

1984

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Recommended Citation

Roy, G. Ross (1984) "Robert Burns Editions and Critical Works 1968-1982," *Studies in Scottish Literature*: Vol. 19: Iss. 1.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol19/iss1/16>

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G. Ross Roy

Robert Burns
Editions and Critical Works 1968-1982



Readers may consider the title of this review article to be misleading when I say that I shall not include discussion of James Kinsley's *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, but the importance and scope of this collection which represents almost forty years of work by Robert Dewar, and after his death Kinsley, would require too much space and would inevitably completely overshadow all other publications during the period 1968 to 1982, in fact during the entire century to date. Besides, Kinsley's Clarendon Press *Burns* was reviewed at length by Robert D. Thornton in *SSL* (Oct. 1970) and in a host of other publications.

Only separate publications will be discussed; to include articles would extend this essay beyond reasonable limits. Works will be considered in the following order: editions of poetry and songs, editions of prose, translations of poetry and songs, English language critical works and foreign language critical works. Within the English categories, books will be considered in approximately chronological order; foreign language books will be classed alphabetically by country.

The abiding interest in the works of Robert Burns can be measured in a number of ways: how many editions of the poet's works are published over a given period, with consideration given to the size of editions if known; how long they are kept in print; how many different editions are available at any

given time; how many books and articles have been written about the poet over a given period; one would also include translations and foreign language studies of the author. But these are more strictly scholarly estimates of the impact of Robert Burns. On a more popular level, there is the Burns Federation with its annual *Burns Chronicle* which combines scholarly articles with news from the world-wide network of Burns Societies of which there have been over a thousand formed since 1801, with over 350 still active. Scholars have a tendency to look down on these clubs, and on the various tourist aspects of the Burns cult--visits to the Birthplace Museum at Alloway, proliferation of "Burnsiana" such as Burns shortbread, Burns cigars, Burns whiskey, and parties at which "Auld Lang Syne" is sung off-key. But these manifestations too attest to the abiding interest that Robert Burns holds for a great number of people.

Several editions of Burns's works have been kept in print during the entire fifteen years of this study. One thinks, of course, of the edition by James Barke in 1955 which is still available. Others include G.S. Fraser's *Selected Poems*, first published in 1960. There are also some facsimiles of early editions now available: the *Reliques* of 1808, *The Prose Works* of 1839 (a useful work edited by Robert Chambers), and *The Land of Burns* (misnamed *The Life and Land of Burns*) by Robert Chambers, useful mostly for its illustrations. Of the older editions which have been reissued in facsimile the most notable is the 4-volume Henley and Henderson Centenary Edition of 1896, a work which is so important for its wealth of commentary that it remains essential as a companion to Kinsley's edition. It is, unfortunately, priced so high that anyone wanting a Henley and Henderson would be better advised to look for a copy of the original which was issued in several formats, the more modest of which can be found for a fraction of what the facsimile reprint costs. One of the selections which has been reprinted during the period covered by this essay is George Ogilvie's edition prepared for use in schools. While it is fine that such an edition is available, the editing leaves something to be desired: does anyone today seriously believe, for instance, that "The Cotter's Saturday Night" is "Burns's greatest poem"? If Scottish schools are to be the places in which the young learn to love Burns, then perhaps a less "sanitized" edition might serve the purpose better--think of the delight of a class in reading "To a Louse" which is not in the selection.

Perhaps the best of the selections is that by David Daiches (Andre Deutsch, 1979, hardback; Fontana/Collins, 1980, paperback) although no two people will agree about what should be included and what excluded, but a selection of only forty

poems and songs should not, I feel, have included "The Cotter's Saturday Night." This work has been published in countless selections and anthologies, often, I suspect, because it uses very few dialect words (Henley and Henderson gloss only thirty-seven and some of these would have been known to most English readers of Burns's time), but this is not *per se* a reason for its inclusion. The poem is too heavily weighted with sentimentality even if it does paint a pleasant picture of the father. If sentimentality were wanted why not have included "To a Mountain Daisy" which is at least shorter? The short introductory essay by Daiches makes the selection worthwhile, however. So many good books and articles have been written about Burns (Daiches' 1950 book among them) that it is difficult to be original in a 14-page general essay, but Daiches does sum up the poet's life and work elegantly.

A somewhat larger selection by Gordon Wright, with a two-page Introduction by Donald Campbell, was published by Wright's own publishing house in 1978 (40 poems, 55 songs). Here again there are inclusions which one would question. What an edition such as this does show is that the perennial popularity of Burns makes him a worthwhile author to add to any publisher's list.

The facsimile business seems to be thriving too. One would have thought that with nineteen facsimiles of the Kilmarnock edition, copies of which regularly turn up in second-hand bookstores and catalogues, there would be no need for a twentieth. This did not prevent Famedram Publishers in Gartocharn, Dunbartonshire, from producing in 1977 a rather gaudy facsimile replete with box and horn paper knife to open the pages. The £35 asking price apparently dampened the sale somewhat since I was able to purchase copy No. 35 of an edition of 1000 several months after the book was issued.

An even less useful facsimile edition was produced by the Scolar Press in 1971. This consists of a composite facsimile of the 1786 edition and the additional poems which appeared in the Edinburgh edition of 1787. The glossary is that of the 1786 volume, so dialect words first used in the 1787 edition remain un glossed. Furthermore it ignores the poems which Burns added to the edition of 1793. This production does not fulfill the aesthetic function of a facsimile of a single edition in the manner in which the best of the earlier facsimiles of the 1786 edition did--some are bound in the same blue paper wrappers as the original; one even has a facsimile of Burns's bookplate. Nor is the Scolar Press facsimile inclusive since the new poems of the 1793 edition, as mentioned, are absent, among them "Tam O' Shanter."

There remains one other collection of Burns's poetry to consider, *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*. This collection, it has been known for several years (see my note in *SSL*, 2 [1965]), was first published in 1799, not c. 1800 as editors continue to date it. A partial history of the publication of *The Merry Muses* is to be found in G. Legman's *The Horn Book* (1964) and a useful annotated bibliography by the same person is appended to his edition of *The Merry Muses* (1965). There were some editions of this work before 1872, but the floodgates opened that year with the publication of an edition dated 1827 but without printer or publisher specified. Legman suggests that in order to be able to sell the work as an "old book" and thus escape possible criminal charges the publisher (who he suggests is John Camden Hotten) reversed the 72 to read 27. This "date" stuck and there were many reprintings of it by various publishers, all of them anonymously of course. Finally in 1959 between James Barke, author of the six-volume fictional life of Burns; Sydney Goodsir Smith, the poet; and J. De Lancey Ferguson, editor of Burns's Letters in 1931, there was produced a reliable edition of *The Merry Muses*. At last there was a publisher who owned up to publishing the work (Macdonald of Edinburgh), but the purchaser still had to go through the fiction of joining the Auk Society as the volume was "for private distribution to members" only. The size of the printing (1000 copies) assured the prospective member of the Auk Society that he would not be turned away.

Between 1959 and 1964 publishing became much more open and in the latter year G.P. Putnam's Sons of New York republished *The Merry Muses* in a trade edition; this was followed in 1965 by a trade edition by W.H. Allen of London which went through three printings in that year. It was but a step to paperback editions.

Before 1964 there had, in fact, been a movement towards open publication of Burns's bawdry; Ralph Ginzburg's ill-fated *Eros* in 1962 and *American Aphrodite* in 1955 had published selections which claimed to be from Burns's *Merry Muses*, but which in fact contained a good deal of material which was neither from the pen nor the era of Robert Burns. And in 1962 the Light Year Press of San Francisco printed a selection from the "1827" *Merry Muses* which went through two or more printings and was apparently openly offered for sale by City Lights Books with listed American and English addresses.

Most recently (Macmillan, 1982) there has been another re-issue of the Barke-Smith-Ferguson edition with an eleven-page Introduction by Magnus Magnusson. Unfortunately this Introduction is at the expense of the thirty-two pages of introductory material written by the three previous editors. Most of Magnusson's Introduction has little to do with the work at

hand, and nowhere does he mention the edition of which this is so close a copy. Textually it is just another paperback version of the 1964 *Merry Muses* except that the text has been re-set. The arrangement of the poems is the same, even the headings of the six sections into which the collection is divided are identical; the glossary has been very slightly changed but all the definitions have been taken from the earlier glossary; even the note about spelling has been copied verbatim.

There is a steady stream of smaller selections of Burns, frequently done up in tartan (Burns had no plaid, but this century has given him one) for the tourist trade. These selections include such things as Gordon Irving's *The Wit of Robert Burns* (Leslie Frewin, 1972), a miniature (5 cm) selection packaged in a matchbox with an equally small vial of Robbie Burns scotch whiskey--the pamphlet is of undetermined date, the scotch of 70 proof.

Also of an ephemeral sort we find *Twenty Favourite Songs and Poems* produced entirely in a calligraphic hand by Tom Gourdie (Shepherd-Walwyn, 1978) selected by J.F.T. Thomson. This booklet is coffee-table material, but it makes an attractive souvenir of Scotland. The present writer's edition of *Tam O'Shanter* (Quarto Press, 1979) as part of the Scottish Poetry Reprints series aims at making available to the public small selections or individual poems accompanied by a short introduction and textual note, in limited editions of fine printing by private presses.

Raymond Lamont Brown has made a small industry of republishing Burns material with his own journalistic annotations. In 1968 he published *Clarinda: The Intimate Story of Robert Burns and Agnes MacLehose* (Martin Black) of which about a quarter is by Brown, the remainder a miscellaneous gathering of material--Burns's tributes to Clarinda, Clarinda's poems, and so on. Most of the book consists of a reprinting of the correspondence between Burns and Mrs. M'Lehose taken except for one letter from the edition of 1843, which he calls the only "authorized complete" edition. This displays an astounding ignorance of nearly a century of Burns scholarship: Ferguson's 1931 edition of Burns's letters includes three from Burns to Mrs. M'Lehose which are not in the 1843 edition, two of which were published by Scott Douglas as early as 1877. One hardly knows whether to classify this book as a reprint of the 1843 correspondence with an introduction or a biography most of which was written by someone else. Considered from either standpoint the book reflects little credit on Mr. Brown.

Then followed *Robert Burns' Common Place Book 1783-85* (S.R. Publishers, 1969) which is a reprint of John Adam's privately

printed edition of 1872. Since the Adam edition has been for many years difficult to find, there can be no objection to its republication. Brown has added some notes and corrected a few mistakes in the Adam original; unfortunately the mistakes are not corrected or even indicated in the text itself (which is a facsimile of the 1872 text) but on separate pages. Thus a reader has to hunt out the corrections himself which makes the work less useful than it should have been.

Yet another book from Mr. Brown is his *Robert Burns's Tour of the Borders 5 May--1 June 1787* (Anchor Press; U.S.A., Rowman and Littlefield, 1972). It is useful to have available this journal because it was first published in 1943 as part of *Robert Burns his Associates and Contemporaries: The Train, Grierson, Young, and Hope Manuscripts*, edited by Robert T. Fitzhugh, to which De Lancey Ferguson added the first accurate transcript of the Border Journal, but this edition has been long out of print. It is a pity that Brown did not add the other MSS., but perhaps they are for another book. In his short introduction Ferguson admitted that he had "shirked the job of annotation" and this Brown has supplied, one might perhaps say over-supplied. Nonetheless there has been need for some annotation, but do we really need a footnote at Voltaire which reads: "*François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire* (1694-1778): one of the greatest French philosophers and writers"? Probably because the introduction, text and notes occupy only 47 pages Brown has added five appendices to puff the book up to a slim 74 pages with material much of which is tangential to the journal.

My main objection to the book, as with all the Burns books Brown has compiled, is that it is a scissors and paste job. Where Ferguson included bracketed comment, Brown has copied this verbatim with no mention of his source. Brown's Introduction is just fluffed out Ferguson as the following quotations indicate:

FERGUSON

...the Robert Burns of his text

is a less solid figure than the peasant of

genius who filled his journal

BROWN

The Robert Burns who appears in the pages of this journal

is less of a solid figure than the tenant farmer poet who cuts a dash in his other prose works. The border journal, however, does show the Burns of rustic

genius who fills his pages

with the materials for future	with materials for future
erotic reveries,	exotic reveries, but who seems to have
suffered increasing boredom from	suffered increasing boredom from
heavy farmers, and saw through	the heavy farmers, and saw through
the pretensions of patronizing	the pretensions of the patronising
gentry.	gentry.

Many other passages in all of Brown's books are equally close to the sources. Where I come from that is called plagiarism.

Finally there was *Robert Burns's Tours of the Highlands and Stirlingshire 1787* (Boydell Press, 1974) this time based on J.C. Ewing's edition of 1927 which did not include the Stirlingshire episode. This was a separate tour Burns made in October 1787 (the Highland tour was with William Nicol and lasted from Aug. 25 till Sept. 16) in the company of Dr. James Adair and is based on that individual's account written after the poet's death. I have no quarrel with Brown including this account, although it is available elsewhere. Some of the annotation by Brown is useful; Ewing's edition contains a three-page Introduction, the text of the journal and a facsimile of it, but is without annotation. Brown's use of material from Ewing and other sources is considerable, and as usual not acknowledged. One of the best features of this and his other books is the copious illustration of people whom Burns met, of old engravings showing how places looked when Burns saw them, and of present day photographs.

A reprint of the original facsimile of *The Glenriddell Manuscripts of Robert Burns* (EP Publishing/Archon Books, 1973) with Introduction and notes by Desmond Donaldson is indeed a welcome publication. The original facsimile was produced by John Gribbel of Philadelphia in 1914 before he gifted the priceless manuscripts to the Scottish Nation in 1914--they are now in the National Library of Scotland. Gribbel's facsimile bears the notation: "Printed Not Published" and only 150 copies were made and the plates destroyed. This, of course, delighted booksellers because probably every copy was a presentation from Gribbel--becoming an example of the old book

dealer's joke that the truly rare copy is an unscribed one! Nevertheless 150 copies is a very small number when one considers the importance of the volumes. Much, but not quite all, of the story of how these MSS. went from James Currie to the Liverpool Athenaeum, to Gribbel, to the N.L.S. is told in the prefatory material in Gribbel's facsimile. I think it a pity that the editor of the reprint did not include this material in his new edition, but what is lost in this omission is more than made up for by Donaldson's own Introduction, notes and index of persons referred to in the notes.

The importance of these volumes (one contains poetry, one letters) is probably greater than any other single MS. collection made by Burns. Most of the contents is in the poet's own hand, but at one point he obviously got bored and had someone transcribe some of the material for him, to which Burns added a typical disclaimer for the "several instances the transcriber has injured & mangled" the text. Particularly noteworthy are the comments Burns wrote about the contents of the collection. For instance the Argument which precedes "Holy Willie's Prayer" is to be found in only two other MS. copies of the poem, one of which is privately owned and not available for collation; the other, also privately owned, is quite different to the one in the Glenriddell volume. While the volumes are more important for the light they shed on Burns's poetry, the collection of letters is important too. First, it is instructive to see which letters Burns thought were important enough to be given a place in this collection made for a man Burns admired greatly and whom he was no doubt anxious to impress. Even more important, the transcriptions in the Glenriddell MS. are the only known copies of some of the letters.

We now come to the alternate method of publication--recording. The earliest Burns recording which I can recall was a speech given by Ramsay Macdonald. It was on a 78 back in the days when you could apply a brake on the speed of the gramophone, and had a humorous introduction by George Bernard Shaw on how to obtain the best results. Although the record has long since gone the way of most wax recordings I can still remember the beautiful timbre of Macdonald's voice. Now with cassettes and complicated hi-fi sets we are able to hear speeches and songs as well as though we were present for the performance--and perhaps even better.

Many years ago Ralph Knight, who collaborated with Ewan McColl to produce a recording of Burns's songs, and I talked of (mostly dreamed of) a recording of all the songs in James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* (1787-1803) which contains 600 songs. Well our dream is coming, if not completely, over one-third true, because Jean Redpath, who is the greatest folk

singer alive, is in the process of recording all the songs which Burns wrote for this collection--over two hundred of them. She is working closely with Serge Hovey, the American composer, who is providing the arrangements. To date this ambitious scheme has given us two cassettes each of which contains about twenty songs. The house which is underwriting this project is Scottish Records of Brig o' Turk, Perthshire. Along with each cassette there is a pamphlet by Donald Low which gives background information on the songs--thus we have authoritative annotation to the songs. It seems almost churlish to suggest that another singer should be brought in on this plan when Ms. Redpath is doing the vocals, but I have always felt that an obviously masculine song requires a male voice, as a feminine song requires a woman's. There are, of course, "neutral" songs. Doesn't "My love she's but a lassie yet" demand a male singer, just as "John Anderson my Jo" demands a female? And what will happen when male and female voices are called for by Burns, as in his song which begins: "HE: 'O Philly, happy be that day'" to be followed in the next stanza with: "SHE: 'O Willy, ay I bless the grove'"? Another cassette will follow in August 1984.

Those songs which appeared in the *Museum* were either written or rewritten by Burns with particular tunes in mind, so that having the songs sung to their proper airs will at last give scholars and the public a chance to assess the genius of Burns in wedding word to tune, something which even the major work on Burns as song-writer, James C. Dick's *The Songs of Robert Burns...A Study in Tone-Poetry* (1903), does not achieve. This would be a good project to have underwritten by the Carnegie Foundation or the National Endowment for the Humanities, so that this important work can be completed without undue delay.

Another ambitious recording project has been undertaken by Scotsoun of Glasgow which has issued three cassettes of readings of Burns's poems and songs. There is a general introduction by Tom Crawford which admirably sets Burns in the Scotland of his day as well as pointing out how he has remained great in our century. The readings of the poems come off admirably with Crawford, an Ayrshireman himself, doing several of them. Most of the best-known poems and songs are here: "Mary Morison," "A Poet's Welcome to his Love-begotten Daughter" (I have always preferred the alternate title which has MS. authority "The Poet's Welcome to his Bastard Wean"), "To a Louse," "Holy Willie's Prayer," "The Holy Fair," "Tam O'Shanter," "John Anderson," "A Man's a Man for a' that," and "Auld Lang Syne."

There are few inclusions with which one would quarrel but

there are omissions which I find surprising: "To a Mouse," while not at the level of "To a Louse," is surely so popular as to need inclusion; on the other hand I applaud the omission of the third of these more-or-less similar poems, "To a Mountain Daisy," which shows Burns at his worst. I am also pleased that what is probably the most frequently anthologized poem, "The Cotter's Saturday Night," has not been included. "The De'il's awa wi' th' Exciseman" is such a splendid piece of self-mockery that I could have wished to see it there too.

The readings are admirable, and these cassettes should be used by all non-native Scots so that they hear the poems sounding as close to the way they would have sounded in Burns's day as it is possible to get two centuries later, without the reader adopting a theatrical pseudo-eighteenth century pronunciation. The point about reading leads to the major reservation which I have about these recordings: "Love and Liberty" is a masterpiece as a production; it includes several people who narrate and sing Burns's cantata, and was recorded in Poesie Nancie's with barroom noise in the background.

Thus having several voices in the recording one wonders why they were not used for the recitation of "Tam O'Shanter" for the several implied voices in that poem--one thinks, for instance, of the eight-line "English" aside beginning "But Pleasures are like poppies spread" sandwiched between two passages of pure Scots which so naturally calls for a different voice. The recording does not include the four lines beginning "Three Lawyer's tongues, turn'd inside out" which as is well known were only removed by Burns because Tytler was afraid that they would offend too many potential patrons and were silently removed but never repudiated by the poet. Still anyone who hears Tam's ride being read cannot but be struck by what a majestic work of art the poem is.

If I have one serious objection to this collection of Burns's work it is that the songs are read instead of being sung. Crawford makes the point in his introduction that Burns always wrote songs with a particular tune in mind--the poet said so himself in one of his letters. Every critic has made the point that Burns married words and music with a genius never surpassed and rarely equalled by any writer in Great Britain, so the listener feels as though he is hearing only half of what Burns intended. Imagine, if you can, "Auld Lang Syne" *read*, and to think that the producers had available a voice like Jean Redpath's (who sang part of "Love and Liberty")--the very idea seems unbelievable! With all that is so good about these cassettes what a pity it is that those responsible for planning them did not go that extra bit.

Incidentally, Scotsoun has also issued cassettes with the poetry of Allan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson and a selection of

Lallans. Perhaps the future will see a greater amount of important Scottish literature available to the listening as well as the reading public.

Finally a cassette which was produced by Caedmon Records for mainly educational purposes devotes one side to a reading of Burns, and the other to Scottish Border ballads. The readers are authentic Scots, but once more the songs are *read* not sung. Among the Burns selections we find "To a Mouse," "To a Louse," "Tam O'Shanter," "John Anderson" and "Auld Lang Syne." Since well over half the cassette is given over to poems it would not have been costly to have added voices to sing the songs. A short note on Burns accompanies the cassette, but there is no introduction to the ballads among which we find "Sir Patrick Spens," "Edward, Edward," "The Wife of Usher's Well," "Clerk Saunders" and "The Twa Corbies"--the latter, I was pleased to note, in its better true Scottish form (Child 26a) rather than its English version (Child 26a, variant) with its languid conclusion.

In 1954 William Kean Seymour "translated" Burns into English and in 1972 Burns's poetry was translated into Esperanto. I do not believe that there is an edition in braille, although there was a selection in braille published in the nineteenth century. Perhaps with the recordings now available such an edition is no longer needed.

There have not been a large number of new translations of Burns published in recent years, although he remains popular in Germany, Japan and Russia. There were Korean, Italian and Spanish editions in 1951, 1953 and 1954, and Professor Luiza Lobo will publish a selection of poems and songs translated into Portuguese. This will fill a gap as there has never been an edition of Burns's work in that language.

One of the more recent languages into which Burns has been translated is Chinese; by a coincidence there were two editions by different translators published for the first time in 1959, the bicentenary year. One of these was by Yuan Ke-jia who also published a revised edition in 1981 in Shanghai in 5,000 copies. The short (12 pages) introduction is interesting as a commentary on how socialist countries view the eighteenth century in Scotland. There are several points with which one could take issue, for example Yuan claims that Burns died early and in poverty and that this makes us feel sympathetic and angry. What constituted poverty in Scotland two centuries ago is largely a matter of definition--many of Burns's contemporaries would not have thought of the poet as poor; furthermore, thirty-seven was not considered young to

die in 1796. Burns received as good medical advice as was available at the time, which was pretty primitive by today's standards.

Yuan writes briefly of the struggle between the Auld Lights and the New, but he is wrong, I think, to interpret the conservative, or reactionary, element in the church in political terms. To be an Auld Light it was not at all necessary to be a Tory. Burns was most concerned with domestic and international political struggles. He was always "on the side of the forces of progress, using his poetry as a weapon to praise or condemn." In this context Yuan cites the "Ode for General Washington's Birthday" and "The Tree of Liberty" to make his point--unfortunately these are not among the poet's better efforts. He also refers to and quotes from "Bannockburn" and "For a' that and a' that"--here, of course, he is on firmer ground; these four poems underline what is well known--Burns is at his best when writing of Scotland and the things he knew intimately. In his poems of domestic concern Burns always supports the radical element, supports Fox, and supports social reform according to Yuan. I think that this statement needs tempering; among the most radical groups of the time were the weavers, and Burns wrote some very uncomplimentary things about them.

In a footnote Yuan states that many of Burns's poems use local color and politics and are therefore unsuitable for a Chinese audience. This may be true up to a point, but after all "Holy Willie's Prayer" certainly is based on local church politics but as Yuan knows this "local" poem rises above the petty attitudes of the local people to become one of the greatest short satires in any language; in fact Yuan calls "Holy Willie" (along with "The Holy Fair") the best of Burns's satirical poems.

Of the love songs he claims that they reflect the working people's love for one another. "The theme of many of these poems runs contrary to the bourgeois attitude to love which is money-oriented and pays little attention to virtue." Again such a statement needs clarification: what does Mr. Yuan mean by the term "virtue"? Children conceived or born out of wedlock were probably more common among the working class in eighteenth-century Scotland; drunkenness was certainly common to both classes; Burns himself was not above getting contraband goods for Maria Riddell while a member of the Excise. One could go on--the great obtained large amounts of money by subterfuge, the small obtained little amounts the same way.

An interesting point is raised near the end of the essay when Yuan states that Burns knew how to be content with little (he had no other alternative) which Yuan sees as a conservative rather than a radical idea--he cites the song which be-

gins "Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair," and goes on "This side of Burns's ideas degrades the militancy of his poems....In many of Burns's poems the peasant mentality obscures the true picture of the peasant's life." It appears to me from this passage that Mr. Yuan wishes that Burns had written a quite different poetry to that which he did write. When there was no other alternative Burns kept quiet, but this does not suggest that he was unaware of the class struggle. One lesson he learned well: it is not because a person is downtrodden that he must forego love, comradeship and merriment. But this does not mean that Burns was insensitive to the ills of the world; he was very much aware of the plight of the poor, after all he did write "O Death! the poor man's dearest friend."

Some of the poems translated are "To a Mouse," "The Holy Fair," "To a Louse," "Afton Water," "The Banks o' Doon," "For a' that and a' that," and of course "Auld Lang Syne." What is just as interesting about this selection is the poems which are not included. Among these are "To a Haggis," "A Poet's Welcome to his love-begotten Daughter," "Epistle to John Rankine," "Tam O'Shanter," and "The Twa Dogs" as well as some of the best known songs.

Like most great artists, Burns can be all things to all people. It is a strength in him that he is beloved by readers and critics of both the left and the right. One is pleased that his popularity in China called for a new edition of his poetry.

The other edition of Burns was translated by Professor Wang. Unfortunately I have not been able to obtain a copy of this translation, so can only mention it in passing. Wang has told me recently that a revised and expanded edition is being prepared, and we hope that it will be successful.

The foreign country where Burns has enjoyed the greatest following is undoubtedly Germany. Two of the most popular translations during the nineteenth century were those of Carl Bartsch (first published in 1865) and L.G. Silbergleit (1875) both of which were many times reprinted. It is thus not surprising to find that there have not been many new issues of the poet in German, since secondhand copies are easily found. In the German Democratic Republic a large collection of translations by Helmet T. Heinrich, edited with a 28-page Introduction by John B. Mitchell was published in 1974 (Aufbau). It is unfortunate that the Introduction is heavily propagandistic: we find the obligatory references to class struggle, an "unclear but deep-rooted belief in a god or principle of love and brotherhood," the French Revolution, as well as other doctrinal comments. Naturally songs such as "Scots Wha Hae"

are grist to such a miller. Mitchell does correctly point out the service Burns rendered to Scotland in cleaning up her popular songs. The selection is a generous one and the music for some of the songs is included.

Toshio Namba, who was first brought to the attention of readers of *SSL* (April 1964) with his definitive study of Burns in Japan, has continued to produce important work in the field. In 1969 he published the most useful of translations, one containing both the original text and his translation; unfortunately, I feel, the translation is preceded by the Scots original--I lean to original and translation on facing pages, but this is a matter of individual choice. The title page reads *Poetry of Robert Burns* followed by the Japanese title; the dust jacket also bears a sub-title: *Nature and Life*. The annotations follow the translations poem by poem.

Among the poems translated we find "Handsome Nell," "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "The Jolly Beggars" (including the Merry-andrew section), "To a Mouse," "To a Mountain Daisy," "The Twa Dogs," "Tam O' Shanter," "Lament of Mary Queen of Scots," and the mandatory "Auld Lang Syne." A sixty-page concluding section contains a translation of an essay from *The Scotsman*; the text, translation and notes of Bernard Barton's poem "Bruce and the Spider"; and Allan Ramsay's "Peggy" (My Peggy is a young thing) which is the first song in *The Gentle Shepherd*, a work which Burns characterized as "the noblest Pastoral in the world." Namba's book concludes with a ten-page selection of passages from Carlyle's "Essay on Burns," surely the most frequently republished article on Burns, and one which will be very useful to Japanese readers. Professor Namba should now be encouraged to edit and translate a collection of criticism on the poet.

Another translation of Burns, this one by Yoshida Minoru, entitled *Songs of Love* was published in 1971, but I have not seen a copy of it.

Although not the first person to translate Burns into Russian the great popularity he enjoys in that country is due to the standard translation by Samuel Marshak. According to J.W. Egerer's *Bibliography of Robert Burns* the first edition of this was published in 1936, but I have seen only an edition of 1947, which Marshak's son Immanuel gave me and told me was the first edition. The 1936 translation was, I believe, by T.A. Shschenpkinoi-Kupernick. In any case editions followed in 1950, 1954 (Egerer); apparently the most recent of Marshak's translations is one which was published in 1976 following one in 1971. Another translation by Victor Fedotov which I have not seen came out in 1963.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect in the U.S.S.R. of Burns studies is the effort to make a selection (I do not believe there is any translation in Russian of all of the poet's work) available in several of the languages which are spoken there. Thus over the years there have been editions in Belorussian, several in Ukrainian, Estonian, Georgian, Baskin, Moldavian, and during the period covered by this study in Kazakh (1969), Mari (or Cheremis, 1970), Uzbek (1971), Armenian (1977) and Kirgiz (1978). Unfortunately I have been unable to examine any of these translations--it would be particularly interesting to see if the selections followed those of the Russian pioneer in Burns translation, Samuel Marshak.

Other countries which have published translations of Burns, none of which I have seen, are Hungary (1973), Italy (1973), the Netherlands (1973), and Yugoslavia (1976). Little by little Burns's work, or at least selections of it, are being made available to a wider and wider audience. The poet would have been proud and happy, and a little astonished, could he have foreseen how far beyond his native land his fame was to spread.

Books about Robert Burns fall into the category of publications on which a house can confidently expect to make money. In this respect they are like cookbooks, although nothing new appears in them the public is willing to purchase (and read one supposes) the same old menu dished up anew. Such a work is L.M. Angus-Butterworth's *Robert Burns and the 18th Century Revival in Scottish Vernacular Poetry* (Aberdeen U.P., 1969) which raises expectation of a somewhat different book than we get, for in it we find a good deal of biography which has little or nothing to do with the topic suggested by the title. We get to Burns in Chapter 4, where the title suffices to inform the reader of its contents: The Ancestry of Robert Burns. But considering that in 1889 the Revd. Charles Rogers had published an exhaustive work entitled *The Book of Robert Burns: Genealogical and Historical Memoirs of the Poet his Associates and those Celebrated in his Writings* and if need there were for additional material one has only to turn to the *Catalogue of Robert Burns Collection in the Mitchell Library Glasgow* (1959) where there are listed nineteen pages of books and articles about Burns, his family and his friends and contemporaries, one might ask, "Why again?" This chapter is followed by one on the education, reading (which Mr. Angus-Butterworth calls "scholarship") and home life. Then there are chapters on Burns as farmer and the poet's relations with Jean Armour, Mary Campbell and Agnes M'Lehose; the author opens the chapter on Burns's love life by stating "Apart from one early episode Burns had a remarkably blameless record in affairs of

the heart"! To read such a statement in a book which has footnotes from De Lancey Ferguson's *Pride and Passion* as well as from his edition of Burns's correspondence, and from Maurice Lindsay's *Burns Encyclopaedia* is a little short of astonishing. Finally we come to three short chapters on the poet's work (Chapts. 9-11; 61 pages). This is followed by "The Burns Poetical Tradition" in which we find brief mention of a half-dozen poets who were influenced by Burns: Baroness Nairne, William Wordsworth, James Hogg, Sir Walter Scott, Robert Tannahill, Keats, and John Greenleaf Whittier. We are even told "Of those who followed Burns some were only very indirectly affected." There follow chapters on Burns's letters, Burns as Mason, Burns's Jacobite sympathies, the poet's "general interests" and finally his last days. There is nothing at all that is new about Burns in the book, nor are there new insights into the poet's work. In fact Mr. Angus-Butterworth avoids committing himself almost entirely by quoting--for example his one page devoted to "A Red, Red Rose" consists of two quotations from Thomas Crawford, the text of the poem and this comment of his own: "With the mastery of his medium which Burns possessed he was able to appeal to the deepest human emotions. No one can express more in a few words than he can." The song "Ae Fond Kiss" rates two sentences and a quotation from Robert Chambers.

To return to the title of the book: the eighteenth-century revival of Scottish vernacular poetry is indeed an interesting one, and one which bears investigation, but here again Angus-Butterworth lets us down. The introductory chapter has a page on "The Makars and early Scottish poetry," followed by a page each on Robert Henryson, William Dunbar, Gavin Douglas and Sir David Lyndsay. The next chapter is devoted to Allan Ramsay; most of it consists of a chronological account of Ramsay's publications. No one can quarrel with this perceived influence because Burns certainly admired Ramsay's work--but *The Tea-Table Miscellany* was a far more important work to Burns than others by Ramsay. We know that Burns owned a copy of the *Tea-Table* which he mined for songs to include or rewrite for Johnson and Thomson. But if we are looking for sources which Burns used why is there no mention of David Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs* or James Watson's *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems, both Ancient and Modern* to name but two? Then too Ramsay published the contents of the Bannatyne MS in *The Ever Green*, and this was re-edited and published by Sir David Dalrymple in 1770, but Angus-Butterworth makes little of the former (except to tell us "It may be noted that the poet's own spelling of the title as two separate words has the advantage of avoiding any misleading connotation with ever-green shrubs"!)) and he does not mention the latter

at all.

Even the index of this ill-conceived work is of little use. Many proper names do not appear at all and there are only occasional references to authors who are quoted several times. Such a book as this one does little harm of itself--it can join dozens of like works whose only contribution to our knowledge of Burns is to prove how well he has captured the popular imagination, but to issue it under the imprint of a respected university press may lead those who are not familiar with twentieth-century Burns scholarship to accept it without question. To do so would be a grave injustice to Robert Burns.

The late Robert T. Fitzhugh published the most valuable work by a single author to appear since Thomas Crawford's *Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs* in 1960. It is based on a lifetime of study of the poet and his works; the title itself sets the tone of the work: *Robert Burns the Man and the Poet: A Round, Unvarnished Account* (Houghton Mifflin, 1970). As Fitzhugh's choice of publisher would suggest, this work is aimed at a general reading public rather than the narrow specialist; it even has the footnotes discretely placed at the end of the volume. It is illustrated with nearly forty well-chosen portraits of Burns, his family, his friends and the houses he lived in. There is a good deal of Burns's poetry quoted and referred to as one would expect, but for searching analysis of texts one would have to turn to other works. Where Fitzhugh excels is in giving the reader a feel for Burns and the environments in which he worked, and played, and loved, and in which (frequently in spite of which) he created poems and songs which are in Emerson's phrase "the property and the solace of mankind." Fitzhugh rightly treats the poems and the songs separately because, as he says, "Burns did not think of the songs as poems; they were always written for tunes, and were intended to be sung." No major edition of Burns until Kinsley's edition of 1968 took this stand, with the result that the public has become accustomed to *reading* Burns's songs. Perhaps a qualification is needed here: once Burns became involved in writing and collecting songs for Johnson, and later Thomson, he thought of poems and songs differently. Burns included four songs in the Kilmarnock edition, and added five to the first Edinburgh edition; these were retained in the new edition of 1793, perhaps because William Creech had bought the copyright to them, but no new ones were added at a time when he was heavily involved in song-writing.

The growth of Burns as a poet, that period about which we have the least information, is the first major chapter (pp. 17-50) in the book. Like most poets, Burns began his learning

by imitation; in his case Pope and James Thomson, thus English or anglicized poetry. This is not surprising, particularly if one looks over the contents of Arthur Masson's *Collection of English Prose and Verse* which he had as a school book and where one looks in vain for a work in the vernacular Scots. (It is interesting to note that the Scottish selections which Masson added in later editions of his text included Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling*, Beattie's "The Hermit" and a selection of English poems by Robert Fergusson which the editor felt constrained to defend by saying "it is hoped, will be acceptable to the reader") none of which uses the vernacular. But Burns did, Fitzhugh points out, read Scottish poets who pointed to the vernacular, particularly Allan Ramsay, whose poetry inspired "The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie" and his verse epistles, and Fergusson.

Fitzhugh is at his most original when he addresses himself to the murkier side of Burns's life, for example the Mary Campbell episode. One may complain that the poet's personal life has little to do with the heritage which he left us, but any event in the poet's life which could call forth the song which begins "Thou lingering star with lessening ray" cannot be easily dismissed. The author is also fair in his assessment of Burns the lion of Edinburgh society, and the perhaps unrequited lover of Agnes M'Lehose. De Lancey Ferguson set the tone for a generation of Burns students by dismissing the affair as a "hothouse" business, but Fitzhugh is closer to the mark when he comments "Most of the letters are tiresome, as love letters tend to be...." This does not suggest, as does Ferguson, that they are trivial to the lover. Agnes M'Lehose, whatever Burns may have done or thought later, was real to Burns at the time that he was paying her court in Edinburgh; again we cannot dismiss a love which called forth, three years after the intimacy was over, these lines:

Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly!
Never met--or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.--

Burns may be charged with inconstancy, but he cannot be charged with dalliance where Agnes M'Lehose is concerned.

In a chapter whose title is "Married Man" Fitzhugh takes Burns through his marriage to Jean, his rupture with Agnes, and his meeting and friendship with Maria Riddell, who, despite Burns's folly of a drunken evening, remained a faithful friend to the poet. Unlike Mrs. M'Lehose, Maria was neither a straight-laced Calvinist who had qualms after each evening spent with the poet, nor was her mind pedestrian. She

stimulated Burns in a way which probably no other woman, with the possible exception of Margaret Chalmers, had done and he responded, as he almost always did, by thinking that he was in love with her. That there may have been an affair between the two is possible, for after the poet's death she got back her letters to him and apparently destroyed them. This chapter sheds little new light on the biography of the poet--it is again something for the general reader.

"Song" is the title of a chapter which begins "Song...was Burns' earliest, his latest, his strongest, and his most enduring poetic interest." It is also the most disappointing in the book: of its 62 pages, almost ten are taken up with quoting "Love and Liberty" (better known as "The Jolly Beggars"), twelve with other songs, and fourteen with bawdy songs. Most of these songs are so well known as to need nothing more than a title, although one can understand the temptation to demonstrate the poet's genius by quoting the deathless lines. The last quarter of the chapter is devoted to *The Merry Muses*, including the quoted bawdy songs. Since Fitzhugh's book is the first to have been written after relaxation in publishing standards which allowed the open publication of such material, it was certainly appropriate that the author should devote some space to them. What is disappointing, though, is that he says so little about the collection--much of which, of course, is not by Burns although not as little as Duncan McNaught (writing under the pseudonym of *Vindex*) would have us believe. Fitzhugh enumerates the problems connected with the MS collection of bawdy songs Burns collected, and its relationship to the 1799 printed *Merry Muses*, but that is all. Scholars, especially G. Legman, have already pointed these out; Fitzhugh's book would have been far more valuable had he taken us a little further in this admittedly fuzzy area of Burns studies.

Although it adds no new material, the chapter "Last Years" is a worthy refutation (if one were still needed) of the oft-repeated calumny which went abroad immediately after the poet's death that in his last years Burns became a misanthrope and a drunkard, a claim furthered rather than denied by the poet's first "official" editor and biographer James Currie. Even Robert's brother Gilbert, who should have set the record straight, failed to do so when he had the opportunity in 1820. Readers these days are used to seeing the "warts and all" in great men, so nothing Fitzhugh says in his closing chapter could have much effect on the firm place the poet holds in world literature. Robert Fitzhugh has gracefully portrayed the man and the work.

Although it does not contain new criticism of Burns, Donald Low's *Robert Burns: The Critical Heritage* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974) is a companion to his *Critical Essays on Robert Burns* and serves as an indication of those earlier essays which have stood the test of time. The book contains a 57-page essay by Low which is, in keeping with the essays collected, a short introduction to Burns's growing reputation. It does not, nor would we expect it to, discuss Burns's poetry. Within its limited range the essay is an admirable summing up of the source material with which Low has worked. He sets forth a good reason why, after the six reviews of the 1786 edition of Burns's poetry, a locally-printed and not widely-distributed book, there were not more reviews of the subsequent editions of 1787 and 1793, both of them Edinburgh-printed and both containing enough new material to warrant new reviews: the Edinburgh printer William Creech felt that "comment more favourable than Henry Mackenzie's [review of the 1786 volume] was scarcely to be expected, and Creech was publisher for Mackenzie as well as for Burns." And so, Low continues, Creech advertised Burns and called attention to the fact that a review of his *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* could be found in *The Lounger*, which he just happened to publish, along with Mackenzie's *The Mirror* and *The Man of Feeling*. We have little reason to wonder why Burns was often annoyed at his Edinburgh publisher.

Low's collection contains 75 entries dating from two months after the publication of the Kilmarnock edition in July 1786 to Emerson's somewhat neglected centenary speech of January 1859. This was a good place to end the volume because by this time Burns's reputation was firmly established. If we accept that the number of editions of a writer is a fairly accurate measure of his reputation, then Burns's peaked around the centenary of his birth; in his bibliography J.W. Egerer lists ten editions in 1858, fifteen in 1859 and eight in 1860. But throughout the nineteenth century Burns remained remarkably high on the best-seller list--there was never a decade which did not see over fifty new editions, five of them had over a hundred.

The early reception is covered in the first ten selections; these include the well-known review by Henry Mackenzie in *The Lounger*, as well as the five other known reviews. Entry No. 10 consists of James Macaulay's poem entitled "Rhyiming Epistle to Mr. R---B---, Ayrshire" first published in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* on 23 June 1787, perhaps the earliest poem addressed to the poet. No. 17 is another poem on Burns, this one by the irascible James Maxwell of Paisley who in 1788 published a pamphlet *Animadversions on Some Poets and Poetasters of the Present Age Especially R---T B---S, and J---N L---K*

[John Lapraik]. A sample will suffice:

Of all British poets that yet have appear'd,
None at things sacred so daringly sneer'd,

He makes of the scriptures a ribaldry joke;
By him are the laws of both God and man broke.

Lapraik, incidentally, published a volume of verse, *Poems, on Several Occasions*, with Burns's Kilmarnock printer John Wilson in 1788 in which there are two poems addressed to Burns. By Burns's death there were a number of poetic epistles to him or poems about him. That indefatigable laborer in ferreting out the most minuscule of references to Burns, John D. Ross, published a book of them, *Round Burns's Grave: The Paeans and Dirges of many Bards*, which contains almost a hundred poems, and I am pretty certain that he only scratched the surface. But these poems are largely by "Bardolators"--for example the first poem in the collection is by Fitz-Green Halleck: "Burns. To a Rose, Brought from near Alloway Kirk...."

Poems written by people who knew Burns, or were his contemporaries, however, have a genuine interest for today's reader; here we see the jostling and pushing of equals, or at least perceived equals. (Did Mrs. Dunlop grasp the difference between Burns's poetry and that of her milkmaid Janet Little who published her *Poetical Works*, to which Burns subscribed, which contains "On a Visit to Mr. Burns" and "An Epistle to Mr. Robert Burns"?) This is the only change I could wish in Low's meticulously-researched volume: the addition of early poems to or about Burns. In addition to those mentioned I would add *Burns' Calf Turn'd Bull*, an anonymous chapbook of 1787, David Sillar (1789), William Taylor (1787), James Fisher (1790), John Learmont (1791) as well as his chapbook *The Kirk's Alarm, A Poem; or, An Answer to the Late Pastoral Admonition* (1799) to name a few.

The early postmortem entries tell us a great deal about their authors if not a great deal about the poet: the pompous George Thomson's obituary in the *London Chronicle*; Maria Riddell's generous and feeling sketch in the *Dumfries Journal*; Robert Heron's piece before the poet's death, with its silly statement that "Tam O' Shanter" is debased by its "relation to obscenity," and his *Memoir of the Life of Robert Burns* of 1797. Because of its length James Currie's writing on Burns colored readers' thinking about the poet for nearly a century. He was, of course, the "official" editor of Burns's work and had access to much more new material than anyone since. By today's standards he did not do a satisfactory job of his editing, but by the standards of his day the four-volume set

of 1800 was a creditable work. The *Life* occupies an entire volume and formed the basis for most other lives for many years. His innuendo about Burns's drunkenness and venereal disease set the tone for all too long, and one cannot excuse his tampering with the texts of Burns's letters, particularly with respect to the poet's taste for bawdry.

As we move through the first half of the century we find many of the best-known names appearing in Low's collection: Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, Keats, Campbell, Hazlitt, Allan Cunningham, J.G. Lockhart and the review of his *Life* by Carlyle, Macaulay, Hogg, De Quincey and others. They all had something to say about the peasant poet whose songs, Emerson wrote, "sing through the air....The wind whispers them, the birds whistle them...the chimes of bells ring them in the spires."

Students of Burns will be grateful to Donald Low for his judicious and knowledgeable collection which brings together a great deal of hard-to-find criticism of the poet.

Low also published a companion volume *Critical Essays on Robert Burns* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) which contains nine essays by contemporary Burns scholars as well as his own introductory essay. The authors and subjects of these essays are Ian Campbell "Burns's Poems and their Audience"; David Murison "The Language of Burns"; Thomas Crawford "The Epistles"; Alexander Scott "The Satires: Underground Poetry"; John D. Baird "Two Poets of the 1780s: Burns and Cowper"; James Kinsley "The Music of the Heart"; David Daiches "Robert Burns and Jacobite Song"; Cedric Thorpe Davie "Robert Burns, Writer of Songs" and the writer of this review contributed "Robert Burns: A Self-Portrait."

Ian Campbell's "Burns's Poems and their Audience" studies the "rustic" bard's reaction to instant fame in the nation's capital and how he resisted being "bowled over" by the attention he received. He feels that Burns in his best work continued to write of the closed rural circle he pictured so well in his satires, but he did so with such genius that all the world can associate with it. In David Murison's "The Language of Burns" the editor of the *Scottish National Dictionary*, who has spent a lifetime studying the Scots language, gives a succinct account of Burns's recognition of "the social prestige of English" in the Scotland of his day. The poet had, however, the artistic sense to abandon English for Scots in the best of his poetry. Murison points out that Burns, in addition to relying heavily on Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson for his language, was also responsible for contributing a number of words himself which even if he did not invent them, his is the first recorded use of them. Any reader familiar with Burns's poetry will recognize words such as *agley*,

bethankit, blellum, skinking and many others.

Thomas Crawford's contribution "The Epistles" has, unfortunately, been published already in his *Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs* (1960), a work which is recognized as one of the half-dozen most important books on Burns, so it is a pity that Crawford did not give us an original article, for he surely has more to add to the critical canon. Alexander Scott's "The Satires: Underground Poetry" comments on the universally recognized importance of these works to the twentieth century, but also points out that there was little comment on them during the poet's time. Some of them could not be openly printed in Burns's day--"Holy Willie's Prayer" for example--because of the personal nature of the poem whose target would immediately be recognized. Unlike poems such as this, "The Holy Fair" is "less personal than public" so it could by the "liberal substitution of asterisks for proper names" be included in Burns's 1786 edition. Scott thinks that "The Holy Fair" is "the most masterly, in its command of verse technique, the idiomatic cut and thrust of its style, the combination of comedy and criticism in its action and characterization, and the cunning of its transitions between panoramic views of general activities and close-ups of individuals and particularities."

John D. Baird's "Two Poets of the 1780s: Burns and Cowper," as the author admits, is a comparison which has been made before. Drawing from Burns's letters, Baird points out the poet's admiration for Cowper, and particularly for *The Task*. Baird goes on to point out how Cowper foreshadows the Burns of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" in which poem the author states "Burns appears most clearly as the spokesman of his age. It embodies one of the central articles of faith of that time, that true virtue is manifested in the life of the husbandman; the rural *paterfamilias* stands forth as the pattern of moral excellence." It is exactly that which, in my opinion, makes the "Cotter" second-rate Burns.

James Kinsley's "The Music of the Heart" was first given as a public lecture in 1963 and published in 1964. As with Crawford, it is a pity that this recognized authority on Robert Burns did not give us something new.

David Daiches' essay "Robert Burns and Jacobite Song" is a good piece on a subject that Burns held dear--the cause of the Stuarts. His connection with the cause was close; his father was said to have left Kincardineshire in 1748 as a result of his Jacobite sympathies, as Daiches points out, citing Burns's own autobiographical letter to Dr. John Moore of 1787, and the poet himself will surely have met people who were active in the '45 when he travelled in the Highlands, if not elsewhere. As time went on he became more aware of the "central

significance of the Jacobite movement in Scottish folk-song" as Daiches puts it. Anyone familiar with James Hogg's *Jacobite Relics of Scotland* (1819-21) will be aware of the mass of material there was still around a third of a century after Burns had tapped the supply for the two collections he contributed to--Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* and Thomson's *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs*. Daiches traces the history of the poet's contributions to these two works, pointing out that in his later years his interest in the ideals of the French Revolution (although repudiating France when that country deviated from these ideals) "added a passionate political egalitarianism to his feelings of sympathy for the Stuart kings and their absolutist claims."

Cedric Thorpe Davie adds a chapter complementary to Daiches with "Robert Burns, Writer of Songs" in which he considers Burns's work from a musical point of view. He rightly states that the "real nature of Burns's songs remains widely misunderstood." A good bit of the problem stems from the enormous number of editions of Burns which include the songs but without the music--even such standard editions as those edited by William Scott Douglas and Henley and Henderson publish songs as though they were poems. In this respect Kinsley's edition of 1968 was the first "complete" edition to publish every song with its music. Davie lists five "broad truths" about the songs: 1) about one fifth of Burns's songs "consist of fine words beautifully matched to worthy melodies"; 2) songs in Johnson are "generally superiour to those in Thomson"; 3) songs "written in the vernacular are in general superiour to those entirely in English"; 4) "everyone concerned, *Burns included*, seems to have accepted that it might be proper to publish a song to a tune other than that which was originally in the poet's mind"; and 5) "Burns's avowed indifference to the more sophisticated aspects of the art of music blinded him to certain facts concerning the form in which his songs were published." Davie rightly comes down hard on Thomson for his "gratuitous tinkering" with the poet's songs, pointing out that of the 34 songs common to Johnson and Thomson "very few of the verses or melodies are identical in the two publications." Davie's is an important article which puts the complex relationship between words and music in the two collections to which Burns contributed in terms understood by the layman.

Finally the first contribution to the collection "Robert Burns: A Self-Portrait" was written by the author of this review, drawing upon the letters to paint the portrait.

With Fitzhugh's biography having gone through reprinting it hardly seemed necessary for another biography. Hugh Douglas

can claim in his *Robert Burns--A Life* (Robert Hale, 1976) that he was born the son of a tenant farmer a few miles from Ayr, but this hardly seems a good claim to understand the poet now any more than most tenant farmers of Burns's day did. The work flows with the easy rhythm of journalism, mixing fact with re-creation in a certainly not unpleasant way. He has steeped himself in the Burns lore, accepting it equally with demonstrable fact. To the casual reader who wants to know something more about Scotia's Bard this will not appear as a weakness in the book; to the scholar it will appear as at most a petty annoyance. The immense body of myth surrounding Burns is, after all, the most eloquent testimony to the grip he holds on the popular imagination; myth-making only occurs when the subject is thought to be of major importance. We see this at work when Douglas introduces us to Jean Armour by retelling the story of Burns's collie which came to him at a dance and of "the poet, sending it away, [commenting] that he wished he could find a lass who would love him as well as his dog did." This story goes at least as far back as Robert Chambers, and while there can be no harm in recounting it, it must not be considered solid material.

There are more serious annoyances in the book however, annoyances which smack of a somewhat hasty perusal of the material available. For example, Douglas states that there are only three songs in the Kilmarnock edition of the poems: there are in fact four, three having the title "Song" in the table of contents, but another whose full title in that volume is: "The Farewell. To the Brethren of St. James's Lodge, Tarbolton. *Tune, Goodnight and joy be wi' you a'*" which song Burns retained in his Edinburgh volume and also had Johnson place as the last song in his *Scots Musical Museum*.

In assessing the poems in the Kilmarnock edition (1786) Douglas rightly picks out "The Holy Fair" as one of the greatest of the poems in the volume. He is also on the mark in dismissing "To a Mountain Daisy" while finding "To a Mouse" to be "much more effective" but reserving his highest praise for "To a Louse" which "shows Burns at his best" in these three similar poems.

Douglas does not pay much attention to the publication of Burns's second volume of poetry with William Creech in 1787--he altogether ignores that favorite of Burns dinners "To a Haggis," surely one of the best-known in the Burns canon. He also, and probably rightly, pays little heed to the Agnes M'Lehose affair, although later in the book he does mention, but only mention, one of the greatest of all of Burns's love songs, "Ae fond kiss," which resulted from the affair. This unequal treatment of certain of the poet's greatest works coupled with a substantial analysis of others leaves the

reader who knows his Burns with a feeling of unevenness in the book. "Tam O' Shanter" comes in for several pages by Douglas who feels that it is Burns's finest poem. One can dispute, however, the author's claim that the passage in "Tam O' Shanter" which begins "But pleasures are like poppies spread" are lines which have "a resounding Scottishness when spoken by a Scottish tongue." Here Douglas has mistaken a Scottish accent with the use of genuinely Scottish words--any poem can be read with a Scottish accent, but this does not make it a Scottish poem.

For the scholar Douglas's treatment of Burns the writer of songs and his editors Johnson and Thomson may seem a bit on the thin side, but this book is for the general reading public, not the scholar. The final chapter, "Immortal Mortal," which treats of the post-Burns period offers a very clear and balanced account of the two immediate articles on Burns, by Maria Riddell and George Thomson, the first an admirable assessment of a man who had acted despicably towards the writer of it, the second an unworthy piece of journalism. This was followed in 1797 by Heron's self-serving 56-page *Memoir*. And in the summing-up Douglas is correct when he writes:

Today we salute Burns...as the man who helped Scotland preserve her language and her traditions...Burns says clearly what every Scot feels; he says it beautifully and with a dash of that sentimentality to which the nation is so partial....Perhaps this ability to put on paper the feelings of all men, to remind them of their best qualities and of the importance of the brotherhood of man is the reason why the Burns cult remains so strong from generation to generation....What better gift could any man give to his country, and how many nations will go on year by year expressing their gratitude?

In 1981 Hugh Douglas published *Johnnie Walker's Burns Supper Companion* (Alloway Publishing), a "how to" book for people organizing a Burns dinner with information on just about everything from choosing a speaker to a list of suppliers of essentials from fresh and canned haggis to oatcakes and kilts; the titlepage itself suggests the libation. This small book would not require notice were it not that I suspect that it is a first: is there any other literary figure for whom such a book has been written? The appropriate companion piece to this guide is Hugh MacDiarmid's classic "The Last Great Burns Discovery" of 1934.

A second collection of essays by various hands was edited

by R.D.S. Jack and Andrew Noble, *The Art of Robert Burns* (Vision and Barnes & Noble, 1982). It consists of nine essays with an introduction by the editors in which they give as their reason for another volume of essays the fact "that the distinct literary modes and poetic forms employed by him [Burns] should receive equally distinct and fresh treatment." None of those contributing to this collection is represented in Low's.

Pride of place goes to an essay by Iain Crichton Smith "The Lyric of Robert Burns." As a respected poet and novelist, Smith brings the creative artist's perspective to the consideration of Burns. His opening paragraph may raise some hackles; he begins:

I must say that I have never considered Burns a great poet in the same sense as I think of Dante as a great poet. I believe that Burns wrote one indisputably great poem, that is, 'Holy Willie's Prayer', and I consider this a great poem because it is artistically articulated, and because it expresses perfectly the hypocrite immersed in his own accepted way of life. As for the rest of Burns's work I do not think that it reached the pitch of artistic perfection that this particular poem reaches.

Fair enough! But if this level of greatness is required our school anthologies would be pretty slim volumes, and our theaters would have a mighty small repertoire. He is right, of course, to state that the kailyard "is implicit" in "The Cotter's Saturday Night" and that this poem "is a perfect example of much that is wrong with a certain kind of Scottish poetry." Burns, I suspect, was here producing the kind of poem he thought was expected of him, and its immense popularity for over a century is proof that he read the public demand accurately. But I don't believe that he thought it was one of his best efforts; Burns liked to send copies of poems he was proud of to friends, and there are three MSS. of "The Cotter" but six of "Tam O' Shanter."

After baiting the reader with more derogatory remarks, Smith admits that Burns cannot "be as easily dismissed as this" and gets down to his essay. Burns's great lyrics, Smith tells us, flow from a "naïve self-confidence" (quoting parts of "Ae Fond Kiss"). He points out how other poems, although they could not be written today, are "perfect of their kind, and their perfection, poised precariously between sentiment and universal truth, tells us that nothing more can be added." The poet in Smith knows that this perfection is a form of

greatness too.

John C. Weston sees "Robert Burns's Satire" as "an instrument of self-therapy, revenge, and protection." The only other Scottish poet to rival Burns in this respect, Weston says, is Hugh MacDiarmid.

Robert P. Wells sets himself an uphill task in the next essay in this collection "Burns and Narrative." He admits at the outset that "No one...would place Burns among the narrative poets" so what follows is an examination of some of Burns's poems "in terms of narrative kind and structure." Wells's problem is that only one of Burns's poems really lends itself to this discussion, because, as he admits, it is the poet's one genuinely narrative piece--"Tam O' Shanter." Other poems are examined for some of the qualities of narrative poems ("Holy Willie," "Death and Doctor Hornbook," "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "The Holy Fair") but the reader does not feel that they fit the mould comfortably, they have to be hammered into it. I feel that this essay was of a too-specialized nature for a book such as this which is for the more general reader.

Catarina Ericson-Roos's essay is entitled "The Young Lassies: Love, Music and Poetry." In it she shows how well Burns uses the tension of the tunes he employs to emphasize the tension of his lyrics. Following Gavin Greig, the author distinguishes between "introspective love-songs, and biographic, narrative ones." Among the former she discusses "Tam Glen," "O, for ane and Twenty Tam," "What can a Young Lassie," and "Wha is that at my Bower Door?"; the latter include "My Harry was a Gallant Gay," "Young Jockey was the Blythest Lad," "For the Sake o' Somebody," and "Ay Waukin O." Ericson-Roos concludes that the varied responses of the women (sometimes just girls, as in "I'm o'er Young to Marry Yet") to their situations "would not be as palpable without the tunes....The wedding of text and tune in these songs is perfect, and through this medium Burns has created a type of woman whose character, thoughts and emotions are universal and modern."

The co-editor R.D.S. Jack follows with "Burns and Bawdy," a topic which has bedevilled scholars and editors of Burns since James Currie falsified a letter which Burns wrote in order to imply that he had had but small interest in the subject. Jack sensibly dismisses those who, according to a letter he quotes, "do not deserve to be called countrymen of him" [Burns] if they "connect the name of Scotia's bard with such a work" [as *The Merry Muses*] with the straightforward "Let us, therefore, accept the bawdy element within the songs and verse of Burns." There will always be those who cannot handle the thought that a hero, be he George Washington or Robert Burns, possessed all the feelings common to humankind: saints can't

be people! The late De Lancey Ferguson told me that when he published his edition of Burns's Letters in 1931 a member of the church looked into whether he could sue Ferguson for having published one of the letters Burns wrote which said more than the reverend wanted to see about the poet.

But people will not be put off by types like this. From their publication in 1799 (not 1800 as Jack says) *The Merry Muses* poems--several of them old in Burns's day and merely collected or refurbished by the poet--were in demand: Walter Scott owned a copy of *The Fornicator's Court* (1823). And there seem to be an endless number of editions of the so-called 1827 *Merry Muses* probably first published in 1872. The collection, as Jack points out, is a very mixed bag; like Burns's non-bawdy love poetry it comes in three forms: good, bad and indifferent. The question, though, is what is Burns's and what only collected by him. Jack, though admitting that there is no way to be certain in many cases, does commit himself on "Green Grow the Rashes O" which exists in no less than four versions, three of them bawdy. He writes that Burns "while working as a folk song collector...expurgated Scottish bawdry for one audience in various ways but enlarged upon it (again in various ways) for other more private groups or for individuals." No one who has studied Burns can quarrel with this claim.

G. Scott Wilson's "Robert Burns: The Image and the Verse-Epistles" no doubt draws upon his Ph.D. dissertation on the verse epistles which he wrote under Donald Low to examine how Burns used both verse and prose to create an image of himself for his audience. Given that most of the verse was written before 1786 and published in the Kilmarnock volume we would expect that the referents are locally based. On the other hand when he wrote his famous autobiographical letter to Dr. John Moore in August 1787 Burns had been the toast of Edinburgh for several months and the enlarged Edinburgh edition of his poems had been published for over three months. Is it any wonder then that he saw himself quite differently? Moore was a well-connected successful author and Burns was out to impress him. One of the ways to achieve this was to show the good doctor how far he, Burns, had come from so unpropitious a start. In an age when people bought editions of letters in order to study them, and when writing letters themselves strove to make them as near as possible to the examples in the collections they had studied, it would be expected of Burns by his audience, either public or private, that he would follow the conventions set forth. (Burns was even at some pains to make his endings cameos of the model.) While Wilson has written an interesting enough essay, most of what he says is self-evident to the reader.

K.G. Simpson makes the point (quoting Thomas Crawford) without belaboring it in "The Impulse of Wit: Sterne and Burns's Letters" about how "one should suit one's style to the needs and personality of one's correspondents." From there Simpson traces early and sustained influences Sterne had on Burns, even to the extent of "a Shandyeanean blank space" in one of his letters. An example of how a common enough event, the wounding of a hare, which gave rise to his poem "On Seeing a Wounded Hare limp by me, which a Fellow had just shot at," is to be seen in the quite different prose accounts of the incident when Burns recounted it to his correspondents. Burns's correspondence with Clarinda allowed the poet full sway to the romantic ideas he had found in works of literature--*Werther* and *The Man of Feeling* were probably never far from his mind as he wrote those stylized "hothouse" letters as Ferguson called them. Much of what Burns wrote, Simpson argues convincingly, was inspired by his reading of Sterne.

The second co-editor of this collection, Andrew Noble, has contributed "Burns, Blake and Romantic Revolt." He is at some pains to refute Hugh MacDiarmid's insistence upon distorting literature (Burns) "by subjecting it to a perverted national idealism" and also to call to task English critics such as Robert Graves who also distorts it (Blake) "by projecting on it...[a] kind of social cynicism." Burns, like Hogg, had "a dazzling capacity to astonishingly literate parody." The difference between Burns and Blake, both revolutionaries, was that Blake "wished to heighten the claims of the spirit...Burns mainly wished to undermine Calvinism with therapeutic laughter." Noble argues his point well.

Finally Alan Bold adds to his dizzying output with "Robert Burns: Superscot." Bold is intent on cutting Burns down to size: James Barke's fictional series *Immortal Memory*, John Cairney's "beautifully realized, witty and elegant reconstruction of the poet's life," these are part of the creation of the Superscot in which Burns "demonstrated the internal psychological schism more than most." (Here, of course, there is the de rigueur reference to *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as though --pace R.D. Laing--only Scotsmen can experience the divided self.) And so we have presented to us the Jekyll half of Burns--tender lover, loyal friend, prudent socializer, author of uplifting love songs; and we have the Hyde half--village drunk, randy fornicator, composer of obscene verse. Perhaps it is an injustice to Bold (though none is intended), but when writers want to "put a poet in perspective" I think back on a splendid article Sydney Goodsir Smith wrote for an early issue of *SSL* in which he traced the "aim...to deny the separate identity of the Scottish nation" and its literature with it for over two centuries. From James Beattie in 1771 and Henry

Mackenzie in 1776 till the time of Smith's essay writers had been prophesying the death of the vernacular--Smith's comment: "A long time a-dying, indeed!"

Burns, and the vernacular in which he wrote his best poems, is alive and healthy today. What matter that most people misquote him or sing his songs at drunken parties? There is room for all of us, just as the apprentice who paid his penny to see *Macbeth* when it was first playing at the Globe did not understand the play as did the Oxford student down to London to see it. Each brought to it what he had, and that was surely all we should ask.

Turning now to some minor works about Burns we can begin with Robert D. Thornton's *William Maxwell to Robert Burns* (John Donald, 1979) the most scholarly of these lesser works. I do not by this term mean to denigrate Thornton's book--it is the only one about Dr. Maxwell, who was certainly an intimate of the poet's during the last years of his life. Thornton has devoted a good deal of his scholarly attention to those who surrounded Burns rather than to Burns himself, although he did edit *The Tuneful Flame: Songs of Robert Burns as He Sang Them* in 1957, but he is probably better known for his biography *James Currie: The Entire Stranger and Robert Burns* (1963). This was a controversial book because Thornton, in seeking to rehabilitate Currie from the charges against him that as the first editor of Burns he used the poet as an example to ride his own hobby-horse of temperance and sexual abstinence outside marriage, had to take the side of Currie against Burns.

William Maxwell (1760-1834) was educated at the Jesuit College at Dinant and studied medicine in Paris. As a member of the National Guard he was present at the execution of Louis XVI and "is reported to have dipped his handkerchief in the king's blood." Thornton's attempt to make his point that Maxwell was very important to Burns begins in the Introduction. Those who know the poet's correspondence will recall that just a few days before he died Burns wrote to his friend Alexander Cunningham "M^{rs} Burns threatens in a week or two, to add one more to my Paternal charge, which, if of the right gender, I intend shall be introduced to the world by the respectable designation of Alex^r Cunningham Burns.--" A son was born on the day of Burns's funeral, delivered by Dr. Maxwell, and was christened Maxwell Burns. Thornton postulates on this change:

Did Jean defy her husband's last wishes? Was she ignorant of those wishes? Or, reasonable, had Burns and Jean, in those few days between his return to Dumfries and his death, decided that there was a man whom they should honor before Cunningham, to whom

they both owed a debt of gratitude far beyond any they might owe Cunningham? That man was Robert's intimate. That man was Robert's and Jean's personal physician, who watched the father to death on Thursday and then watched the mother to her delivery on the burial Monday.

This sets the tone for the book--the claim that William Maxwell was a major influence in the life of the poet. I cannot endorse this claim. It seems unlikely that Jean was privy to many of the letters her husband wrote; from what one can ascertain letters were considered to be very personal things in the eighteenth century, probably more so than today, and Burns probably did not show many of those he wrote or received to his wife.

We are at chapter six ("Poet") before we get a close look at Burns, and it is the next chapter ("Doctor to Poet") before we get the two men together--less than forty pages and only half of them deal with Burns alive. This seems rather scant fare for a book which bears the title Thornton has given this one. I have no quarrel with a biography of William Maxwell as a person of real talent who, as a Roman Catholic, got most of his education abroad, and who became, like Wordsworth and many others, a supporter of the French Revolution and of republicanism--but Maxwell remains one of many. His connection with Burns makes an interesting chapter in the life of both men, but it is only a chapter.

David Daiches' *Robert Burns and his World* (Thames and Hudson, 1971) is one of a series (he also wrote one on Scott) which, without disparagement, falls into the "coffee table" category: in its category it is a finely produced book with illustrations on almost every page. The text reads smoothly and would present no difficulty for anyone even if he had never read a word by Burns and had not the vaguest idea of the Scottish dialect--the few quoted poems have glosses where needed. Obviously not a book for a student of Scottish literature, it would be ideal for anyone who was about to take a tour of the Burns country, or for someone who would like to do so but has to settle for a book.

Dietrich Strauss has published the most important foreign book on Burns during the period under review. After Hans Hecht's *Robert Burns: Leben und Werken des schottischen Volksdichters* (1919; translated in 1936 as *Robert Burns: The Man and his Work*) the flood of short monographs by German scholars came pretty well to an end. Along with Auguste Angellier and James C. Dick, Hecht led the renaissance in Burns studies which stripped away the legend and concentrated on the texts.

Now we have Strauss' *Die erotische Dichtung von Robert Burns* (Peter Lang, 1981) following in the mainstream of Burns studies. Not all the "erotic" poetry as Strauss interprets the word are those which were banished from the poet's "official" work; in fact Strauss speaks of erotic works which were published in the poet's lifetime, and of those which were not--his "unofficial" poetry, the most explicit of which is to be found in *The Merry Muses of Caledonia; A Collection of Favourite Scots Songs, Ancient and Modern; Selected for Use of the Crochallan Fencibles*, to give the work its fulsome title.

But as R.D.S. Jack in his essay "Burns and Bawdy," mentioned elsewhere, found it difficult to determine what *Merry Muses* titles were by Burns, so Strauss found it difficult to determine where the line was to be drawn between "official" and "unofficial" poetry. In the last hundred years, Strauss correctly points out, the truly bawdy poetry has gone from being passed over in polite silence to open discussion of its merits. I think that he is a bit too charitable when he includes a critic like Duncan McNaught among those who dealt openly with the subject. McNaught, under the pseudonym of "Vindex" (itself revealing) did edit an edition of *The Merry Muses* in 1911, but the subtitle set the tone of the edition: *A Vindication of Robert Burns...* and the thrust of the preface, called "Introduction and Corrective," is to exonerate Burns from any "connection with the above publication." At that time most of Burns's bawdy letters were not in print; there was the one to Robert Ainslie of March 3, 1788, which had appeared in all the editions of the so-called 1827 edition of *The Merry Muses*, however, and this one had to be taken into account. It is not generally known, but McNaught had the letter set for the edition of 1911, but decided to suppress it at the last moment.

Strauss feels that the repressiveness of the Calvinist church of the time did much to degrade and narrow the concept of womanhood. While this may be argued, it can be pointed out that while similarly repressive churches have existed elsewhere (Puritanism, Jansenism) they have not necessarily had the effects Strauss detects in the Scotland of Burns.

A major part of this book is the author's careful consideration of earlier editors of Burns. He deals with G. Legman's important study of the Cunningham MS. and then with James Currie. As I have already said, Currie had more new material available to him than any editor since, and we do not know how much of it he silently destroyed. Strauss sees Currie's inclusion of the famous letter to John M'Murdo of December 1793 concerning the poet's collection of bawdy songs as a deliberate attempt on the part of Currie to disparage Burns--he did this by innuendo in the *Life*. Here I disagree with Strauss.

I have argued before that it is quite possible that Currie heard of the publication of *The Merry Muses* (in 1799) and put the sentence "A very few of them are my own" in to disarm those who might also know of this damning book; it is possible that Currie thought such information would harm the sale of his edition, all of the proceeds of which were to go to Burns's widow and children. Certainly Currie was a prude, as anyone who has compared Currie's edited texts with what Burns wrote knows, but in this instance I am willing to give the prim temperance advocate the benefit of the doubt.

Strauss notes a "vigorous sexual undertone" in many of Burns's "official" poems and songs; here, of course, Burns is following a well-established eighteenth-century pattern going back to D'Urfey, Watson's *Choice Collection* and Ramsay; the double entendre was alive and well until recent permissiveness made it unnecessary--probably thereby killing off a valid art form. There is a large body of verse, and especially of song, which lends itself to a second, bawdy, version by the simple substitution of a word here and there; almost any stanza which has a rhyme which can be substituted with an "unofficial" word with the same rhyme will end up that way--if it wasn't that way in the first place. Although Strauss has not told us anything new, his thorough working through of the entire corpus of Burns's poetry and songs is an important contribution to scholarship.

Strauss also underlines the ease with which Burns switches from erotic to non-erotic poetry, from male to female, from young to old. These are the very traits which make of Burns the greatest song writer in Scots or English; here Strauss confines himself mainly, as was his stated intention, to a consideration of the words. If one takes into consideration the artistry with which Burns married tunes to those words Burns's creations become little short of miraculous.

In looking into why Burns's erotic poems and songs "were happier with rustic settings" Strauss feels that the poet's rural youth is only part of the answer; it is also to be found in "other conditions of socio-literary relevance...[in part because] the erotic folk song was never eradicated among the farming population..." In writing songs Burns was never far from that folk tradition.

Strauss' book has a useful English summary of fourteen pages, but it is to be hoped that it will before long be translated.

In 1975 Toshio Namba, who has already been mentioned in connection with his translation of a selection of Burns's poetry, published *A Study of Robert Burns's Poetry* which, I am certain, will be a welcome introduction to a poet whose