominently in the series title, most of the material appears to have been previously published. Sensitive, perhaps, to charges that most of what they were offering the public had already appeared in print, the Preface to the first volume of Brash and Reid includes the statement:

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*Collection of “Poetry Original and Selected”* (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1934), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> [Quotations below from the Brash and Reid chapbooks are referenced in the text by volume and chapbook/part number, from the bound set in the Roy Collection, University of South Carolina Libraries. See also J.W. Egerer, *A Bibliography of Robert Burns* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), pp. 52-55. Eds.]

Some of the Poems are original. Those which have been formerly published are either such as are not commonly met with, or possessed some peculiar merit to recommend them. Indeed, from the very favourable reception they have experienced, the EDITORS flatter themselves, that they have not been altogether unsuccessful in their endeavours to gratify the taste of the Public.

Most of the poems are unattributed although we can identify the author in some cases, for instance Alexander Wilson's anonymously presented "Watty and Meg" (which appears in Vol. I, No. 5). This was a period when copyright infringement, particularly for material which appeared in magazines or the daily or weekly press, was common and unprosecuted, so that a close examination of printed matter of the time would probably turn up earlier printings of many of the poems to be found in Brash and Reid's *Poetry*.

There can be no doubt that their chapbooks were popular. The third chapbook consisted of Robert Burns's "Tam o' Shanter," first published in the *Edinburgh Herald* for 18 March 1791, and later in the work for which it was written, Francis Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland* (Vol. II, London 1791). At least six distinct printings of this work were produced by Brash and Reid in the decade during which their chapbooks were being published.<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, no other chapbook appears to have enjoyed the same popularity, although several others were reprinted at least once.

By 1795 Burns was established as the preeminent Scottish poet of his day. Those who had not seen the first edition of his *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Kilmarnock, 1786) had ready access to the expanded Edinburgh edition of 1787, or the further enlarged two-volume set of 1793 (which included "Tam o' Shanter"). Although there were probably some Burns manuscripts in the Glasgow region at the time of the Brash and Reid pamphlets, all of the Burns poems and songs published by the firm had already been published elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

As mentioned above, the earliest Burns poem to appear in Brash and

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<sup>3</sup> G. Ross Roy, "The Brash and Reid Editions of 'Tam o' Shanter,'" *Burns Chronicle*, 98 (1989): 38-44. [On publication sequence, cf. p. 74, n. 1 above. Since this essay was written, a third printing with the one L *Aloway*, has been added to the Roy Collection, making seven variants now on record. Eds.]

<sup>4</sup> It is probable, for instance, that Thomas Duncan had access to MSS. for his edition of Burns (1801): see G. Ross Roy, "Sixteen Poems of Burns: Their First Publication," *Burns Chronicle*, 4th Series, 9 (1984): 48-58; 10 (1985): 82-92.

Reid's collection was "Tam o' Shanter" (I, 3). What are presumed to be the first two chapbook printings of this tale bear the title *Aloway Kirk; or Tam o' Shanter. A Tale. By Robert Burns, the Ayrshire Poet*. Only at the presumed third printing of the poem is the word *Alloway* corrected.

The next chapbook (I, 4) contains "The Soldier's Return," a song which enjoyed a considerable popularity in Britain and America throughout the Napoleonic era, and was one of the handsomely produced volumes issued by the Royal Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland in the 1850s. According to a prefatory note, "the following very pleasing Song, adapted to the measure of one of our most favourite Scottish Airs, has not appeared in any of the Editions of Mr. Burns' Poems; it has, therefore, been hitherto much less known than its merit entitled it to be." In the strict sense of the word, the song had not appeared in an *edition*; it had, however, been published by George Thomson in his *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs... With Select & Characteristic Verses* in May 1793. The chapbook was republished twice.

The next work by Burns to appear in Brash and Reid is something of a puzzle. "John Anderson, my Jo" was first published in the 1787 edition of Burns's poems, and has remained a favorite since then. No manuscript of the song exists, but what Burns wrote has never been printed in more than two eight-line stanzas. What Brash and Reid produced (I, 13), however, consists of eight four-line stanzas, each line incorporating two lines of the original: thus the original sixteen lines are here expanded fourfold. True enough the publishers did admit to their tampering, because the title of the song now reads "John Anderson, my Joe [sic]. Improved." The most casual reading of the expanded poem will convince the reader that the word "improved" can be taken only in the sense of "added to;" by no stretch of the imagination can the longer poem be considered to be in any way a better poem, or even remotely as good a poem. There was an earlier bawdy version of "John Anderson" running to six stanzas, published at least by 1744; the bawdy version also turned up in *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* in 1799, but there is no reason to suspect that it was not Burns who first made "polite" words for the song, although Henderson notes a much earlier version of c. 1560 composed "in ridicule of the Sacraments of the Church."<sup>5</sup> According to Henderson, the bawdy version of "John Anderson" by Burns is a "witty and sprightly song ...

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<sup>5</sup> W. E. Henley and T. F. Henderson, eds., *The Poetry of Robert Burns*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1896-97), III: 349.

unfit for modern print" (the version in the *Merry Muses*) and for this reason the Brash and Reid version is called "improved." No mention is made by Henderson, however, as to why the sixteen lines of Burns's "polite" version of the song should have been expanded to sixty-four. According to Henderson, the additional stanzas were supplied by William Reid, although he gives no evidence for this statement. The enlarged "John Anderson" appears to have been popular with the public, as we see it reappearing in other chapbooks—one example from my own collection was published by R. Hutchison of Glasgow in 1823. For reasons of space in this particular example, the eight stanzas have been cut to seven, but the text of those stanzas present is essentially the same as that of the Brash and Reid chapbooks.

Number 23 of the first volume of chapbooks contains six songs, two of them by Burns. The first of these is "Here awa, there awa" with a facing song "English Verses. To the same Air" by "Peter Pindar" (pseudonym of John Wolcot). The second song by Burns in this chapbook is "Behind yon Hills where Lugar flows" to the tune "My Nannie O" and it, too, has "English Verses, to the same Air," by Thomas Percy.

Apparently Burns died shortly before the last chapbook of Vol. I appeared; in this number there is a prose note of the event, an elegy for him, and the following "Lines Characteristic of Robert Burns, Written by Himself":

The simple Bard, unbroke by rules of art,  
Pours forth the wild effusions of the heart;  
And, if inspir'd, 'tis nature's powers inspire;  
Her's all the melting thrill, her's all the kindling fire.

Where these lines came from is not known, but there is no evidence that they are by Burns.<sup>6</sup>

The first seven chapbooks of Vol. II of Brash and Reid's *Poetry* are devoted in whole or in part to eulogies in prose or verse to Burns, and to selections of his poems and songs. The first of the poems is "A Bard's Epitaph" which becomes in Brash and Reid (II, 2) "Epitaph for Robert Burns, Written by Himself." This is followed by "A Prayer for the Prospect of Death." The next chapbook (II, 3) contains "O Wat ye wha's in yon Town" which had first appeared in the *Glasgow Magazine* in September 1795, and in the fifth volume of James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* in 1796, published some time after the poet's death. The song as printed in the Brash and Reid chapbook differs from the received

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<sup>6</sup> [On his 1786 title-page, Burns presented these lines as being anonymous. Eds.]

text in that it does not indicate that the first stanza (four lines) is meant as a chorus, and should be indicated as repeated after each stanza. Another Burns song in that chapbook is entitled "Open the Door to Me, Oh!"; there are versions of the song before Burns, and the poet sent it to George Thomson in April 1793 with the comment, "I do not know whether this song be really mended."<sup>7</sup>

The next chapbook to be issued (II, 4) contains one of the poet's best known works, "For a' that and a' that." The song originally appeared in Vol. III of *The Scots Musical Museum* (1790) in a rollicking version with the lines "For a' that and a' that, / Ant twice as mickle's a' that," but the well-known version was written in either 1794 or 1795, and appeared in the *Glasgow Magazine* in August 1795, and elsewhere. In the Brash and Reid chapbook the song bears the title "An Honest Man the Best of Men. A Favourite New Song" and runs to forty lines as does the original text. However, the chapbook text is an extremely corrupt one. The eight-line stanzas of the original are broken into two four-line stanzas, and the first eight lines of the text are transposed with lines 9-16. The first stanza (lines 1-8) of the original is transformed almost beyond recognition in its chapbook form; lines 5-8, which should read:

For a' that, and a' that  
 Our toils obscure, and a' that,  
 The rank is but the guinea's stamp,  
 The Man's the gowd for a' that.—

somehow became in Brash and Reid:

For a' that, and a' that  
 Their purse-proud looks, and a' that;  
 In ragged coats ye'll aften fin'  
 The noblest hearts for a' that.

As though to make amends for their performance with "For a' that," the next issue (II, 5) contains a quite accurate version of Burns's great comic poem about his friend Francis Grose, which has appeared under several titles, here called "Address of the People of Scotland." *Seven Favourite Songs, Scots and English* was the title of the next chapbook (II, 6); three of these are by Burns. "Braw Lads on Yarrow Braes" (frequently called by the name of the air for which it was written, "Galla Water") is followed by "English Verses, to the Same Air" by the Hon. Andrew Erskine, of Kellie. Next we find "Farewell to Eliza" ("From thee Eliza, I must go"), one of the poet's earliest compositions, written before 1782.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Letters of Robert Burns*, ed. G. Ross Roy, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1985), II:195.

"Auld Rob Morris" in this number brings to an end the selections from Burns in Vol. II of the *Poetry; Original and Selected*.

It was not until No. 12 of Vol. III that Brash and Reid returned to the poetry of Robert Burns. In that number we find "The Lovely Lass of Inverness" in a version somewhat expanded from the way Burns had intended it for Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*. The work in the *Museum* consists of two eight-line stanzas, whereas in the Brash and Reid chapbook lines 5-8 are taken as a chorus and the song is thus expanded to three stanzas. It must be admitted that this uncalled-for rearrangement of the song rather improves it. Here for the first time Burns is identified as "the Ayrshire Poet" because another Robert Burns, from Hamilton, had begun contributing material to the *Poetry*. I shall return to this Burns later.

The next chapbook issued (III, 13) opens with "Caledonia," which is printed complete, but with the stanzas not following the requirements of the air "Humours of Glen," indicated in the chapbook. The tune would require an eight-line stanza, and this is how the words are normally printed, but for some reason Brash and Reid split the song into four four-line stanzas, which must have puzzled anyone familiar with the air.

We come now to the fourth and final volume of *Poetry; Original and Selected* [1798?], where in No. 6 we find "Tam Glen" listed only as "A Favourite Song" but without indication that the song is by Burns, although when it was first published in Vol. III of the *Scots Musical Museum* it was endorsed "Written for this Work by Robert Burns." It is possible, of course, that Brash and Reid found elsewhere the text which they printed.

The other Burns song (which he really only emended) is called "A Favourite Scots Song" by Brash and Reid, although its title is "Gin a Body Meet a Body," better known as "Comin thro' the Rye." In Brash and Reid, both the older version and Burns's version are given, the one called "Original Words," Burns's version called "Modem Words." The latter originally appeared in Vol. V of the *Museum* (1796).

"Tibbie I hae seen the Day" (its title taken from the first line of the chorus) appears in Brash and Reid IV, 10, anonymously; it may have been lifted from the *Museum* (II, 1788) where it is initialled X, with identification that this letter was used by Burns for some of his contributions. As published in the *Museum* the song consists of seven four-line stanzas and a four-line chorus; as published by Brash and Reid the song contains seven stanzas plus chorus, but only six of these are to be found in the *Museum* version, the sixth stanza of Brash and Reid,



recognized as by Burns, was taken from another source.

"Scots wha ha'e," as Burns's stirring battle-song "Robert Bruce's March to Bannockburn" is usually called, appears in the next issue of chapbooks (IV, 11) with the fulsome eighteenth-century title "The Speech of King Robert the Bruce to his Troops, to urge them on to Fight with King Edward II. and his Formidable Host, at the ever Memorable Battle of Bannockburn, fought on the *25th of June, 1314.*" The most notable thing about this chapbook is that it contains the later version of the song with the longer final line in each stanza ("Or to glorious victorie" instead of "Or to victorie"; "Edward! chains and slaverie" instead of "chains and slaverie," and so on), as preferred by George Thomson and published thus in his *Select Collection* in 1799. The song was so instantly famous that there were a number of copies requested from and sent by Burns, and it is not possible to hazard a guess as to where the text came from which is in the Brash and Reid printing, but following Thomson's comment to Burns, the air which is called for is "Lewie Gordon" and not "Hey tutti taiti" as Burns wished, and which would go with the words as Burns wished them.

In several of their chapbooks Brash and Reid published companion poems and songs; sometimes there are two songs to the same air as is the case in IV, 22, where the first song bears the title "I had a Horse, and had nae Mair" to "its own tune"; the next song is by Burns, simply called "Scots Song" ("Now westlin winds, and slaught'ring guns"), to be sung to the same tune. In Brash and Reid the song is attributed to Burns "the Ayrshire poet," and the entire forty lines are printed.

Finally there are two poems in the second-last chapbook of Vol. IV: "The Tooth-Ache" and "Ye Banks and Braes of Bonnie Doon." Although not in any edition of Burns's works published before the Brash and Reid chapbook, the poet's "Address to the Tooth-Ache," as it is correctly titled, had previously appeared in *The Belfast News Letter* on 11 September 1797, and in *The Scots Magazine* for October of that year. Burns had added to the title of the poem a descriptive note: "Written by the Author at a time when he was grievously tormented by that Disorder," and Brash and Reid include that also.

There also appears by Burns in that chapbook (IV, 23) "The Banks of Doon" which exists in two quite separate versions. One version, of twenty-four lines, first appeared in R.H. Cromek's *Reliques of Robert Burns* (London, 1808); the version in Brash and Reid, with sixteen lines, was published first in Thomson's *Select Collection* in 1798.

With these two works by Burns, Brash and Reid concluded their

reprintings from the poet, reprintings which, it will be recalled, spanned the years 1795 to 1798, from the third chapbook in the series to the penultimate one. It remains for us to consider poems and one prose essay about the poet, inspired, for the most part, by his death. Before returning to those eulogistic writings, I should note that immediately following "The Banks of Doon" there appears "Song. To a Beautiful Young Lady from the Country, whose Parents are held in Universal Estimation" with the tune noted "Ye banks and braes of bonnie Doon," although I have not been able to trace this air. The song is signed "W.R. [William Reid], Glasgow, 1798," and my guess is that Reid assumed that Burns's song was to be sung to its own air, as songs by Burns and others of the period frequently were, when in fact the air called for by Burns is "The Caledonian Hunt's Delight."

We return now to the poet's death in July 1796. There appeared the first mention of this event, "Elegiac Stanzas, Applicable to the Untimely Death of the Celebrated Poet, Robert Burns" (I, 24). The poem is in four-line stanzas, running to forty lines of undistinguished verse. Most of the poem is given to lavish praise of the bard, to end with a typical "graveyard-school" admonition:

"Oft then, O mortals! oft this dreadful truth  
 "Should be proclaim'd - for fate is in the sound,  
*"That genius, learning, health and vigorous youth*  
*"May, in one day, in death's cold chains be bound."*

There is a short prose introduction to the poem, "Death of Robert Burns", in which we read that his poetry is "distinguished equally by the force of native humour, by the warmth and the tenderness of passion, and by the glowing touches of a descriptive pencil, will remain a lasting monument of the vigour and versatility of a mind, guided only by the light of nature and the inspiration of genius." The writer of this passage has obviously accepted the then-popular view that Burns was indeed the "Heaven-taught ploughman" introduced to Scotland by Henry Mackenzie. The author continues on a more sombre note when we are told that Burns's "extraordinary endowments were accompanied with frailties which rendered them useless to himself and his family. The last months of his short life were spent in sickness and indigence."

Several of the early chapbooks in the second volume of *Poetry; Original and Selected* are devoted to Burns or contain selections of his work. The first (II, 1) contains "Character of Robert Burns, with Observations on his Writings" and "Monody on the Death of Robert Burns." The "Character" extends to three pages; after a passage on

Burns's early life, the author (perhaps William Reid himself) mentions Mackenzie's review in *The Lounger*, which helped decide Burns against emigration to Jamaica and go instead to Edinburgh to bring out an expanded edition of his poems. Once in Edinburgh, we are told, Burns was "every where invited and caressed." The last page of the assessment is given over to a mention, by category, of some of the poet's better-known productions. Among the categories we find "solemn and sublime" ("The Vision," "Winter"); "the tender and moral" ("Man was made to Mourn," "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "To a Mouse," "To a Mountain Daisy"). Echoing the reservation about Burns's character noted above, there are here reservations about the poems, some of which "it has been objected...breathe a spirit of libertinism and irreligion. ...Of religion he expresses...the justest sentiments, though he has been sometimes sufficiently open in his ridicule of hypocrisy." On balance, though, the assessment is a very positive one. The writer ends with the statement that Burns was "[a] man who was the pupil of nature, the Poet of inspiration, and who possessed, in an extraordinary degree, the power and the failings of genius."

Appropriately, the "Monody" is written in the standard habbie stanza with echoes from "The Life and Death of the Piper of Kilbarchan." Just as Habbie Simson's exploits are detailed in that poem, so Burns's find a place in the "Monody." Some of his poems are even mentioned by name ("The Ordination," "The Holy Fair"), some by reference:

Let poor dull rhymers rack their brains,  
His native wild enchanting strains  
Shall charm a' Caledonia's swains,  
Baith young and aul',  
While *mountain daisies* deck our plains  
They'll touch the saul.

The final stanza accords Burns his true place in the Scottish tradition:

The winter nights I've cheer'd by turns,  
Wi' Ramsay, Fergusson, and Burns:  
The first twa cauld are in their urns,  
Their sauls at rest:  
Now weeping Caledonia mourns,  
Him last and best.

I suspect that the "Monody" was written by Robert Lochore, and shall give my reasons later.

The next chapbook (II, 2) is also devoted entirely to Burns. "Account of the Interment of R. Burns" occupies one page, and is followed by "Verses to Burns' Memory," a poem set up like Gray's "Elegy," with

twelve four-line stanzas followed by a two-stanza "Epitaph." Nor does the similarity to Gray end there. The phrasing, too, owes a good deal to its obvious model:

For Genius gone let Scotia melt in tears;  
Her darling son no more shall soothe her woes,  
No more gay hope excite,—dispel her fears,  
Or tuneful sing her sorrows to repose.

There follows an anonymous and untitled poem of twenty lines, dated "Glasgow, July 26, 1796." Burns certainly admitted his shortcomings, but surely he deserved much better than he got here:

But ah! what avail'd it that Heav'n did bestow  
A mind so capacious all Nature to scan;  
Shall I point out those frailties which humbled thee low,  
And levell'd thee down with the weakest of man.

Poor Burns!

Another anonymous untitled poem follows, little better than the one cited above:

Genius of Scotia mourn!  
Cypress bestrew the urn  
Where BURNS lies dead;  
No—Here the laurel gives  
Her never fading leaves  
To crown his head.

One can certainly appreciate the desire for anonymity on the part of the author or authors of these pieces. The chapbook is completed by two poems by Burns himself, "Epitaph for Robert Burns" and "A Prayer in the Prospect of Death," mentioned earlier.

The next three Brash and Reid chapbooks (II, 4-6) contain selections from Burns's work, already discussed. These are followed by a chapbook (II, 7) which is mostly taken up with two poems by one Robert Burns, of Hamilton. The poems are preceded by a one-page "Advertisement" which makes me wonder if the Brash and Reid partnership occasionally accepted verses against payment. The Burns of Hamilton obviously tried to pattern himself on the Burns of Ayrshire, as we can see from the Advertisement. He writes of "the humble sphere of life in which he has been destined to move," and his two poems are "now offered to the Public, with diffidence and respect." He hopes, however, that his public will "assign to him a small portion of that merit which distinguished his illustrious predecessor of the same name" in which case "his highest ambition will be gratified." The first poem again plays on readers' sympathy by invoking the memory of Burns in its very title: "The Echo

of Friars-Carse Hermitage. An Inscription for the Ruins of Cadzow Castle on the Banks of Avon, near Hamilton” which concludes with these lines:

Stranger! go—be Virtue’s friend,  
Moralize on Cadzow’s ruin;  
Keep in view thy latter end,  
Bliss beyond the grave pursuing.

The second poem by Burns of Hamilton owes nothing to the Ayrshire Burns, with the possible exception that its title “Avon’s Stream: A Dirge” will recall to its readers an infinitely better poem about the River Afton.

Several other chapbooks contain further contributions by Burns of Hamilton, including one (III, 3), “The Lover Cured” to the tune “A’ that, and a’ that,” which has a chorus with variations on Burns’s song. Burns of Hamilton’s reads:

And a’ that, and a’ that,  
A gay coquet, and a’ that,  
By seeming shy, but studied art  
Led me a dance, and a’ that.

The next chapbook in the series with work about Burns (III, 5) contains “Patie and Ralph: An Elegiac Pastoral on the Death of Robert Burns” by Robert Lochore (1762-1852), about whom the *D.N.B.* says: “his literary tastes brought him into contact with Burns.” I don’t know where this information came from; I can find no trace of his sending to Burns or receiving from him any letters, and he does not figure in any of the standard works on Burns. Lochore is best known for his *Margaret and the Minister*; two other poetic tracts by him were published in 1795-6. Obviously “Patie and Ralph” owes something to Allan Ramsay’s “Richie and Sandy, A Pastoral on the Death of Joseph Addison, Esq.” and to his “Patie and Roger: A Pastoral Inscrib’d to Josiah Burchet, Esq.” (which was to grow into Ramsay’s *Gentle Shepherd*). Robert Burns had turned the idea to comic effect in the first poem to appear in his own *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, “The Twa Dogs. A Tale.” According to a footnote to Lochore’s poem, it was written “about” eight days after the death of Burns. In the introductory lines, Lochore invokes the names (almost obligatory) of Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns, and then he lets Ralph and Patie talk. After some discussion of Burns and his poems in which the reader is told: “A’ will lament his loss except the priests, / Wham he misca’d, an’ rank’d among the beasts,” there is a lyric interlude in standard habbie (“Patie and Ralph” is in rhyming couplets) which consists of four stanzas quoted from the anonymous “Monody” mentioned already. Lochore is really quite clever in the way in which he

brings in the titles of or references to poems by Burns. Here is a typical passage:

His gawsy *Haggies* [*sic*] lang will please the taste  
 O' Scottish swains, an' be a dainty feast;  
 The *Louse* on Jenny's cap shall ever creep,  
 Nor shall the *Whistle* ever fa' asleep;  
 The happy *Cottar*, 'mang his wife an' weans,  
 Shall ever rank 'mang ROBIN's sweetest strains;  
 The *Brigs o' Ayr* shall ne'er gae owre to flyte,  
 But scaul at ither in perpetual spite....

Lochore's elegy lacks the notes of censure which were mentioned in earlier poems in memory of Burns, and there is no note of condescension towards the end of the poem when Patie says:

Lament in saut, saut tears ye ploughmen a'  
 The prince o' bards an' ploughmen ta'en awa...

To this Ralph concludes the poem:

Let ilka tribute due be faithfu' paid  
 The highly honour'd BURNS, now lowly laid,  
 Whase WORKS, the best memorial o' his name,  
 To latest ages loud shall trump his FAME.

We come to the end of the poems on Burns with "Colin. A Pastoral Elegy to the Memory of Robert Burns" (III, 14), an anonymous work in thirty-one four-line stanzas, which was, we are informed, "composed in the month of July, 1796, without any view to Publication...." A long passage which one could almost call a parody of Gray's "Elegy" opens the poem. Colin is then directly addressed by a female persona, opening with the following lines:

"Alas, poor Colin, all thy hopes are fled,  
 "Nature's apt Pupil life's short race has run;  
 "E'en now he humbly hails his kindred dead,  
 "The love-lorn Ramsay, and gay Ferguson [*sic*].

The informant continues thus for five stanzas, without mentioning Burns by name; this is followed immediately by, "And is BURNS dead! sweet minstrel of our plains, / And fled the spark that did his lays inspire?" This occurs in stanza twenty-two and the elegy continues in this vein, without forgetting to mention the poet's frailties.

Blest be his widow'd wife, left to regret  
 A husband's death, involv'd in want and wo [*sic*];  
 O may their offspring meet a kinder fate,  
 Possess his worth, but ne'er his frailties know!

These lines raise an interesting question: Did the author of this poem know the lines Burns wrote for his "Dear-bought Bess" in his poem

entitled “A Poet’s Welcome to his Love-Begotten Daughter; the First Instance that Entitled him to the Venerable Appellation of Father” when he asked:

Lord grant that thou may ay inherit  
Thy Mither’s looks an’ gracefu’ merit;  
An’ thy poor, worthless Daddie’s spirit,  
Without his failins!

The problem is that Burns’s poem does not appear to have been published until August 31, 1799, whereas the parts of Vol. III of *Poetry; Original and Selected* came out, we assume, during the years 1797 and 1798. As usual, we must be cautious about stating that a person could *not* have seen a Burns poem before a given date because it was not published until then, because there were very frequently manuscript versions, original and copied, aplenty; in the case of the “Poet’s Welcome” there are three known manuscripts in Burns’s hand.<sup>8</sup> The elegy ends with the hope that Burns’s grave in “the lone church-yard” will display “the genuine beauties of the fallen Bard”:

There let the Mountain-daisy spring to grace  
The virgin beauties of the opening year;  
There let the Lark begin her airy race,  
And claim for heaven-taught BURNS the Muse’s tear.

thus closing with a double reference: to Burns’s own mountain daisy and to Henry Mackenzie’s equally famous epithet.

By the time he died we can find traces of the influence of Burns in the work of almost every poet writing in Scots, so we are not surprised to find many of the poems in *Poetry; Original and Selected* which bear this imprint. I shall content myself with pointing out a few of the most obvious examples in the collection. “The Twa Cats and the Cheese: A Tale” (I, 6) seems to have drawn its title from “The Twa Dogs,” though the inspiration appears to have come from Aesop rather than Burns.

“The Mouse’s Petition” (I, 22), which in the Index is expanded to “The Mouse’s Petition when Caught in a Trap,” was obviously suggested by Burns’s poem, even to its denial that what the mouse pilfers will be missed: “the scattered gleanings of a feast / My frugal meals supply.” The poem’s conclusion, too, is reminiscent of Burns’s “The best laid plans o’ *Mice an’ Men*, / Gang aft agley”:

So, when destruction lurks unseen,

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<sup>8</sup> [Since this essay was written, further MSS of the poem have been discovered, including one now in the Roy Collection, University of South Carolina. Eds.].

Which men, like mice, may share,  
 May some kind angel clear thy path,  
 And break the hidden snare.

We find "Answer to the Favourite Scots Song, Tam Glen" (IV, 7) in the chapbook following the one in which Burns's song had appeared. An earlier issue (I, 22) had drawn readers' attention to the possibility of answering a poem by a poem with the publication of both Christopher Marlowe's (here spelled Marlow) "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love" with Sir Walter Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd," although there are, of course, poetical replies in eighteenth-century Scottish poetry as well.

"The Lamentation of Mary Queen of Scotland, when Confined in Lochleven Castle" (IV, 15) certainly suggests Burns's better-known "Lament of Mary Queen of Scots on the Approach of Spring." The inclusion of "The Lamentation of Mary Queen of Scotland" owes something to the nearly universal admiration of the Scots for the woman whom Burns called "the amiable but unfortunate Mary" (*Letters*, II:123).

By the time Brash and Reid were completing Vol. IV of *Poetry; Original and Selected* they appear to have been running out of enthusiasm for the project or of new material. We can infer this from the more frequent appearance of poems by William Reid. Initially the series must have been very successful, as we can see from the number of individual chapbooks which were reprinted, some more than once. Not unexpectedly poems by Robert Burns appear to have been among the most popular of the offerings, as we can tell from the number of times that chapbooks containing poems of his were reprinted.

By their nature chapbooks are, as I mentioned, ephemeral, and the Brash and Reid series was no exception. Today single issues are scarce, and a full set of the five volumes (including the supplemental volume with its three new titles) is almost never offered for sale; in the past quarter century I can recall no complete set being listed by a dealer or an auction house. Like much of the ephemera destined for the use of working class readers, the series contains an excellent cross-section of what came into these readers' homes, to be read and re-read or passed on in exchange for another title, until the material literally disintegrated from handling. Not surprisingly, these humble folks identified with and wanted to read Burns, and some of them (like our Robert Burns of Hamilton) tried their hands at writing in Burns's manner. Although none succeeded, their attempts as chronicled in the pages of Brash and Reid's chapbooks constitute a significant chapter in the history of working class literature.