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Book Reviews

Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle. *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle.* Eds. Charles Richard Saunders and Kenneth J. Fielding. Vols. 10-12. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 1985.

Here in three volumes which severally cover the years 1838 to 1840 are over five hundred more of the Carlyles' letters, bound handsomely in the Duke-Edinburgh Edition and edited with the same high standards as in the earlier volumes. A few changes have been made in the interests of efficiency: arabic numerals are used instead of roman, some commas are omitted, and the date and place of a postmark are as a rule given only when it provides needed clues to the writing or transit of the letter. To the General Index has been added an Index of Correspondents which lists all the persons to whom the Carlyles wrote, and gives a first page reference for each of the letters written to those persons—so that the reader can see, for example, that during these three years 66 letters were written to his mother (more than to anyone else), 58 to his brother John, 29 to Alick; 32 to Forster, 20 each to Emerson and John Sterling, 19 to

Richard Monckton Milnes, and only 9 to Mill. These figures are significant, but there is evidence scattered throughout these volumes and in the footnotes that many more letters were written than have survived. The Carlyle family, and Victorians generally, saved letters, for which we cannot be too thankful; but inevitable attrition warps the figures and distorts the record. Surely Jane wrote more than two letters to her mother, wrote more letters to others too even though 'franks' were not so available to her for postage as they were for Carlyle. Of the letters we have here, nearly 200, or two-fifths of all, were written to members of the Carlyle family, the rest to the increasingly wide circle of their friends, their social and business acquaintances. Two hundred and fifteen are here published for the first time.

The record they give us is somewhat unusual. Since the publication of *The French Revolution* and the delivery of his Lectures on German Literature in May, 1837, Carlyle had gained a considerable fame in London, but he and Jane were still poor and faced an uncertain future. From the Lectures he had realized £120; from *The French Revolution*, though it was selling well, he had gained nothing, nor would until August when Emerson sent him £50 as first earnings from the American edition. Partly owing to his burgeoning American fame, aided and abetted by Emerson's Boston editions of *Sartor Resartus* (1836) and the *Miscellanies* (1838), London publishers were at last persuaded to publish them too, though tardily. In March 1838 he explained to John that since "there is as to money no other resource very visible for me here," (10:43) he meant to give a second course of lectures in May, twelve of them, "On the History of Literature." These proved more popular than his German Lectures, caused him less distress (he did not read them but spoke impromptu from notes), and yielded about £260 (10:110). He told his Mother that now they were "no longer so terribly poor as we used to be;" (10:225), but he nevertheless continued to feel insecure, and decided, as he wrote Emerson in April 1839, that he would give a third course of lectures, on "Revolutions of Modern Europe":

> I almost regret that I had undertaken the thing this year at all: for I am no longer driven by Poverty as heretofore, nay I am richer than I have been for ten years; and have a

> kind of prospect, for the first time in a great while, of being allowed to subsist in this world for the future . . . However, I thought it right to keep this Lecture business open, come what might . . . it is not agony, and wretched trembling to the marrow of the bone, as it was the last two times (11:81).

But the next year his fourth and final course of lectures, on Heroes, caused him nearly the same agony and trembling. He still spoke them, but this time from fuller notes which he planned later to work into a book:

> I have serious thoughts of writing them down; then flaming about, over both hemispheres with them . . . to earn as much as will buy the smallest peculium of annuity whereon to retire into some hut by the sea-shore,—and there lie quiet until my hour come! (12:89)

His complaints were work- and health-related, oftenest expressed in his letters to John: "I pass my days under the abominablest pressure of physical misery . . . . my life is black and hateful to me, spent as I am forced to spend it here" (12:89). But to his mother as always he put up a brave front: "If my *liver and stomach* would but stand true, I should have every reason to be happy; but what then? We know them of old; they will not stand true; we must just try to be content *without* them" (11:11).

Looking at the letters written during these three years, we can see them as a unit, as a middle-stage, in Carlyle's career. Whether it is by design of the Editors, or happened of itself, each of the preceding groups of published volumes also bore a unity. We saw first (Vols. 1-4) the young struggling Carlyle "trying with his 'Free Will' and Dyspepsia to conquer Necessity by becoming a writer," whose temper was next "deliberate valour" (Vols. 5-7) as he and Jane lived their six years at Craigenputtoch and descended upon London; then their "desperate hope" for survival in London and, after the burning of *The French Revolution* MS., his "sacred defiance" (Vols. 8-9). The task of rewriting the burned part and completing the whole made him draw on his deepest resources of energy and control, and left him for the next several years in a state of emotional let-down. Also, after *The French Revolution*—what should he write next?

The one thing needful was a suitable, doable subject for his next major work. To his sister Jean he wrote "of the want of work; of the inability to work. All writing has grown a disgusting matter to me. I must even wait till I rally again!" (10:13). Through 1838 he waited, but not idly. There were the May Lectures to prepare for and deliver, and recover from. He sat for Samuel Laurence's portrait. Callers came in increasing numbers, and invitations to Soirées, which he hated but where he met many of the eminent men and women of the day; he watched Victoria's Coronation with Scottish disdain, and later described seeing "poor little Queen Victory" riding through Green Park. He began to muster support for the creation of what would eventually become the London Library. With his seeing eyes he watched the spread of hunger and poverty among the working classes and thought thoughts which would go into "Chartism." In August, leaving Jane (by her wish) in Chelsea, he went for a six-week period of rest and recuperation to Scotland, after which he could write to Emerson that "I do feel sometimes as if another Book were growing in me," (10:26) although he later confessed, "I am yet writing nothing; feel forsaken, sad, sick,—not unhappy" (10:230). "A book I suppose will grow in me," he told Sterling, "if I live some years. But as yet it lies swimming over Infinitude; sunk beyond sounding in Chaos and Night" (10:233).

His subject, of course, is "Oliver Cromwell and the *Covenant* time in England and Scotland" (11:14). Though his third Lecture series loomed before him he began reading through the many volumes about Cromwell that friends had sent him from Cambridge, searching for a structure or a narrative line that would make the subject doable. We remember that he had had trouble with this subject before, in 1822, when he planned "a kind of Essay on the Civil War and the Commonwealth of England" featuring "Cromwell, Laud, Geo: Fox, Milton, Hyde &c the most distinguished of the actors in this great scene" (2:94). In 1826 he thought "What a fine thing a *Life of Cromwell*, like the *Vie de Charles XII* would be!" (2NBs, 93), but now, in 1839, he finds "There are but two very remarkable men in the Period visible as yet: Cromwell and Montrose," and the whole subject is "far inferior in interest to my French Subject . . . . with an internal fire and significance indeed, but externally wrapt in buckram and lead" (11:15-16). He had abandoned the project

then, and he came close to doing so now, though he perseveringly ploughed through those volumes of buckram and lead. By November 1840 he had made little progress and was blaming himself as well as the times:

> My reading goes on, my stupidity seems to increase with it. More and more I get to see that no *History* in the strict sense *can* be made of *that* unspeakable puddle of a time, all covered up with things entirely obsolete for us—a Golgotha of Dead Dogs! But some kind of *Book* can be made? That is the question, that we are still looking to (12:326).

It was to take five more years for him to shape *Cromwell*, and then only after he had taken time off to produce *Heroes* (1841) and *Past and Present* (1843). The somewhat surprising fact is that during the three years of these letters, except possibly for "Chartism," he published no major work. It was an "interregnum that I am in" (11:81). He tried "to keep myself *quiet*; not to get into a fret and a *fuff*" (10:37), tried to maintain a mood of "harmonious composure," which during his Lectures had to be one of forced composure" (10:43, 54). However, he did feel that something was developing within him, deep in what he would certainly call his unconscious. He mentioned it first to himself in a Journal entry of 3 December 1838 as something "that cannot yet articulate or spell itself; which it were like laying bare the *roots* of a thing in growth to speak of. A new epoch (for good or for great evil!) is evolving itself in me . . ." (10:230, n. 7). It is a gloomy entry belying the more sanguine mood of his letters. The following April he wrote John, "I have arrived at the turning of a new leaf . . . and do purpose by Heaven's blessing, to take my breath a moment there before venturing farther" (11:45). And to Emerson: "I wait in silence for the new chapter,—feeling truly that we are at the end of one period here. I count it *two* in my autobiography: we shall see what the *third* is" (11:81).

The marked difference between his Journal entries, many of which the Editors have supplied for us in the footnotes, and the Letters, reminds us of the special nature of even so full and diverse an epistolary record as this. Where he pours his gloomiest, innermost thoughts and feelings into the Journal, to exorcise them as it were, resorts to his Journal by the day, or week, for needed "solitude and self-converse" (10:230), he writes

his letters in the quotidian world of action, modulating his expressive manner according to the character or position of his correspondent. We have seen this in his earlier letters. It is not deceptive or manipulative but only such adjustment of speech as he or anyone might make in conversing with persons of differing character or degrees of acquaintance. Thus to the numerous members of his family he still writes with the authority of an eldest son; he is especially anxious after his mother's health, encourages Alick in his farming, advises Jean to take her little ailing child sea-bathing "when a blink of good weather comes" (12:189), and writes with unflagging support and affection to his brother John, of whose faults he is quite as well aware as Jane is but loves unreservedly. We have seen before his strong need to maintain close contact with his family, and with Scotland. This need has not diminished with his move to London and will not diminish with his growing fame and success. Distance perhaps, has made the heart grow fonder—and lonelier. In many a Journal entry he cries for companionship: "I had counted on the true Brother [John] to commune with, a little; to break the utter solitude of heart in which I painfully live here. Lonelier probably is no man" (10:97, n. 13). This would seem to exclude Jane, but does not. In their struggle to survive in London he alone is responsible. Without preferment or profession or paid sinecure he can earn money only by his pen.

Both the Journal (to judge from the numerous passages quoted from it in the footnotes) and these letters tell us how strong was his attachment to the Scotland in which he grew up. It was a constant source of strength to him in London. He returned to it for solace in his thoughts; he returned to it for rest after hard labor. He had never felt at home in London. In 1834 it had been exciting with its new sights, new friends and opportunities. Jane continued to like it. But for Carlyle it had by now lost most of its charm; it is "this mad Babylon:" "there is little or nothing I could not leave in it tomorrow morning with dry eyes; much that I should rejoice to leave: its soot, for instance, its dust and *glar*, its tumult quackery, dupery and loud inanity" (10:20-21). London heat, he said, destroyed him. He sometimes thought of actually leaving for good. Considering the matter practically, however, and in deference to Jane, he admits that London is the best place for them, the place where he can and must do his life's work.

In the absence of any major work, his letter-writing partly satisfied his habitual need to write. He had to be writing something or be idle. "The end of man is an action, not a thought," he had recorded in his Notebook (2NBs, 81), and for him writing was as much action as ploughing was for the farmer. In August 1839 he said what he had said several times before: "There seems no use in *living* for me, if it be not writing, or preparing to write." So we have these wonderful long news-packed letters to his family, friends, and acquaintances, which he seems reluctant to end, often adding a postscript or two before mailing. Beginning a letter to Alick he says "I must send you a short line rather than none at all . . . in the heat and press of Lecturing and tumult, I can afford no writing . . . " (10:75), then writes nearly 2000 words. Jane often added her postscripts too, which made them longer.

As in the earlier volumes, Jane's letters are fewer than Carlyle's—only 45 have survived from these three years, and only four of them to Carlyle. Although we assume she wrote more than these she was never the steady, almost compulsive, letter-writer that he was. Moreover, these are years when she seems to have been averse to correspondence generally; "since I became so sick and dispirited," she wrote John Sterling in February 1837, "I have contracted a horror of letter-writing almost equal to the hydrophobea horror for cold water," (l:xviii) and although her health and spirits improved during the next several years her most prolific years came later (as also for Carlyle) in 1841-1845, when she had acquired many more friends to write to and hear from. Her four letters to Carlyle were written during the rare times when they were apart. It does seem true, as has been observed, that she is happier when they are apart. His letters to her are more affectionate; he entreats her to bear with him, they will succeed together despite all difficulties, though he finishes (in a previously unpublished letter) "God ever bless thee my own ill-tempered Dear!" (10:145). In her four letters to him love and affection are clearly discernible through her playful, sometimes caustic, wit. Though she seems relieved to be alone in Chelsea she misses him. His letters begin "My Dear Goody" or Dearest" or "My own Jeannie"; hers begin with "Dear husband of me," or "Dear Ill" (opposite of 'Goody') or "Thou precious Cheep" (opposite of 'Dear'), and finish with "so god bless you Dear and put home-tendencies into your head and feet" (10:184). But

when he returns she is often left lonely while he works long hours in his study or is invited out, without her, to a soirée. In 1838 they have been married twelve years, lived in London four; they will remain childless. She is left to her own devices to pass the time, reading French novels, managing the house which means managing their little Scottish maid Helen Mitchell, and seeking the company of newly-acquired friends. Hensleigh and Frances Wedgwood had earlier been drawn to Carlyle, and Jane developed a close friendship with Fanny. Hensleigh's first cousin, and brother of Charles, Erasmus Darwin, also became a valued friend. Leigh Hunt still called, until he moved from Chelsea, and after one visit wrote his "Jenny Kissed Me." John Forster, seeing her plight, called frequently, and on occasion took her to the theatre. Mill's friendship was mainly for Carlyle, as was John Sterling's—though to him she wrote one of her wittiest letters attempting to allay his displeasure with her for inadvertently revealing the subject of a long poem he was then writing.

> Suppose now that, before exploding this shower of crackers on my devoted head, you had taken a moment's breath to enquire into the *merits of the case*, who knows but you might have saved your crackers for some future emergency, and I might have saved my head? (12:275)

Carlyle's growing popularity put further strains on their marriage, but during these years she could bear it and was proud of his growing success, attending his Lectures even when she was sick. In October 1840, when Carlyle's efforts to find a publisher for the manuscript of his Heroes Lectures had failed, she took on the task herself ("She can do it better, she thinks,") calling on Fraser to exact from him "in the modest language of innocence and truth" the sum of £150, and, when his "Bookseller Arithmetic" defeated her, pursued the matter further by enlisting the aid of an influential friend, Anna Brownell Jameson (10:277). Fraser would not be persuaded until the following April. In a joint letter to Carlyle's sister Jean she described him while lecturing as "a surprisingly beautiful man," but implied her own discontent by warning Jean not to "encourage that little morsel of yours to follow the trade of being a Genius" (12:72-3).

There is evidence enough in these letters that Carlyle orders

his life not for Jane's comfort but for his own personal needs as a writer. They both know he must keep at his writing if they are to survive. If this is hard on Jane, as it is, she finds it more bearable at this time than she will in later years. Their nerves and tempers frequently clash. Her health is at best uncertain; she catches flu, suffers often from coughs, headaches, or sleeplessness. Carlyle complains about his health, too, which he continues to doctor with senna, castor oil, and other nostrums of the day, doctors with best results by riding his horse Citoyenne which a wealthy friend has given him. His work is a constant irritant. Jane writes to *his* mother that he "is reading voraciously great folios preparatory to writing a new book—for the rest he growls away much in the old style—but one gets to feel a certain indifference to his growling—if one did not, it would be the worse for one . . . " (12:303). But he must drive himself. He has banished poverty at last, but only for the time being. He still cannot relax but must begin the New Chapter in his life, commence actual writing of the Cromwell book despite the intractability of the subject. We see him, in the letters, reading and waiting for it to become more tractable; but we also see him between times involving himself vigorously in social, political and religious concerns of the day.

Several of these were directly or indirectly important to his work. From Craigenputtoch days he had had difficulty in acquiring needed books, and had borrowed where he could from friends. It was nearly the same in London. Mill had been generous in lending him books pertaining to the French Revolution. Milnes, too, sent him books from his large library. There was of course the British Museum Library but it would not lend books out. In an interesting letter, previously unpublished, he besought Frederick Denison Maurice, with whom he was not on the best of terms, for help in obtaining permission to read in a private room there. It was apparently not Maurice's fault that the request was denied, for at his suggestion Carlyle was later able to obtain those many books on Cromwell and his times from the University Library at Cambridge (10:246). In the same letter he adds, "Neither is the scheme of the 'London Library' dead; nay it seems rather to be in a lively way, and will perhaps come to something before long." The idea of a *public* library which would lend books out to readers had been growing in Carlyle's mind, and during 1839 and 1840 he enlisted, even

commandeered, the help of men like Edward Fitzgerald, Milnes, and W.D. Christie in attracting persons of influence, wealth, and rank to support the project, printing prospectuses, distributing circulars, and holding preliminary meetings. Without allowing such organizational matters to take too much of his own time (though he accepted appointment as a Secretary), he was able with their help to see the scheme through to eventual completion. By the end of 1840 they were searching for a Librarian; the London Library would open June 24, 1841.

One incident may be noted, which awakens memories of the young, belligerent Carlyle, when he was sending in solutions to problems as part of a Mathematical Correspondence in the *Dumfries Courier*. In March, 1814, he was ridiculed by two of the corresponding mathematical students for the high-handed manner of one of his solutions, and Carlyle replied with such a "severe retaliation" that the Editor of the *Courier*, the Reverend Henry Duncan, had to suppress it (1, 8, n. 7). Now, in June 1840, a letter having been sent in to the *Times* deprecating the London Library scheme "as mere humbug," Carlyle was characteristically goaded into writing a reply so sarcastic that though his points were well taken the *Times* Editor had to refuse it "for the sake of avoiding controversy" (12:176-9). Carlyle still could not suffer fools gladly.

In two other matters affecting his writing he took an active part. A Copyright Bill had long been needed to protect the work and welfare of men of letters. Wordsworth had campaigned for one since 1837, and Serjeant Talfourd, M.P. for Reading, had introduced a Bill which was several times reintroduced, then somewhat modified, and finally passed in July 1842. In a newly published letter to John Forster, of 27 February 1839, Carlyle considerately declined to sign the Petition, which he heartily favored, thinking the Bill would sooner pass if supported by Wordsworth, Southey, and other "reverend veterans" of the literary world and "excluding any meaner sort of man whose appearance in the cause could only weaken" it (11:34-5). He was to have further reason to favor it when Emerson told him in 1841 that the American edition of *Heroes* had been driven from the market by pirating New York newspapers.

As a committed correspondent, Carlyle was naturally attracted to the idea of Postal Reform as promulgated by "Rowland Hill the Invaluable" in his *Post Office Reform*

(London, 1837). At last the sender, not the recipient, would pay the postage, at the uniform rate of 1d per 1/2 oz. Probably in May of 1838 (the Editors have had to deduce the date of the letter) Carlyle was asked by Henry Cole, an energetic promoter of the cause, to give some public lectures on it. Carlyle might well have consented but had to decline, being then "in the agony of" his own Lectures on the History of Literature (10:79-80). Both the Carlyles eagerly anticipated passage of the Bill, which met opposition by the Government and the Post Office but was finally passed in July 1839, and implemented January 11, 1840. Jane wrote that she would "surely send 'Sibilline leaves' all over the world" (11:187). Carlyle predicted it would soon "introduce a quite new style of letter-writing," and soon discovered the change to be both good and bad. Postage being cheaper meant that everyone could write oftener. This was good; but it meant many more letters to answer. In February he wrote John that he was seriously considering setting aside one day each week exclusively for answering letters (10:47). Yet he continued to urge his mother to write more frequently, and to blame himself as well as others for writing so rarely.

A significant consequence of this change was that letters tended to be shorter than before. When like the frugal Carlyles one had to obtain 'franks' from friendly (or even unfriendly) Peers or M.P.s, and this was often not easy, one tried to make the letter memorable, a worthy communication not just of all the news but of all one's personal feelings, and often lengthy commentary on current affairs. At best it had rich literary and human value; it offered, as he used to tell Jane (2:57), a "picture of one's soul." They wrote more letters in the single year 1840, after the Penny Post went into effect, than they had written during the preceding two years, and these letters (Vol. 12), although they still bear the unmistakable stamp of Carlyle and Jane, seem generally more hurried and occasional. Perhaps the difference should not be overemphasized, for they wrote some marvelous letters in 1840 and were destined to write many more in the years to come.

Apart from his Lectures and his so-far baffled efforts to work his Cromwell materials into a book, Carlyle's recurrent preoccupation is with the material and spiritual condition of English society. In his *French Revolution* he had dramatized the inevitable consequence of the rich oppressing the poor; now he

watched the neglected misery and distress of England's poor with mounting alarm. In 1837 Mill had asked him for an Essay on the Working Classes. The idea appealed to him, but since he disagreed with Mill's conviction that "general improvement was going on there" (10:15) the matter rested until May 1839 when he wrote to Lockhart proposing his essay for the *Quarterly Review* (11:103). This offer receiving a courteous negative, he once again approached Mill, though tentatively, on the slender chance that Mill might want it for his last number of the *London and Westminster Review*. "What am I to do? One is hard bested, squeezing oneself into any of the marketable shapes" (11:206). By December he had decided to let Fraser print it as a separate pamphlet.

Chartism would seem to be a return (since "Signs of the Times" and "Characteristics") to direct social criticism of contemporary England. So it is: he still hopes to write a history of Cromwell and his times. But the letters have been full of his observations of the plight of the Lancashire laborers, the Scottish farmers, and the London poor—of the Irish, too, although his strongest interest in Ireland is to come. Carlyle saw their sufferings as the tragic product of political malfeasance, spiritual hollowness, and social neglect. He wrote Alec that he "felt as if I *ought* to write it." Ironically, the Tories seemed to him to have more "fellow-feeling" for the poor than the Radicals (11:117); and there was double irony when some readers of "Charitsm" thought him a Tory whereas he knew himself on the contrary to be "one of the deepest tho' perhaps the quietest of all the radicals now extant in the world" (12:40). To Fraser's delight "Chartism" sold well, but it became a political football among rival newspapers and journals. There was something in it to displease everybody, especially the Liberals. He was prepared therefore to believe that it was Macaulay who wrote the criticism of his *French Revolution* in the *Edinburgh Review* of July 1840, and to attribute to Macaulay the opinion "that all good government consists in uniting of the monied classes to keep down that one miserable class, and make the pigs *die without squealing*" (12:206). "At bottom," he added, "this Macaulay is but a poor creature, with his Dictionary literature and erudition, his saloon arrogance; he has no vision in him: he will neither see nor do any great thing, but be a poor Holland-House Unbeliever, with spectacles instead of eyes, to the end of him, I think!" (12:207). This harsh opinion

was retracted when he learned that the author of the objectionable review was one Herman Merivale. Carlyle declared himself "heartily glad" it was not by Macaulay, "of whom I have still considerable hopes" (12:264). But he returned to the attack against Whiggery, against the unstated but ruthless policy of all "liberal government," the "joining together of those who have some money to keep those who have none quiet—in their hunger. The pigs have all to die, *no* help for that; but by God's blessing we will keep down their *squealing*!" (12:282).

The Tories were generally less critical of him, and he of them. In the *Quarterly Review* for September 1840 there was a mostly favorable review of his works by William Sewell, a writer then associated with the Oxford Movement. He praises Sewell for understanding that the Church of England is and has been for two centuries empty of real faith; but Sewell does not understand that "Puseyism" threatens to break the poor old Church apart (12:268, 273). The crisis Carlyle sees facing the Church is echoed in his warning that continued neglect of the Poor by a callous liberal government and do-nothing Aristocracy is fomenting open violence by the Chartists and Anti-Corn Law agitators, and may bring on revolution (12:11-12). His long-range counsel, however, looks beyond these disruptive forces, with a faith he can still sustain: let us address "the great solid *heart* of England, the rational and just man of England, and, avoiding all outposts and their inconclusive tumult, go right to the heart of the matter;" (12:23), i.e., establish government by a true Aristocracy guided by a Church of true faith.

Like "Chartism," the Letters contain Carlyle's soberest thought about the desperate condition of English society. But more clearly than in "Chartism" they remind us that amidst the distractions of Lectures and soirées and moneymatters he has not forgotten his old religious feelings and aspirations. He might condemn the Church but he loved Bishop Connop Thirwall, "a most effectual-looking Overseer. He walked with me, talked with me; I love him as a most solid soundhearted man. Who shall say that even as a Bishop he may not do much good" (12:237). He was fond of the Wilsons, Jane and her brother Thomas, although they reflected "Church-of-England Gigmanism of the aversest sort" (10:19). Among the various classes of people he was encountering early in 1838 he was drawn to religous people: "the best of this class is the best one will find in any class

whatsoever" (10:54). He liked especially Thomas Erskine, a Scottish advocate and religious writer, who "talks greatly about 'symbols' and other Teufelsdroeckhiana; seems not disinclined to *let* the Christian Religion pass for a kind of Mythus, provided men can retain the spirit of it well" (10:18). This approximated Carlyle's own religious position, although that position was not always clear to others. Writing to Carlyle, Jane reported hearing Erasmus Darwin ask "After all, what the deuce is Carlyles religion, or has he any?" (10:170). Because it was rooted in his vision of the mysterious and infinite nature of the universe, his statements about religion are often imprecise or ambiguous, so that parties like the Quakers, the Puseyites, even the Catholics found in them points on which they agreed, while he agreed with none of them. The deepest faith could not be verbalized. He is fond of quoting Goethe's saying, "We begin to err, the first *word* we utter" (11:192). In his letters to his mother (34 of them newly published here) he tries as always to conceal how far he has departed from the fundamental faith of his family. In the 'self-converse' of his Journal, however, and sometimes in his letters to others, it becomes evident that he is still searching for a faith he can *feel* more firmly. One visitor to Cheyne Rowe in March 1838, John Hunter, wrote in his diary that Carlyle's "speculations have not led him to any firm ground and his immortal longings and high aspirations are dashed and thwarted by the vain struggle he is always making to solve the riddle of the world—'the hidden mystery,' the discovery of which is to make its agonies and disappointments intelligible and consistent. This knot his power cannot untie" (11:50, n. 32). This is overstated but of proleptic accuracy. Yet often, when Carlyle is walking in the country, or watching crowds on the streets of London, or riding (his equestrian therapy!) down into Sussex and Kent, he feels the presence of that 'hidden mystery' with awe and joy, and is content to leave it hidden. In a previously unpublished letter to John he writes:

> Last night I sat down to smoke in my nightshirt in the backyard; it was one of the beautifullest nights; the half moon clear as silver, looked out as from Eternity, and the great Dawn was streaming up: I felt a remorse, a kind of shudder, at the fuss I was making about a sleepless night, about my sorrow at all of a Life so soon to be absolved

> into that great Mystery above and around us. O let us be patient, let us call to God with our silent heart, if we cannot with our tongue!— (10:123)

Finally, there is his correspondence with Geraldine Jewsbury, who wrote him in April, 1840, asking for spiritual counsel. Assuming the role of a kindly Teacher and Sage, and drawing largely on *Sartor Resartus*, he told her how he had conquered skepticism and won his way back to faith; he counselled Work, Silence, Renunciation. "We are in our Maker's hands, . . . Job said long since, 'Tho' He slay me yet will I trust Him.' Ought we to say less?—I will promise you, too, that such mournful transcendency of *Renunciation* will abate in due season; become an earnest background of Eternity of which this fantasm-reality of Time will paint itself all the more touching and lovely for you. Hope always; we are here to hope" (12:245). The letters to her (three are newly published) reaffirm his old Everlasting Yea, and convey an assurance that reflects his growing confidence in their future. Though he still has to work out the problem of his Cromwell book, though he needs to 'untie that knot,' he knows that he and Jane have 'made it' in London; their future is more certain. He can and will utter forth his deepest convictions about the world they live in, without compromise, however unpopular they may be, and survive.

We note that the Duke-Edinburgh Edition is undergoing a change. Volumes 10, 11, and 12 are the last in which Charles Richard Sanders' name is to appear on the title-page. In 1980 he officially retired from the project which he initiated 34 years ago, in 1952, to resume work on another early project—the assembling and editing of Carlyle's pen-portraits. He has modestly told his story in "A Brief History of the Duke-Edinburgh Edition of the Carlyle Letters," *SSL* 17: 1-12. We cannot praise too highly his foresight and perseverance in collecting these more than 12,000 letters and his skill and tact in enlisting help not only in Edinburgh and Durham (N.C.) but from numerous individuals, institutions and libraries elsewhere. The thoroughness and accuracy of the editing in Volumes 1 through 12 have been impeccable. The abundance of needed and helpful footnote materials is testimony to the editors' deep and wide knowledge of the period. We now have every reason to expect that future volumes will preserve the same high standards

under the Editorship of Professor Kenneth J. Fielding, of the University of Edinburgh, and his team of skilled and seasoned editors. We fervently hope there will be no deterrent but time and hard work to the eventual completion of what must be to all Carlylean and Victorian scholars an invaluable project.

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R.D.S. Jack. *Alexander Montgomerie.* Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. 1985. 140 pp. Scottish Writers Series No. 7.

Dr. Jack is one of the few authorities on the 16th-century Scottish Renaissance and his monograph of Alexander Montgomerie is welcome. His avowed aim is to rescue this neglected poet from the long shadow cast by the earlier *makars*, Henryson, Dunbar and Douglas, who themselves lurked in the larger shadow of Burns and Scott until well into the 20th century.

As Dr. Jack's select bibliography indicates, work on Montgomerie has been scanty. The Ker MS. containing the poet's shorter verse was edited for the STS by James Cranstoun in 1887 but leaves something to be desired as a full edition, since Cranstoun lacked access to the 1621 Hart edition. Dr. Jack's quotations all come direct from the MSS. or by way of his own previous editing. For "The Flyting betwixt Montgomery and Polwart" he used the Hart and the Tullibardine MS., thought to be the oldest extant text and undoubtedly the most prolific in Scots words. Since no one textual source can claim superiority over the others, students of this poet soon encounter problems.

Nor has there been much criticism. Two German theses by Hoffmann and Brotanek appeared in the 1890s but both depended heavily upon biography. Montgomerie was not really assessed on his own terms until 1958 (by Ian Ross) and 1960 (in Helena M. Shire's Saltire Classics selection). Students of Scottish literature knew *The Cherrie and the Slae* (in H. Harvey Wood's 1937 edition), "The Flyting" and from anthologies the courtly lyric

> Lyk as the dum
> Solsequium

In general, Montgomerie was casually passed over as an inferior late *makar*, best remembered as the diehard author of *The Cherrie and the Slae*, wearily described as a rearguard example of love-allegory in the dream tradition inspired by *Le Roman de la Rose*.

Mr. Jack does not try to elevate Montgomerie to the heights occupied by Henryson, Dunbar and Douglas, nor even Lyndsay, a false position which a lesser scholar and critic might have encouraged his audience to accept. Instead, he considers him (i) as a poetical propagandist seeking personal preferment at James VI's court (ii) as a courtly lyricist in line with Dunbar, Lyndsay and Alexander Scott, illustrating the fashions esteemed by the King in his 1584 *Reulis and Cautelis* (iii) as a sonneteer having a specifically Scottish character distinguished in subject and style from his earlier English and European counterparts. These chapters are prefaced by a critical biography, for, unlike those of the early *makars*, of whom very little is known, Mongomerie's life and personal relationships are well documented.

Most of Montgomerie's work circulated in MS. form, familiar only to the court circle and its adherents. His only long poem, *The Cherrie and the Slae*, was an exception. It was printed and reprinted many times and by the mid-18th century came second in popularity only to Hary's *Wallace*. Dr. Jack sees it as a re-vitalization of literary traditions, not, as C.S. Lewis and others argued, as a last fling in the erotic allegory style, and devotes his penultimate chapter to an analysis, discussing its meaning in relation to the conventions chosen by Montgomerie for his immediate purpose, which was to compose a Catholic religious poem.

James VI saluted him as a leading practitioner of the group referred to as the "Castalian band," a circle of Petrarchists including Stewart of Baldynneis, William Fowler, William Alexander and the English brothers Hudson. James created this group from which Montgomerie was eventually excluded, on grounds of political and religious expediency, as a liability in an anti-Catholic climate. Yet his poetical status was in no way reduced in the King's eyes, nor, consequently, in those of the other "Castalians." James mentions him twice in verse, first before 1584 as "Beloved Sanders maistre of our art" and again after his death in 1598 as "the prince of poets in our land."

As a lyrist Montgomerie's principal models were Marot and Ronsard—his "A Lang Gudenicht" is close to Ronsard's "Quand vous serez bien vielle, au soir, à la chandelle," a typical utterance of *les Rhétoriqueurs*, who merged sleep, death and enduring love with change and time. Yet, as Dr. Jack observes, Montgomerie was no slavish follower but a poet who, while admiring European and English poets, "valued his own voice above them all." Professor Elliot and Mrs. Shire showed the extent to which Montgomerie composed with a musical setting in mind.

One common explanation of the fading of the Scottish Renaissance has been that Scotland lacked an assured court such as Henry VIII established. Dr. Jack provides grounds for doubting this, if not for rejecting it altogether. Assurance there was but the 1603 Union removed the essential focal point. By then Montgomerie had been dead for five years. The Castalians, owing their inspiration mainly to European Catholic traditions, left no "school." The Scots language lost its force in print and Scots forms declined in MS. records—Mure of Rowelian's prose show the change over forty years. But, though the era of promise was ending, Montgomerie's ranging vocabulary looked forward to, in particular, that of Robert Fergusson. Watson printed Montgomerie (including *The Cherrie and the Slae* and *The Solsequium*) in Part I of his *Choice Collection*, though in a modernized form, and Allan Ramsay followed his lead in *The Evergreen*, presenting some of Montgomerie's poems, among them "The Solsequium," showing more respect for the originals than Watson cared to do.

The long-term value of Jack's compact re-examination of Montgomerie is that it must encourage further fresh assessments and draw the student away from a stereotyped accounting of the poet's "beauties and blemishes." It is a pleasure these days to read a lucid interpretation untrammelled by opaque jargon in which the author does not hold himself aloof, uttering pronouncements at a long distance from the reader. Dr. Jack's presentation has the direct lecture manner, his own sound and voice in fact, and this freshness comes through, even in his detailed account of *The Cherrie and the Slae*, which he strips of the "weary allegory" label and shows to be a highly original work of enormous symbolic weight, "a complex view of life."

To other scholars and critics, past and present, he is generous and, in respect of his own claims, modest. He ends with

suggestions for further research, for example, a new edition of the Ker MS., of "The Flyting" and for precise critical study combining analysis with investigation of influences, of which Ian Ross's "The Form and Matter of *The Cherrie and the Slae,*" in *Texas Studies in English* (1958) is an instance. This reviewer would like to hear of work on Montgomerie's Scots, obviously a neglected but "large feld to ere," for this most talented poet was an experimenter in the true "making" tradition, who might have done for Scots what the early Tudors did for English, had history taken a different turn.

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Wolfgang G. Müller. *Die englisch-schottische Volksballade.* Bern and Munich: Francke Verlag. 1983. 223 pp. Studienreihe Englisch, 44.

"Every rose grows merry in time"—the distortion of the old refrain "Savory, sage, rosemary, and thyme" by modern ballad singers (who have obviously lost the knowledge of the plants originally referred to and of the magic powers ascribed to them) is by no means a new phenomenon in the fascinating history of the popular ballad; from its beginning in the Middle Ages right down to its survival in twentieth-century Britain and America, the ballad tradition has depended on "oral re-creation" as a vital impetus, sometimes yielding versions of inimitable impressiveness and beauty, sometimes producing hackneyed trash or downright nonsense. Wolfgang G. Müller has carefully retraced and judiciously commented on the main lines of the development of this poetic tradition and of its reception, both popular and academic, in his very readable introduction to the English and Scottish popular ballad. Müller does not develop a ballad theory of his own, but draws on the large body of ballad scholarship produced in the English-speaking countries and on the Continent (more than a third of the titles listed in the bibliography are in German). His survey of the changing theories of the ballad during the last hundred years, with Gummere, Kittredge and Heusler on the one side of the scale and Milman Parry, David Buchan and Wolfhart Anders on the other, will prove particularly

rewarding to the newcomer to this field. ("Studienreihe Englisch" is a series of fundamental textbooks primarily destined for young German *Anglisten*).

Müller's discussion of the ballad collections from Percy's *Reliques* to Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* should be complemented by Albert B. Friedman's chapter on "Ballad Collections before Percy's 'Reliques'" in the latter's *The Ballad Revival* (Chicago, 1961) to widen the historical perspective and to provide a better idea of the links that existed between the early ballad books and other poetical miscellanies. Müller is by no means blind to the fact that the popular ballad shares many characteristics with related poetic genres, but he is eager to draw the line between such works as *Thomas Rhymer* or *Lord Randal* on the one hand, and street ballads, songs, carols, romances, or Breton lays on the other.

The dating of the popular ballad is still a highly controversial issue, and Müller's chapter on this problem is therefore debatable in several points. Because of his narrow definition of this genre (p. 92), Müller cannot agree with the theory, recently put forth by Ernst Erich Metzner, that its origins are prior to the age of chivalry; he rather follows the traditional view that regards the ballad as a "spätmittelalterliche Neuschöpfung," a genre newly created in the late Middle Ages (p. 99). Although Müller disapproves of David C. Fowler, who rigorously dates the ballads after their first written record, thus cutting off any consideration of a previous oral tradition, he too tends to look at the eighteenth century as the golden age of balladry, ascribing to this period the texts of *Edward*, *Sir Patrick Spens*, and other well-known examples from Percy (p. 99). Whether the text of *The Twa Corbies* is "unthinkable" before the Romantic (or at least the pre-Romantic) period (p. 104) because of the figure of the lonely wanderer roaming through nature (and overhearing the birds' gruesome conversation) is an open question: certainly medieval Scots poetry already knew this type of eavesdropper together with the macabre details and the convention of the speaking animals that can be found in this ballad.

Unfortunately Müller has little space at his disposal to elaborate on the question of textual refurbishing and fake-ballad production during the eighteenth century. Ramsay's editorial practice, though cursorily mentioned (p. 17), receives no appreciation; the Lady Wardlaw controversy is only briefly

alluded to (p. 99); and Sir Walter Scott's place in the history of the Border ballad remains rather hazy. The Romantic art ballad is completely outside the scope of this investigation.

Rather more satisfying is Müller's sketch of the development of the British popular ballad in America. Müller follows an established German philological tradition, now becoming rare, in his minute description of the formal elements of the ballad, its meter, sentence patterns, verbal and structural formulas, etc. Two short chapters on the impersonal character and the tragic world-view of the ballad round off the treatise.

Müller's study deserves to become a standard textbook. Although individual ballads are not interpreted in detail, the observations made on *Sir Patrick Spens*, *Edward*, *The Three Ravens*, *Lord Randal*, the Robin Hood ballads, and other classics of the genre help to deepen the reader's understanding both of the specific texts and the tradition as a whole. It is regrettable that the index only covers the titles of the ballads and that the bibliography contains only a selection of the works mentioned in the notes. Quick reference use of the valuable *Forschungsbericht* is thereby rendered nearly impossible.

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Carol McGuirk. *Robert Burns and the Sentimental Era.* Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press. 1985. xxviii + 193 pp.

This book meets a long-standing need. Burns made no secret of his interest in, and debt to, sentimental authors. Accordingly, a number of scholars have at different times drawn attention to specific connections between his work and the writings of his near contemporaries (including the "elegantly melting Mr Gray," Shenstone, and, above all, Henry Mackenzie). Until now, however, not one has taken the trouble to explore the subject thoroughly, or to demonstrate in detail just how pervasive and significant are Burns's affinities with eighteenth-century sentimental authors. Carol McGuirk deserves to be congratulated on carrying through this investigation with clarity and poise. Her study contributes directly and valuably to Burns scholarship.

Literary movements are notoriously unstable compounds.

Historically, the eighteenth-century vogue for sentimentalism is one of the principal tributaries of romanticism. I have to admit that I should have liked to see Professor McGuirk look rather more closely at the way in which Burns as a lively-minded heir of sentimentalism broke away from its particular concerns and atmosphere, to become an innovative poet and song-writer, one who from time to time quite clearly anticipated certain aspects of romantic poetic practice. An exciting subject awaits its investigator here. This said, it is nevertheless to the credit of *Robert Burns and the Sentimental Era* that it delivers what it proposes, instead of taking on too much. Professor McGuirk does what she sets out to do, which is to consider Burns in relation to one leading movement in British literature in his age. In one sense, it scarcely matters that Pound and Eliot were interested in imagism: their poetry stands or falls by what it has to say to the reader, irrespective of "background" considerations. Yet it is palpably wrong to ignore or set aside imagism as an influence on the making of good experimental poems in English. Similarly, readers of Burns need to pay attention to sentimentalism. In contrast to imagism, sentimentalism has had a consistently bad press, simply because nothing dates so quickly as superseded emotionalism—unless it be the technique used to create easy emotional effects. It seems unlikely that anyone in the late twentieth century can read *The Man of Feeling*, which so moved Burns, without laughing out loud at some point. The convention of sympathetic weeping on which the book depends now seems as artificial and unreal as stylized Hollywood camera work of the sentimental 1920's.

It has to be kept in mind, though, that Burns was responding to what was for the time being genuinely popular. His First Commonplace Book shows him striking poses as a kind of Ayrshire Harley, no doubt; but he is able to use the idiom and gestures of sentimentalism as a means of exploring what he feels about subjects which matter to him as man and writer. The very artifice of sentimentalism, in other words, is attractive to him, because it allows him to express feelings, and to do so with characteristic warmth. Thus, he writes about his predecessors in Scottish song with strong admiration, accompanied by rueful thoughts about his own situation as an unknown rural Bard.

There is a certain irregularity in the old Scotch Songs, a

> redundancy of syllables with respect to that exactness of accent & measure that the English Poetry requires, but which glides in, most melodiously with the respective tunes to which they are set . . . . O ye illustrious Names, who could feel so strongly and describe so well! the last, the meanest of the Muses train—one who, though far inferiour to your flights, yet eyes your path, and with trembling wing would sometimes soar after you—a poor, rustic Bard unknown, pays this sympathetic pang to your memory! Some of you tell us, with all the charms of Verse, that you have been unfortunate in the world—unfortunate in love; he, too, has felt all the unfitness of a Poetic heart for the struggle of a busy, bad world; he has felt the loss of his little fortune, the loss of his friends, and worse than all, the loss of the woman he adored! Like you, all his consolation was his Muse—She taught him in rustic measures to complain—Happy, could he have done it with your strength of imagination, and flow of Verses! May the turf rest lightly on your bones! And may you now enjoy that solace and rest which this world rarely gives to the heart tuned to all the feelings of POESY AND LOVE!—

Burns refers to himself in the third person only, but there is never any doubt that his real subject is himself. The language of sentimentalism is in this instance put to service by a writer bent on projecting an image of himself as an interesting figure, both poet and victim of experience.

Professor McGuirk writes well about Burns and song, and is particularly good on his later songs, which she rightly points out have been undervalued. She is able to show that in his work for *The Scots Musical Museum*, the poet both draws on and transcends sentimental precedents. On the poetry, too, she is a stimulating and generally a reliable guide. *Tam o' Shanter* is only the best known of many poems placed in a fresh perspective.

One shortcoming may be mentioned. Carol McGuirk seems to underestimate the sheer human interest of Burns's letters. (She also refers more than once to the "Glenriddle" instead of Glenriddell Manuscripts). "In his letters," she writes, "—like Boswell and Goldsmith in their social lives—Burns never quite composed a persona to suit his taste: he kept shifting ground.

Generally speaking, he alternated between a pose of passive aggression borrowed from Mackenzie's Harley and a Miltonic defiance heightened by a violent self-pity like Werther . . . Neither pose expresses Burns with the distinction of his best poetry." This is acute, and the final sentence is undoubtedly accurate. It would be a pity, though, if anyone were to be deterred from reading Burns's letters by Professor McGuirk's strictures.

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J.H. Alexander and David Hewitt, eds. *Scott and his Influence: The Papers of the Aberdeen Scott Conference, 1982.* Aberdeen: (Association for Scottish Literary Studies). 1983. 517 pp. (Association for Scottish Studies; no. 6).

Scott and his Influence is the result of the 1983 conference in Aberdeen which drew together a distinguished body of scholars whose width of interests ensures a wide view of "influence" in these dense pages; it ensures, too, a diversity of approach and critical stance which the editors wisely did not curb, but left as a true record of an international occasion.

The strength of the volume lies in its recognition of the status of Scott as major Romantic figure, for his "influence" can be defined as differently as the literatures in which it is found, and the genre in which it is thought to be detected. Among the excellent things in this collection is a listing of Scott operas, a discussion of "tale" motifs and place names, several discussions of narrative level and use of speech-forms and local dialect in Scott, studies of Scott as politcal historian, intellectual historian, religious writer, student of foreign affairs, cutodian of his own country's affairs, private man, public man. Sometimes, people plainly apply their own private research interests to Scott, with varying degrees of illumination; sometimes their contribution arises from a deep and plainly extensive research experience in Scott himself, and there are a number of really useful discussions, particularly by Jane Millgate, Peter Garside, and R.C. Gordon, which take their place in an evolving long-term study of the author. An exceptionally interesting piece comes

near the opening, Gary Kelly on a critical edition of the *Waverley Novels*; overtaken by events though it may well prove to be, this faces squarely the difficulties involved in looking at Scott more closely than at the level of *general* influence.

It is a matter of frustration or wry amusement to Scots in Europe and the USA to see the status accorded in survey courses to an author so little read in Scotland; with the paperback market now amply supplied, there seems little reason for neglect of a general knowledge. But the particular problems of the novels, their establishment in a critical edition with a critically agreed text, is a step to a more exact estimation of Scott as influence in ideas, on novelistic practice, on Romantic literary practice. With the *Journal* admirably edited, the autobiographical works increasingly known, the *Letters* being collected and Grierson's work updated and supplemented by Corson's index, and with a remarkable recent body of published criticism, the time is coming for an estimation of Scott's influence in detail. It is a tribute to the size of Scott's ability, as well as to the width of his interests, that a large body of assembled scholars pierce him with so many shafts and leave the reader with a sense of work under way rather than work achieved. This is, of course, a natural result of reading a conference-paper anthology, and it is a tribute to the success of the conference. But the man himself is larger than these 530-odd pages and they help, for the first time, prepare the stage now to take advantage of scholarship which has cleared the ground, and cleared the ground for discussion of further scholarship particularly in the establishing of texts. Tom Crawford in his introduction looks forward to the genuine popularization of Scott; a volume such as this, dense with scholarship and mixed though it is, significantly makes that aim more possible.

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Christopher Murray Grieve. *The Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid*. Ed. with an Introd. by Alan Bold. London: Hamish Hamilton; Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. 1984. xxxv + 910 pp.

In a letter to J.K. Annand written on 11 September 1970, in

response to a request to publish an edition of the correspondence between MacDiarmid and his former school teacher George Ogilvie, MacDiarmid could only give a qualified acceptance to the proposal, reserving the right to go over the letters first before agreeing to their publication. "There may be things in them I would find embarrassing or that are liable to misunderstanding without explanations by myself. All my affairs are now being gone through with a small tooth comb by all sorts of people in this and other countries, and many of these people have a point of view not at all compatible with my own." The publication of Alan Bold's extensive selection of the letters of Hugh MacDiarmid is a further manifestation of the growing interest in MacDiarmid's life and work, but of course published without the control he deliberately exercised over his writings and without the benefit of his editorial advice. If MacDiarmid's published work, both poetry and prose, can give a picture of the man and writer, so his letters, with the exception of those written to and published in newspapers, reveal the private face that was not intended for public comsumption. MacDiarmid was convinced of the need to be honest with oneself, "exhibiting one's weaknesses as well as one's strengths," and in this sense Alan Bold has given MacDiarmid ample opportunity for such honesty in a substantial edition of mainly private letters where editorial excisions are very much the exception rather than the rule.

MacDiarmid was a prolific letter writer throughout his long life. No doubt he did not write over forty letters every evening, as he confessed to Neil Gunn in 1924, but by any standards his output was phenomenal. Letters were of course a vital life-line for someone whose days were spent either in provincial Scotland, at Montrose and Biggar, for example, or in exile from Scotland, in South Wales, London, or Liverpool, or in a different kind of exile in Shetland, and for someone who declared an abhorrence for the telephone, much preferring pen and paper. Many thousands of letters addressed to Hugh MacDiarmid survive in the collections of Edinburgh University Library and the National Library of Scotland. A large number of MacDiarmid's letters are also extant in public collections, and many are still in private hands, and it is this body of material which has served as the basis for Alan Bold's selection. The letters published range in time from 1911 when MacDiarmid worked as a journalist in South Wales to 1978 shortly before his death. They have been

arranged in groups according to the correspondent; each group of letters to an individual is arranged chronologically and the groups of letters follow a chronological sequence according to the date of the first letter published. Each section is preceded by a short introduction to explain the background of the correspondence and to situate the individual's relationship with MacDiarmid. Two final sections comprising letters written to and published in newspapers and journals and single letters written to individuals both adopt a chronological arrangement, although the former section is loosely arranged around certain key themes which were of interest to MacDiarmid. The chronology of MacDiarmid's life, placed after the editor's introduction and note on the text, is reprinted from his anthology of MacDiarmid's prose and poetry, *The Thistle Rises* (1984).

In spite of, or perhaps because of, this voluminous correspondence, MacDiarmid asserted on more than one occasion that he was a poor correspondent. Sheer pressure of work meant that replies to letters took a long time before they were forthcoming, and his relations with certain people were consequently somewhat one-sided. His comment to Helen Cruickshank in 1930 that "my prolonged silence means nothing whatever except I am—have always been—a bad and am getting a worse and worse correspondent" is revealing of his own assessment, frequently repeated in this selection of letters. Letter writing was also pushed into the background by force of circumstances, as in his engineering days in Glasgow when excessive physical toil left him with little strength or indeed time for intellectual pursuits. MacDiarmid also harbored negative feelings with regard to his own abilities as a letter writer. He derided "matter-of-fact communications" which were not real letters and despaired of the fact that his letters could be misunderstood in the way that they were. Small wonder, then, that he considered letters "hopeless," seeming to prefer personal contact for the communication and elaboration of ideas with those closest to him. Yet letters played a much greater role than might be supposed in the light of these statements, since MacDiarmid was a self-confessed loner and preferred isolation to intimacy: "I do not like people—I'd be ashamed to profess any regard for the mass of mankind—I may love or have friendship for an individual here and there, but that is all. I am essentially a loner and practise what I preach." Letters in fact permitted

communication without contact, and enabled MacDiarmid to further his interests without compromising his principles too often. How close this posturing is to the reality can only be related by those who knew MacDiarmid personally. Nevertheless, it coincides with and supports his elitist view of poetry, of which the following description of *Mature Art* is one example:

> I define it as a 'hapax legomenon of a poem—an exercise in schlabone, bordatini, and prolonged scordatura' and it is, I am very safe in saying, a very advanced example of 'learned poetry', much of it written in a multi-linguistic diction embracing not only many European but also Asiatic languages, and prolific in allusions and 'synthetic poetry', demanding for their complete comprehension an extremely detailed knowledge of numerous fields of world-literature. At the same time the logic of the whole is quite clear, and most of the poem should be understood by almost anyone who reads while he runs—if he runs fast enough.

MacDiarmid resolutely affirmed that the creative artist had no need to take into account his audience, or even consider whether anyone would be able to understand his poetry. He felt that all great achievements in the arts were the creation of a minority for a minority, very often against the current of popular opinion. It is no doubt in this stance that lies the explanation of MacDiarmid's apparently paradoxical attitude to letters. There could be no real substitute for personal contact with those whom he considered to be his intellectual peers, but for the rest letters were perfectly adequate and kept ordinary minds at a suitable distance.

Alan Bold maintains in his introduction that his selection of the letters shows MacDiarmid to be one of the great letter-writers of the twentieth century. As a qualitative assessment, this is questionable. Of course all readers will have their favorite MacDiarmid letters: perhaps the confession to Pittendrigh Macgillvray that all his early publishing ventures were a failure financially, the plea to Helen Cruickshank to supply blankets after the Grieve family's installation on Whalsay, the discussion of idealism and materialism alongside more routine matters in a letter to F.G. Scott, the press flytings, especially that inspired by

the anthology *Honour'd Shade*, or the sheer pathos of letters written to Mary Macdonald shortly before MacDiarmid's death in 1978. But if MacDiarmid's job as a poet was never "to lay a tit's egg, but to erupt like a volcano, emitting not only flame, but a lot of rubbish," so it is with his letters too, and there is still much dross alongside the pure metal in this volume. Not that its presence is intrusive. Indeed, only with such a generous selection of letters can we fully appreciate the rigors of MacDiarmid's life and career, the intensity of his activities as a writer and publisher constantly interrupted by financial difficulties, the numerous personal accidents and tragedies which fate cast in his way, the harshness of daily living, with periods of unemployment, illness, exile, even deprivation of the conveniences of modern living. We can then marvel at MacDiarmid's tremendous spirit, which was indomitable until the very end, and which was able to produce work of lasting quality out of such adverse personal circumstances. Through the letters we are privileged to see the mind of a great writer at work, or at least as much as he cared to give away in his epistolary confessions. MacDiarmid's own judgement of his *Drunk Man* is equally appropriate as a definition of the value of his letters: "It is me in every way—satire, lyricism, and all the rest of it: beauty and fun and savagery and objectionable elements all mixed just as they are in me."

Alan Bold is to be congratulated for providing such an expansive view of MacDiarmid through his letters. His selection has the merit of bringing certain letters in private ownership into the public domain, although inevitably some of these have passed into public collections since the publication of the volume. Clearly not all letters have been available to the editor, and this results in a lack of balance overall, which belies MacDiarmid's claim that in later life he was putting all his energies into writing letters. The reader is presented with a careful selection, but the editor has been more selective with some correspondences than with others without indicating where additional material is available. The arrangement of the correspondence, while giving the selection a definite structure, nevertheless has disadvantages. The suggestion is implicit that these fifty or so personalities are the key figures for MacDiarmid, and while this is indeed true for many, it is a judgment that cannot be applied across the board. Moreover this organizational structure of the material at times

leads to a disjointed text, for example when the final letter to W.R. Aitken dated June 1978 is followed in the next section devoted to John Lehmann by a letter dated 1938. The disruption of the chronology is by no means compensated for by the critical apparatus of the edition, which has too few internal references to related letters. Indeed, a straight chronological sequence would have eliminated repetition between some letters and would have emphasized rather than minimized MacDiarmid's various struggles and achievements. It has to be admitted that the editor's approach works well with some of the correspondences, especially when the letters themselves impose a cohesiveness on the grouping, but it is called into question when the letters, by date alone, are seen to be a strict selection, the only focus of which is the name of the correspondent.

For a book of this length the text is relatively free of typographical errors, although some of those which have escaped the eye of the proof readers are most unfortunate, e.g. Fiona Mac Colla on p. 566, or 16 Miles Avenue on p. 758. On the basis of random checks made, it is possible to suggest that there are occasional lapses in the transcription of the text as well as misreadings of the text, e.g. the phrase "a stiff proposition!" is omitted after "Northern Numbers had to sell" on p. 108, Puis Servien for Pius Servien on p. 443, the preposition "to" is omitted at the beginning of the letter dated 23 April 1966 on p. 704, Franz Mascreel for Frans Masereel on p. 741. MacDiarmid's letter to *The Scotsman* written on 27 November 1959 (p. 800) was published on 1 December 1959 and not on 25 November, and the letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* in response to John Sparrow's letter of 22 April 1965 (pp. 830-1) was published on 29 April and not 6 May 1965; also the text published in the issue of 22 February 1936 (pp. 777-8) appeared as a note at the end of the correspondence page and not as a published letter. As for the critical apparatus supporting the letters, this has been kept to a minimum, and what is given is more than occasionally erratic or inconsistent. Given the arrangement of the letters in groups by correspondent and the dearth of internal cross-references, the index becomes crucial if access is to be had to all the material presented. Unfortunately the index produced by Kate Chapman has done Alan Bold's edition a disservice. Inconsistencies and inaccuracies apart, which are far too numerous to mention in detail, the index is unnecessarily

idiosyncratic, with, for example, pseudonymns appearing under their real names with no regard for the actual text indexed and titles indexed separately from their authors which introduces singularly unhelpful index points: e.g. *Poems* (Mackenzie). The entry for Christopher Murray Grieve is particularly unmanageable and would have benefited from a more structured arrangement. Although Alan Bold has done all those interested in MacDiarmid's life and work a service by making so much of his extant correspondence available in print, this is not always an easy book to use and as a point of reference it should be treated with caution.

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Mary Wagoner. *Tobias Smollett: A Checklist of Editions of His Works and an Annotated Secondary Bibliography.* New York and London: Garland. 1984. xvi + 753 pp.

If bibliographies and checklists are labors of love (and who could doubt that they are?), then ones on Smollett must be doubly so. We partisans may admire Smollett very much, but we admit in our secret hearts that he is not in the first rank of novelists, and locating his exact position in the second rank is a task we would rather shun than undertake. Yet such bibliographies are substantial testimony to the enthusiasm and pervasiveness of Smollet's readers. Mary Wagoner's checklist contains some 3538 items. I suspect that this is about 1000 more than Donald Spector lists in *Tobias Smollett: a reference guide* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980). Professor Wagoner begins at number one and ends with 3538, while Professor Spector numbers his items for each year, and his checklist is organized chronologically.

Professor Wagoner first lists editions of works by Smollett, consisting of seventeen categories (with generous sub-categories from time to time) covering such things as collected editions, the novels, the plays, the poems, etc. This is followed by a secondary bibliography consisting of seventeen categories of writings on Smollett. Little distinction, if any, is made between ephemera and substantial works. For example, in the sub-section

on *Humphry Clinker*, the first eleven items list advertisements and announcements of the publication of the novel; this is followed by an alphabetical listing by author of critical articles and books, notes and essays. There are 249 items on *Humphry Clinker*, as well as 84 editions. One of the happy features of this list is the inclusion of works in which *Humphry Clinker* appears, but does not feature. Number 2708 is Jean Hecht's *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England*, included because of its allusions to *Humphry Clinker* "to illustrate the circumstances of servants." (I avoid, reluctantly, commenting on the value of a work which uses fiction as evidence for fact).

The inclusion of such details makes Wagoner's checklist distinctively different from those of Spector or Cordasco; it is the first attempt to list the various editions of Smollett's original works, editions, and translations in anything like completeness. This makes it more comprehensive than anything Smollettians have had to consult in the past, and one must be grateful for a work which can be used so readily. Having said that, I now proceed to prove that even grateful Smollettians can turn into churls and philistines if the occasion demands.

One of Smollett's more interesting endeavors was his translation of *Don Quixote*. Professor Wagoner lists 34 separate editions of this work, and I quote her entry 602, the first edition of his translation: "2 vols. London: T. Osborn, T. and T. Longman, R. Miller, C. Hitch and L. Hawes, J. Hodges, and J. and J. Rivington, 1755." This entry omits the name of the first publisher, A. Millar, who was not only one of Smollett's friends, but a Scot as well, and his name on the imprint would remind us of Smollett's enduring attachment to his Scottish origins. More serious, however, is the omission of the format—a fine quarto—and the fact that its "Twenty-eight new Copper-Plates, designed by Hayman,/ And engraved by the best Artists" offered the book-buying public some of the best examples of the "state of the art" in engraved book illustration in the middle of the eighteenth century. Elementary information of this sort would be invaluable and time-saving.

The sequence of entries for the translation of *Don Quixote* is also puzzling. Entry 602 is the first edition of 1755. Entry 603 is Henshall's Dublin edition of 1795, but with an edition of 1855 listed in brackets before that of 1795. Entry 604 is then the second edition of 1761, and after that the editions appear in

chronological order, but it is not clear why Henshall's edition (which is, incidentally, "embellished with superb engravings," though we do not learn that from the entry) should follow the first edition.

The omission of the information about the illustrations is all the more curious and regrettable, as Professor Wagoner sometimes mentions illustrated editions of Smollett's works and sometimes doesn't. For example, the first mention of any illustrated edition of *Roderick Random* is entry 59: "Illus. Rowlandson: J. Sibbald, 1793." I have never seen a copy of this edition, but presumably it exists, as the plates in an edition of 1805 indicated that they were published for J. Sibbald in 1793. However, from the second edition (1748) onwards, the work was illustrated by frontispieces to the two volumes, and in 1792 Lowndes published an edition in two volumes with six very fine folding coloured plates (four from drawings by Rowlandson, two from drawings by Stadler). This edition is not in the checklist. Indeed, there are a number of editions omitted from this list of editions of *Roderick Random*. *NCBEL* lists a French edition of 1751 and German editions of 1754 and 1755. The following futher editions are also omitted: London, 1752; London, 1754; London, 1760; Amsterdam, 1762; London, 1764; London, 1769; London, 1779; Geneva, 1782; Berlin, 1790; Edinburgh, 1791; London, 1794; Mannheim, 1802; Paris, 1804. While one doesn't expect checklists to be immaculately complete, these imprints were culled from various rather obvious sources, including *NCBEL*

Professor Wagoner writes in her introduction that "the weakest part of the secondary list is my review of eighteenth-century journals." The thought of anyone wading through every volume of every eighteenth-century periodical in a search for references to Smollett is mind-staggering, but it reminds us just how much fruitful research can be done on eighteenth-century periodicals. I might suggest that one further weakness of the secondary list lies in Professor Wagoner's spelling of certain names. The middle name of one Smollett critic seems to give her some trouble, but as that particular critic had his own problems with the spelling of Lismahago's name in *Humphry Clinker*, it would be indecently churlish to comment further.

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Thomas D. Knowles. *Ideology, Art and Commerce: Aspects of Literary Sociology in the Late Victorian Scottish Kailyard.* Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis. 1983. 278 pp. Gothenburg Studies in English 54.

The phenomenon of the Kailyard—although rearing its head in every history of Scottish fiction—still presents many puzzles. Work by Ian Carter, Christopher Harvie, F.R. Hart, Ian Campbell and Cairns Craig has advanced understanding of Kailyard fiction far beyond the condemnation of J.H. Miller or the strictures of George Blake; tracing its antecedents in Elizabeth Hamilton, in Scott and Galt, pursuing its subsequent manifestations in both the anti-kailyard and in contemporary versions, they have come to terms with the Kailyard's place in Scottish literary traditions, while at the same time giving the economic, social and religious realities behind its enclosed world of cozy domesticity and exploited sentiment serious consideration. It is the amazing popularity of the three major Kailyard writers—Barrie, Maclaren and Crockett—at the turn of the century, however, which continues to mystify. What were those characteristics of the late Victorian cast of mind which led to their fascination with village life in "Thrums" and "Drumtochty" or with the rural idylls of Galloway? In what ways can the international success of these works be explained? For whom were the Kailyard novels intended, what kind of people were, in actuality, reading them—and why? This new study by Thomas Knowles goes some way towards answering these questions, and fills a major gap in previous work on the Kailyard by focusing on its "commercial" aspects. In examining the ways in which Barrie, Maclaren and Crockett were perceived, both by their peers in the literary world, and by their public, in tracing their literary "careers," in considering the kinds of gratification offered by the novels themselves, and in relating their popularity to specific moral and social issues of the day, both in Britain and America, his book represents an important shift of perspective away from the fictions seen in isolation towards an awareness of the question of readership and the influences of market forces. In confronting this neglected aspect of Kailyard fiction, Knowles writes from a very particular and clearly defined standpoint, some features of

which I would wish to debate; nevertheless, this movement towards a recognition of the sociological implications of the Kailyard in the context of Victorian popular literature is a significant one.

Knowles, then, has certain categorical intentions in this book. He aims, firstly, to move away from a specific emphasis on the "Scottish tradition" and to see the Kailyard instead in a British dimension. To this end he argues that the Kailyard, emerging at a time when the Victorian penchant for "regional" writers was already established, offered a particularly acceptable version of the genre to a British market which had, through Scott in particular, been educated into an appreciation of "Scottish stories." Certain expectations existed, he shows, within the literary market as to the nature of the Scottish "product." In its retreat from urban reality and its allegience to Nonconformism, moreover, the Kailyard appears to have given British Victorians exactly what they wanted to hear, in both moral and social terms. Having established the existence of forces which facilitated the entry of Scottish Kailyarders on to the British market, Knowles' second aim is to "indicate the type of Scottish literary career . . . which developed on the Victorian literary scene." Here again his material is enlightening. Making the neat point that William Robertson Nicoll, editor of *The British Weekly* himself presents a paradigm of the "lad o' pairts," he goes on to show the ways in which Nicoll and his stable of writers were deeply involved in contemporary literary debates on the moral function of literature and the nature and validity of realism. His comments on the authors themselves, and their ambiguous relationship with Scotland, the source of their material and—in a sense—of their success, are also perceptive. Barrie's inner contradictions between engagement with a literary career in England and recognized success, and his more emotional allegience to his mother in Kirriemuir, epitomized in the morbidity of his "constant fear that he will fail to reach her at the end," is contrasted with the more external conflicts experienced by Ian Maclaren (John Watson), between his role as an author of stories about an isolated Scottish village and the demands of his life as the busy minister of a large urban parish in Liverpool.

The sensitivity which Knowles reveals in exploring these dichotomies appears at times, however, to serve as an argument against his previously stated aim of "decontextualizing" the

Kailyard from the Scottish scene. If contradictions within the works themselves may be related to ambivalences created within the authors by virtue of their Scottishness, then certain social and moral issues in their work must also be peculiar to the Scottish situation. In establishing boundaries, therefore, Knowles also appears to have created limitations. This can be most clearly seen in the question of religion: although the Kailyard must obviously be linked to British Nonconformism in general, the religious background from which it emerges—that of Scottish Calvinism—cannot be easily assimilated within a "British" framework. As so eminent a historian as E.P. Thompson has pointed out, "The Scottish story is significantly different. Calvinism was not the same thing as Methodism although it is difficult to say which, in the early nineteenth century, was worse" (*The Making of the English Working Class*). Confrontations between the Auld and New Lichts, the demise of the Marrow Kirk, can then be seen as peculiarly Scottish in nature, and Knowles' determination to place them in a wider context becomes restrictive rather than liberating.

One area where his desire for expansion does become more productive, however, is in his third concern—the evaluation of intended and actual readerships, in both Britain and America. Pointing to the growth of the mass media generally at this time, Knowles shows how Nicoll sought a very specific readership for *The British Weekly*'s fiction: "I hoped to reach the vast number of educated Nonconformists in Scotland and England who take no Christian paper, and despise the Nonconformist religious papers for their want of culture. I hope especially to get the ministers." The success of Nicoll's endeavors is revealed not only in the British market but also in sales of Kailyard novels in America. Here, as Knowles convincingly argues, the Kailyard novels had a more clearly defined image, free from the contradictions apparent to a home audience. American sales were initially helped by the different copyright laws which meant that for a time the market was flooded with pirated copies of Kailyard fiction, with Barrie complaining in 1896: "I do not know how many volumes purporting to be by me are in circulation which are no books of mine." Sales in America were also aided, Knowles shows, by a familiarity with the work of Scott; indeed, he quotes one publisher who argued that the American ear was readier to respond to a Scottish dialect in

fiction than that of rural Shropshire. On a more general level, he also argues that the Kailyard operated in the American market as an essentially conservative force, offering an alternative perspective to the developing school of urban realism. Again attempting to move beyond the Scottish dimension, however, he suggests that the Kailyard's popularity was not simply attributable to the nostalgia of emigrant Scots:

> the American response to the Kailyard was undoubtedly more than that of an urban audience demanding nostalgic escapism from an environment which lacked community feeling. Religious, ironic and humorous elements modified the sentimental-retrospective profile in Scottish fiction . . .

Knowles underestimates, I think, the ways in which irony, and humor, by giving the impression of objectivity, may actually reinforce the power of the nostalgic impulse; nevertheless, his analysis of American reactions to the Kailyard does extend our knowledge of its impact, and is one of the book's strengths.

It is in the second half of the book, in which he discusses the lives and works of Barrie and Maclaren in considerable detail, that more serious questions about Knowles' approach arise. His discussions of the individual texts are both thorough and revealing, as is his discussion of the historical background to the events they describe. There are, however, two aspects of his comments with which I would take issue: his use of the term "ideology" and his contention that ultimately the texts do engage with historical realities. My first point can be best illustrated by considering Knowles' own remarks on the question of ideology:

> My stress on ideology does not of course preclude literary-critical comment. On the contrary, the two aspects of investigation are inextricably linked: in fiction, for example, an overt ideological didacticism can often jeopardize literary excellence if it is not fully interwoven with aspects of character development and plot. In other words ideological content is integrated and may be deeply embedded in works of high quality, it is usually superficial in works of schematized propaganda, and in minor works like Barrie's its level of explicitness lies intermediate between the two.

Although attempting to establish the relationship between literature and ideology his argument appears to result in seeing them as potentially being mutually exclusive. The discussion is further confused by the concept of literary excellence which seems to be set in opposition to propaganda. Indeed, "propaganda," "conscious didacticism," even "moral intention" would frequently appear to be more appropriate to the terms of Knowles' discussion than "ideology," as, for example, when he talks of an "ideological component" determining "what should be portrayed and how," relating this in particular to the Nonconformist tendency to "impose moral restrictions on artistic freedom"; his language here is directed more towards a conscious proselytizing than to implicit ideological assumptions within the texts. Likewise, in using the term "ideological distortion" he appears to imply an ideal state in which a text may be "free" of ideology. Again, when talking of "the unprejudiced reader" an "ideal reader," existing outwith ideology, is suggested. The very ways in which ideologies naturalize themselves, however, surely means that the reader will only recognize as distortions those aspects of the text which do not confirm his or her own ideological perspective.

A rather different area of debate in Knowles' argument lies in his assessment of the relationship between the Kailyard and nineteenth century history. Knowles engages with Cairns Craig's contention that Kailyard fiction presents a "historyless" world, and offers some valuable historical data—in particular on Chartist risings in Dundee and Kirriemuir—in support of his argument. In countering Craig's argument, however, it is insufficient simply to show that history is "there" in the fictions, and Knowles, I feel, misses a valuable opportunity of examining exactly what the Kailyard novelists *do* with history—how they treat historical elements, and to what extent they are prepared to confront their significance. The subject is perhaps so large that it would deserve a book to itself, and here again both the limits Knowles has set for himself, and the broad range of his interests in this book preclude deeper analysis. Indeed, this would appear to be both the strength and weakness of his study; in opening up so many new areas, none may be explored to its full potential. It is, in fact, in one of those areas—a question posed but left unanswered—that Knowles highlights one of the most fascinating

puzzles of his book. To what extent, he asks, would rural or working class Scottish readers of Kailyard fiction have felt the same resentment at misrepresentation of their history and culture as that experienced by the Scottish intelligentsia of the time? The significance of his question is not confined to the Victorian age; it points to that tension between popular literature's role as a representation of the people and their concerns and as a process of indoctrination, between the ways in which people exist and the ways in which they are encouraged to see themselves as existing, which is increasingly becoming the focus of academic debate. The merits of Knowles' work lie in his giving the Scottish Kailyard a central place within that discussion.

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P.H. Scott. *John Galt*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. 1985. 130 pp. Scottish Writers Series No. 5.

John Galt. *Ringan Gilhaize or The Covenanters*. Ed. Patricia J. Wilson. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. 1984. xxvii + 370 pp.

The years 1984-5 have seen great activity in the publication of work on John Galt—there have been fully-annotated modern editions of two of his best novels—printed in attractive paperbacks, a volume of critical "reappraisals" originating from a conference of Galt scholars held at the University of Guelph, and now these two excellent books from the Scottish Academic Press.

Paul Scott's *John Galt* is one of a new series on Scottish writers from the Scottish Academic Press. It is slight in size and the text of the study does not run to much over 30,000 words. Do not be deceived; the slightness and the paperback format are deceptive. The book is a closely-packed and excellently documented critical study of all of Galt's main works of fiction written by a writer who wears his learning lightly—but who knows his Galt scholarship from A to Z. He has, for the purpose of the series, wisely avoided any attempt to cover in detail all of Galt's multifarious output and concentrates, with both knowledge

and perception, on Galt's qualities as a novelist.

Mr. Scott can offer his insights in a few lines. *Annals of the Parish* (p. 36) "is a book which can be read in at least three ways: as an evocation of a period, as an illustration of a theory of social change, or quite simply as a highly entertaining comedy." A remark like that is worth more than many of the laborious pages of plot summary and character analysis that sometimes pass for criticism of fiction. Scott's perception that Galt can be read at different levels goes a long way towards explaining why he had his initial popular success in 1820, why he continued—as a Scots comic writer—to remain in print, and why (in the light of the research of the last 50 years) he is now being revaluated as a "serious" novelist with a great deal more to offer the modern reader than entertaining anecdotes and dialect comedy. I found this book impressive and recommend it both to the student reader, who may be tackling Galt for the first time, and to the academic teacher, for whom if can offer fresh insights.

Miss Wilson's brief—and purpose—differ from Mr. Scott's. She was commissioned some years ago to produce one of the volumes of comprehensively edited Scottish works published annually by the Association for Scottish Literary Studies. We have already seen some spin-offs from her labours in articles like her "*Ringan Gilhaize*—A Neglected Masterpiece" (1979) and "*Ringan Gilhaize*: the Product of an Informing Vision" (1981).

Ringan Gilhaize or The Covenanters (to give the novel its full title) was—in some of his moods at least—Galt's favorite among his novels. It certainly cost him more effort than any of the others. He set himself the task of writing not merely a Scots novel but a novel set in a period of Scottish history with which he was unfamiliar. He could not rely on his customary fluency with the pen and on his power of total recall of all he had ever experienced or heard tell of in the Irvine of his boyhood. He consequently had to do massive reading in books that dealt with the period between 1550 and 1680. Technically, he set himself the difficult problem of covering in one novel a time-span of 150 years with a "hero" that belonged at least in spirit to all of them.. He had to adjust his prose style—and Galt was always a supremely careful stylist and articulate about his intentions. In *Ringan Gilhaize* his central characters are, as ever, Ayrshire-based and that for him was no problem; but he had to convey the flavor of an earlier period and to get the distancing right he used

what he called "that grave, cool, and in some degree obsolete, but emphatic manner which was employed by the covenanting authors."

Miss Wilson has tackled all of this with great skill. In particular, her notes are superb. She set herself the major task of reading all that Galt had found he had to read—and much else besides. The result is that places, "historical" characters, allusions, topical references, even minor topographical details, are comprehensively identified and documented as fully as if *Ringan Gilhaize* were a "real" historical narrative and not (as she herself noted in her 1981 article) historical fiction, the product of what she calls an "informing vision." All readers of Galt are in her debt for a job well done.

I part company with the ASLS edition only in one particular, the handling of the text, a decision that evidently rested with the publishers and not with the editor. In my old-fashioned way, I always start with a sharp xerox of my copy-edition (once I have assured myself that Galt had a hand in it) and then do all I can to ensure that the printer reproduces it with absolute fidelity. ASLS decided to "experiment" with computer technology. The copy-text was first "read" by a machine. Alas, like the Cabots (who speak only to God), machines speak only to machines. What was "read" was not the original hand-set (and so "unreadable") edition of 1823 but a machine-set (and so "machine-readable") altered text published in 1936.

This process produced a machine-readable text which was sent to Stirling and this 1936 text was checked against the 1823 text by 15 postgraduate students (some of whose names suggest that English was not their first language). The Stirling computer was then "used to restore the readings of the first edition." It seems a long way round to arrive at where you should have started. The whole exercise shows a touching faith in the computer which I (as a confirmed computer user) do not share. The "computer" is only as good as the mind (and the fingers) of whoever is doing the keyboarding. Who did what? It is impossible to work out who is responsible for the final result.

These doubts led me to the Notes on the Text (pp. xxv-xxvii) which set out emendations that have been incorporated in the ASLS text, either to correct "obvious errors" in the 1823 original, or to "restore readings from the manuscript." In the ensuing list there is no indication which are the obvious errors

now corrected and which are the new readings incorporated from the manuscript. Offhand, I can spot four 1823 readings which are in my opinion needlessly emended. There is no need (e.g.) to replace the 1823 *unpenitent* (p. 88) with *impenitent*, which was Sir George Douglas's guess in his 1899 edition. *Wrenght* (p. 208) is to me merely an "obvious misprint" for *wrength*. To emend it to *wrath* as this edition does is needless interference. *Unpenitent* and *wrength* are well-attested words and are instances of Galt's deliberate choice of "obsolete" terms chosen for "distancing." When in doubt, trust Galt. He did, after all, write the book—and proof-read it.

This is, in the end, a relatively minor matter. It does not detract from the massive learning and the sympathetic understanding of the social and religious issues involved which the editor has brought to her work. I do not see this edition of *Ringan Gilhaize* being displaced.

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Robert Burns. *The Letters of Robert Burns*. 2nd edition, edited by G. Ross Roy, from the edition of J. De Lancey Ferguson. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1985. 2 vols.

The appearance of Professor Roy's complete revision of the late De Lancey Ferguson's edition of the collected *Letters* of Burns is the most important event in Burns Studies since the publication of Kinsley's edition of the *Poems and Songs* in 1968. Whether our interest is chiefly in his poetry or his life, Burns's letters are essential documents, which in Scott's words exhibit "all the force of the writer's talents." Time and again, they supply information which is simply not to be found anywhere else. Considered together, they provide both a remarkably detailed factual record of Burns's busy life as poet, farmer, and exciseman, and his own uniquely valuable commentary upon it.

This revised edition is in many respects a model of exact and unobtrusive scholarship. At no point does Professor Roy come between the text and the reader. Nor does he make the mistake of dismissing on grounds of date De Lancey Ferguson's Introduction and Notes. Instead, he makes use wherever he can

of his predecessor's words, keeping the greater part of the original Introduction, and silently linking in his Notes new material to old, almost as if he were the Bard invisibly mending the heritage of Scottish song for successive volumes of Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*. He does this because, like Burns working with Johnson, he respects the tradition to which he belongs, and cares more about others than himself. This modest and scholarly approach is greatly to preferred to a showy demonstration of biographical or critical revisionism for its own sake.

Special interest attaches, quite naturally, to previously uncollected letters. However, it probably conveys more accurately the flavor of the second edition of the *Letters* to consider an example of Professor Roy's treatment of an already familiar text. De Lancey Ferguson in his day gave a more reliable text of the famous autobiographical letter of August 1787 to Dr. John Moore than any previous editor had done. He also supplied informative notes on the sources of Burns's many quotations. Ross Roy keeps this general framework, checking against the original manuscript the reading of every syllable and comma of the text. (Time and again, his texts are more faithful in particulars to what Burns wrote than anything previously in print). And at two crucial points in the Notes, he assists the reader by identifying books referred to by the poet. The first of these occurs where Burns writes, "I met with these pieces in Mas[s]on's English Collection, one of my school-books.—" Professor Roy's note informs us directly and unfussily that the work in question is Arthur Masson's *Collection of Prose and Verse from the Best English Authors*, and that Burns probably made use of the second edition of 1767. This information is not new, but De Lancey Ferguson did not include it in his Notes, and it is in fact part of the essential background to the study of Burns as a letter-writer—as it happens, Burns modelled his own lifelong epistolary style on examples included by Masson. Again, Professor Roy saves hours of library research by identifying all of these volumes referred to in the following passage:

> My knowledge of ancient story was gathered from Salmon's and Guthries' geographical grammars; my knowledge of modern manners, and of literature and criticism, I got from the Spectator.—These, with Pope's works, some plays of Shakespear, Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, The

> Pantheon, Locke's Essay on human understanding, Stackhouse's history of the bible, Justice's British Gardiner's directory, Boyle's lectures, Allan Ramsay's works, Taylor's scripture doctrine of original sin, a select Collection of English songs, and Hervey's meditations had been the extent of my reading.—

It is difficult to exaggerate the value of Professor Roy's exact and helpful Notes on such an important and frequently consulted letter as this.

Possibly the most intriguing of the letters now first collected is one written to Henry Mackenzie when Burns was on the point of leaving Edinburgh in May 1787. Mackenzie himself endorsed the manuscript: "Robt Burns May 1787 Remarkable Anecdote to shew the good Effects of *Moral Reading*." The anecdote is best given in Burns's own words:

> It is said often that the world reads and is never mended: I shall tell you a real matter of fact which happened in my own observation, and I tell it you because [I know (*deleted*)] you are a little interested in it.— A dear friend of mine, and the truly cleverest fellow I ever saw, was very fond of a girl in the neighbourhood who doated on him distractedly.— He was bred to the sea, a lad of much better than ordinary education, and glowed with unbounded ambition; she too was very pretty, and knew a little more of the politesse of life than most of her compeers.— He was going abroad not to return for some time, and stung with passion, knowing she had many admirers, he formed a common but very wicked resolution respecting her, and hinted to me his plan.— I had just then got the Man of the World and lent it him, not indeed with a moral design but as something that pleased me.— This was two evenings before the fatal interview was to have happened; and calling on him, as usual, next evening to ask his opinion of the book, I shall never forget the horror with which he mentioned his tomorrow night's enterprise; and this moment she makes him one of the best of wives.—
>
> I give you this seemingly romantic but real story, because as an Author and as a Man it must highly gratify your feelings.—

It seems likely that the friend to whom Burns refers here is Captain Richard Brown, elsewhere identified as having encouraged him to think of publishing his work, but also, ironically enough, as a bad influence on his own sexual conduct.

When it comes to letters, contexts are vitally important. Wallace's edition of the letters between Burns and Mrs. Dunlop (1898) demonstrated how much it can help to have access to both sides of a correspondence. In modern scholarly publishing, however, scale of treatment is strictly controlled by cost. No letters to Burns are included here; nor are details given of the whereabouts even of those in public collections. This is a disappointment, for which the publisher must bear responsibility. Nevertheless, Professor Roy improves on the 1931 edition by including as an appendix the list of letters to Burns prepared for his first editor, James Currie, first printed in the *Burns Chronicle* in 1933.

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Clark Hunter. *The Life and Letters of Alexander Wilson.* Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society. 1983. 456 pp. 21 illustrations, 3 maps, vignettes from Thomas Bewick. American Philosophical Society Memoirs Series, Vol. 154.

Alexander Wilson -- Ornithologist

It has been almost twenty years since a major contribution on the life of Alexander Wilson has been published. Clark Hunter's short biography fills a void in modern Wilson scholarship and should inspire further research and publication. Wilson's life and contributions have had a shroud of controversy cast over them—due more to the foibles of friends and associates and less to the acts of the man himself.

Alexander Wilson, an unhappy and brooding man, spent much of his life in solitude and loneliness which are perhaps essential attributes for one who writes poetry, observes nature and plays the flute. He was, however, interested in the actions of his fellowmen during his young adult years in Scotland—an

interest that at times was overzealous and led to unfortunate consequences. In fact, his talent for writing satirical poetry on issues and personalities in Paisley, Scotland, his birthplace in 1766, resulted in an unfortunate lawsuit and humiliation for his family. For this reason Wilson left Scotland in 1794 to seek a better life in America. His early political radicalism changed to a strong republican attachment to his adopted country.

Wilson came to America a penniless unknown weaver whose poetry in Scotland was mistaken on occasion for that of Robert Burns. He had published a small volume of *Poems* in 1790 which did not bring him the fame he desired and he despaired of succeeding by his pen. He was discouraged further in Philadelphia to find that his early training as a weaver could not be depended upon as a source for a decent living wage. As a result Wilson utilized his learning gained in reading and self-education to become a schoolmaster from 1796 to 1806.

It was at his last position as a schoolmaster in Gray's Ferry near Philadelphia that Alexander Wilson made the fortunate acquaintance of William Bartram, the naturalist. This association was the turning point in Wilson's life and led to his avid interest in birds and to a determination to publish the first extensive American ornithology. He drew birds in imitation of the style of Mark Catesby and George Edwards, successful naturalist-illustrators of the 18th century. He was assisted in the endeavor by Alexander Lawson, an engraver and fellow Scotsman. Lawson is due almost as much credit as Wilson for the success of the landmark publication. Concurrent with his work on drawing birds Wilson also served as assistant editor of a new edition of Rees's *Cyclopaedia* for the publisher, Samuel F. Bradford. Bradford financed and published Wilson's nine-volume *American Ornithology*, the first color-plate book printed in America. The first volume was issued in 1808 and the eighth and ninth volumes appeared in 1814, a year after Wilson's death from dysentery.

In order to identify more species and observe their habits, Alexander Wilson traveled by stage and on foot from Portland, Maine to St. Augustine, Florida and from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. It was on the later journey that he had an encounter which resulted in the eclipse of the importance of his pioneer work and its magnificent publication. Had Alexander Wilson not tried to solicit subscriptions to his ornithology in Louisville, Ky., in March 1810, John James Audubon might never have published

Birds of America! In a chance meeting at Audubon's store, Wilson showed the Frenchman his bird drawings in an attempt to secure a subscription from Audubon. Audubon compared his drawings, done as a pastime, to Wilson's and realized how superior his life-size sketches were to the smaller, more primitive attempts of Wilson. Many Audubon authorities are convinced that this brief association with Wilson caused Audubon to resolve to draw all the birds in America in life-size and publish them in a grand scale unequalled in publishing history.

The chance meeting between Audubon and Wilson also fueled a controversy unequalled in natural history. Charges of plagerism by both artists of each other's work were made by friends and staunch supporters. Vitriolic accusations were made, particularly by the Wilson camp, until today it is virtually impossible to fathom the truth. Records were falsified and confusion created after Wilson's untimely death in 1813 by George Ord who harbored a deep hatred of Audubon.

Hunter in his account has not dwelt at length on the Audubon-Wilson affair and for that reason his biography is unique, refreshing and welcome. The book is also enhanced by vignettes from Thomas Bewick's wood engravings. Hunter perhaps devotes too much space to Wilson's early life and literary effort. Were it not for his publication of the *American Ornithology*, Wilson would be a mere footnote in literature as an imitator of Robert Burns. His works on American birds earned him a place of major importance in natural history. He is the "Father of American Ornithology," and has been called "the pioneer writer of the bird essay." Although Wilson travelled only the eastern United States north of Florida, he identified and listed all but 23 indigenous land birds known in America. Thirty-nine of the species he discovered were new to science. For these accomplishments Alexander Wilson deserves more exposure in modern scientific literature. Hunter's biography of Wilson is an unbiased, well written and researched account and can be considered a major contribution to Alexander Wilson scholarship.

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Alexander Wilson -- Poet

Alexander Wilson (1766-1813) is no longer the well-known poet he once was; in fact he is not even represented in *The Oxford Book of Scottish Verse* (1966), although he was featured prominently in the anthologies of the nineteenth century. In 1825 Allan Cunningham wrote of "his homely and vigorous style, his scorn of all ornament, his directness of purpose, and his rough energy" and added, "whatever was present to his eye, and manifest to his ear, he could paint with a life and a humour which Burns seems alone to rival . . ." Wilson's "Watty and Meg: or the Wife Reformed" (the title varies) of 1795 was immensely popular for a half-century after its publication. It was, in fact, variously attributed to Burns and to Hector MacNeil whose "Scotland's Skaith" of the same year was an even more popular work. Wilson's work has also been attributed to James Wilson ('Claudero,' d. 1787), but Clark Hunter has laid to rest all these misattributions in his beautifully produced book

From his earliest days in Paisley Wilson seems to have been predestined to move at some time to the United States because he was baptised by John Witherspoon, later to become the President of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Wilson had an active career in Scotland, starting work as a herd boy in 1777 when his father was obliged to withdraw him from Paisley Grammar School because of hard times, partly as a result of the cessation of trade with America caused by the American Revolution. Soon Wilson was apprenticed weaver to his brother-in-law, and he later travelled as a packman, a trade at which he did not prosper, although the constant walking through the countryside of lowland Scotland gave him an opportunity to observe native bird life. Before he had read Robert Burns's poems (unless he chanced on one or two of them circulating in MS.) Wilson was known locally as a rhymester. He subscribed for two copies of Burns's poems, and was probably inspired by them to try his own luck at publishing.

Wilson's first appearance in print was not at all auspicious. In 1790 he had printed by John Neilson of Paisley *The Hollander, or Light Weight*, a satirical attack on a silk manufacturer William Henry who sued the author for criminal libel and incitement to unrest, but the case never came to trial.

In 1790 also Wilson published *Poems* in Paisley, and the following year he brought out an expanded edition in Edinburgh, *Poems: Humorous, Satirical and Serious*. These were the only two collections the poet published in Scotland. Of the first edition 600 copies were printed, but sales were slow perhaps, as Hunter suggests, because there were then so many "Burns imitators, such as Lapraik, Sillar, Tait, and Sherrefs." Of these, Wilson fared the best—there were five collected editions of his poetry and miscellaneous prose published in the nineteenth century.

It requires genius such as that of Burns to make purely local events universally recognizable, and for this reason some of Wilson's poetry did not travel well, and it has not aged well. But a poem such as his "Watty and Meg" works because the situation it depicts (domestic strife) is widely appreciated. When he wrote merely clever poems like "Auchtertool" his invention was not quite up to the mark. Even Burns was hard pressed to be really good at this sort of verse ("Husband, husband, cease your strife"), as was James Hogg ("The Village of Balmaquhapple"). The pawkieness which was enjoyed in the poetry and which became a standard ingredient of Kailyard fiction in the nineteenth century is not now admired—most works of this sort are no longer even read. There is just too much for the modern reader to wade through on the chance of discovering even a semi-precious gem. I think that Wilson's poetry deserves a bit better than the near total neglect into which it has fallen in recent years: not mentioned in Maurice Lindsay's *History of Scottish Literature* (1977), or Trevor Royle's *Companion to Scottish Literature* (1983) or Roderick Watson's *The Literature of Scotland* (1984).

Wilson was obviously influenced by Burns, whom he may have met, and to whom we known that he wrote at least two letters, one enclosing a poem and requesting Burns's strictures. These letters do not appear to have survived, nor do Burns's answers, if any, but Burns did ask to borrow a copy of Wilson's book of poems from his friend Mrs. Dunlop in 1792.

As a center of weaving, Paisley was also a center of radicalism in the later eighteenth century, and Wilson became a member of the Friends of Reform in that city; Hunter believes that the poet wrote some of the material which the society circulated, often clandestinely. He certainly was the author of a poem about the owner of the Long Mills in Paisley—"The Shark;

or Lang Mills Detected." He also sent the owner of the mills, William Sharp, a copy of the poem together with a letter demanding five guineas not to publish the poem. Sharp sued and protracted maneuvering ensued. This and imprisonment in January 1794 under warrant for having distributed handbills calling a meeting of the Reformers, made Wilson realize that he had little future in Scotland and that it would be wiser, Hunter writes, to "transport" himself to the United States rather than wait and be transported to Botany Bay, so he left in May 1794.

It took Wilson some time to adjust to his new country; in 1801 he wrote that he had "lost all relish for this country . . ." but three years later he became a citizen. Apparently by 1803 Wilson had determined to produce what was to become *American Ornithology*, a nine-volume work which appeared between 1808 and 1814, and while this certainly was his main preoccupation, he still managed to publish *The Foresters: A Poem Descriptive of a Pedestrian Journey to the Falls of Niagara in the Autumn of 1803* [for 1804], a work of over 2,200 lines. The trip was taken to gather information on birds, however, and it was this pursuit which gave us the pioneer work on ornithology in America.

Mr. Clark Hunter has brought together for the first time all the known letters written by Wilson, a total of only 150 of which 56 are taken from printed sources and a few from transcriptions in another hand. We may judge that many more were written—for example, in the first five years, almost to the day, that Wilson lived in the United States only eight letters are known. In fact the poet complained to his father in 1798 of the "cold silence to all my letters" to friends in Scotland. As is the way with letters (dividing them among surviving family members, gifts of single letters to friends or libraries) even Wilson's letters to his parents are obviously incomplete as here gathered.

Although only sixteen letters written in Scotland are published in this collection, it is interesting to note that nowhere in them does Wilson refer to birds; when he refers to matters other than business and a recounting of his travels as a packman (he describes himself as a "Pedlar . . . despicable as the vanities he deals in") it is as a poet that he writes. Both in Scotland and America Wilson wrote rhyming epistles, sometimes interspersed with prose, but his American correspondence turned increasingly to details of his search for new species of birds. He was always on the lookout on his travels for subscribers to his work, seeking

the financial security which to the end eluded him. What is fascinating in reading these letters is to see the impression the land made on the traveller-artist-businessman. His acute observation makes this book an important source of information for a good part of the country east of the Mississippi.

Clark Hunter's Introduction and Life form the first part of the book (113 pages). The subject has been very carefully researched in both printed sources and manuscript material. Hunter gives the reader an excellent feel for the Scotland at the end of the eighteenth century, particularly Paisley, Hunter's own city, but is a little less sure of himself when following his subject around the United States.

The 150 letters make up the bulk of the book; these are followed by four appendicies, a glossary of Scottish words and a bibliography of primary and secondary material. The letters themselves have an indication as to location of the MS. or the printed source from which they are taken. Some extracts from a now disappeared journal are printed to fill in details of Wilson's travels. There should be a fairly large cache of Wilson's letters somewhere, since Hunter has taken the text of several of them from the Revd. Alexander B. Grosart's *The Poems and Literary Prose of Alexander Wilson* published in 1876, and it seems improbable that they have been destroyed since then. But Hunter appears to accept as genuine everything which Grosart published, complaining only "As a minister of religion he was probably more inhibited than Paton [Allan Park Paton, author of *Wilson the Ornithologist*] by contemporary social and literary standards and he made many excisions from the texts." This was not Grosart's only shortcoming; given his known unreliability, even dishonesty, in editing other works (particularly Robert Fergusson) readers should be cautious of accepting any text which first appeared in Grosart and for which no MS. is known.

Mr. Clark Hunter has given us an important book about a poet of no small ability, and a naturalist of very great ability. He and the American Philosophical Society have also given us a very handsome book.

G.R.R.

David Hewitt and Michael Spiller, eds. *Literature of the North.* Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press. 1983. vii + 211 pp.

Literature of the North is a volume of fourteen essays on the poetry and novels of northern Scotland, by fourteen members of the English department at the University of Aberdeen. The subjects under discussion range from the fourteenth to the twentieth century. As a whole the collection of essays is enthusiastic, readable, and not too analytical or theoretical. I suspect that the contributors were requested to aim at a wide audience, to include large doses of biography, not to expect too much knowledge of the part of their readers, and to make as many comparisons as possible with well-known English, Irish, continental, or American writers.

The essays are arranged in chronological order, with helpful suggestions for further reading at the end of each paper. For the most part the emphasis is on surveying an author's life-work and arriving at some judgment of that work, rather than inquiring closely into particular texts. As many of the poets and novelists are not widely recognized outside Scotland, the essays contain a large number of extensive quotations.

First is Matthew P. McDiarmid, whose article "Northern Initiative: John of Fordun, John Barbour and the 'Saints' Legends'" discusses the poetry of three fourteenth-century Aberdonian poets: John of Fordun, Barbour, and the unknown author of *The Scottish Saints' Legends.* These three men, McDiarmid argues, are the greatest of the surviving writers of early Scotland, and they laid the foundation for a national culture which would be centrally concerned with the struggle for freedom. McDiarmid asserts that such a precarious nation required to be defended by determined, committed freemen, rather than by mere serfs, and that this historical accident meant that "Scotland, so much earlier than England or France, had done away with serfdom" in "consequence of the fight for survival." From Barbour's time to the twentieth century, Scottish literature has been primarily concerned with the theme of freedom, according to McDiarmid.

Several essays in *Literature of the North* deal with the effect of folk material on the work of sophisticated poets and novelists. These include Flora Alexander's "Richard Holland's 'Buke of the Howlat,'" David Hewitt's "The Ballad World and Alexander Ross,"

and J. Graeme Roberts' "Tradition and Pattern in the Short Stories of George Mackay Brown." Flora Alexander's piece draws interesting conclusions about the nature of the audience for Holland's fifteenth century allegory about the education of an owl. Hewitt's article applauds the eighteenth-century Alexander Ross for his "revolutionary step" of using "local dialect [which] must have made his first audience conscious of themselves" in a way that the earlier ballads (since they lacked the status of high art) "could never do." J. G. Roberts finds local northern legends and ballads reflected in the rituals, ceremonies, and seasonal rythms and patterns of the fiction of George Mackay Brown, with his combination of (so-called) primitivism with careful craftsmanship.

Joan H. Pittock's "James Beattie: A Friend to All" recounts Beattie's academic life, his patronage and his popularity, with fascinating glimpses of Beattie's relations with other Enlightenment figures, particularly his contemporary David Hume, whom the poet attacked for his religious skepticism. We also hear Beattie complaining to Thomas Gray that "almost all our Scotch authors" "are too metaphysical: I wish they would learn to speak more to the heart."

In "George MacDonald's Fiction," David S. Robb tries to revive interest in a Victorian novelist who was, in his day, a best-seller and a respected poet. Robb argues that MacDonald was "not merely a Victorian eccentric, but a writer whose works constitute a real and valuable contribution to the Scottish novel as a whole." His survey makes a strong case for re-evaluating George MacDonald's allegories, fantasies, children's stories, and novels.

The importance of regional dialect and language is of course an issue in many of these essays. Colin Milton's "From Charles Murray to Hugh MacDiarmid: Vernacular Revival and Scottish Renaissance" discusses the re-emergence of Scots vernacular as a poetic force in northern literature from the 1860's to the 1920's and beyond. Milton discusses his topic in the larger context of mainstream authors like Thomas Hardy (who relied heavily on *English* dialect), Lewis Grassic Gibbon, John Buchan, and Stevenson, Kipling, and T. S. Eliot.

J. Derrick McClure, in "Fionn Mac Colla: Unity Through Trilingualism," applauds a twentieth-century novelist for "attempting to restore national unity by reversing the movement

towards uniformity of English monolingualism . . . . The struggle of Gaelic against Scots, and the far more desperate struggle of both of these against the English, were never necessary; and could yet, at least in principle, end in reconciliation."

Isobel Murray's "Action and Narrative Stance in 'A Scots Quair'" is a strong, well-reasoned refutation of the "received wisdom that the trilogy of novels forming *A Scots Quair* falls off, is disappointing." The critic asserts that Gibbon's three novels show a change and a gradual maturation in the author's style, themes, characterization, and narrative method. Through the sequence of the three works, the heroine matures, the action becomes (in a sense) more distanced and wide-ranging, and the tone becomes more analytical, complex, and (again in a sense) objective. I thought this article very strong in its rejection of certain critical errors of the past. Its main comparisons are, interestingly, with American experimental novelists such as Dos Passos, Steinbeck, and Faulkner.

Thomas Crawford's "Edwin Muir as a Political Poet" discusses the modern Orkney-born poet in a humane and non-reductive way, and finds considerable social relevance: "Muir comments on problems that are still among the most insistent facing western man—what unemployment does to the human spirit, the tyranny of right and left, the threat of nuclear war."

Social relevance and concreteness of detail are also found by G. J. Watson in "The Novels of Neil Gunn." Watson also stresses the epiphanic "moment of delight" in Gunn's work, and compares the novelist to Wordsworth, Proust, Dickens, Lawrence, and others in his ability to "embody some of the finest evocations of boyhood that I know."

In "Eric Linklater as Comic Novelist," Andrew Rutherford assesses the humorous side of one of Aberdeen's greatest novelists. Emphasis is placed on Linklater's distrust of intellectualism and modernism in literature and in life. It is interesting to hear the young Linklater expressing his reservations about T. S. Eliot and Hugh MacDiarmid as early as 1934. Perhaps this article relies too heavily on biography rather than criticism, but nevertheless it should inspire readers to pick up Linklater's comic novel *Juan in America.*

Despite the many strengths of this collection of essays, it can become slightly tedious to read fourteen hymns of praise with so little in the way of deprecation or reservation. I felt that

Michael Spiller was a little too one-sided in his remarks on two seventeenth-century authors in "Pioneers of Prose: Sir Thomas Urquhart and Sir George Mackenzie." It was a relief, therefore, to arrive at the last essay, in which J. H. Alexander assesses with apparent balance, ambiguity, and detachment "The English Poetry of Iain Crichton Smith." This piece is an introductory survey of Smith's English verse. Smith's pursuit of nature and grace, and his dislike of rationalism, are well illustrated by a quotation from his "Hume" of 1965:

> More than this I do not love you,
> Hume of the reasonable mind.
> There was an otter crossing the sound,
> A salmon in his cold teeth.

At other times the poetry of Iain Crichton Smith is not as good, according to this critic, and his fifth collection contains "several distressingly slick poems, making easy points easily." Of the fourteen essays, I found this the most convincing and inviting.

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Robert Burns. *The Kilmarnock Poems (Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, 1786).* Ed. Donald A. Low. London & Melbourne: J. M. Dent. 1985. xxxiv + 188 pp.

At last count there were sixteen facsimiles of the Kilmarnock (1786) edition of Burns's poems as well as a mishmash facsimile of the 1786 edition with those poems which were added in 1787, and two miniature (2.9cm.) editions from the heyday of miniature books, the 1890's. Happily Donald A. Low's edition is not yet another facsimile, but a scholarly edition of the poems which appeared, and in the order in which they appeared, in the Kilmarnock edition. With all the editions of Burns's poems which have poured from the presses of almost every English-speaking land (and very many non-English-speaking lands too), it seems odd that Low's is the first truly scholarly edition of these poems as they first appeared, and which set Scotland's best-

known poet on his road to immortality.

The text is set out in more compact form than that used in the original volume—where the 1786 volume took 223 pages to print the 44 poems and songs, the Low volume compresses them into 131 pages. Even the layout of the titles is testimony to the cost of space on a page: for instance the original four lines (with the ornament, over half the page) of the first poem in the collection, "The Twa Dogs, A Tale," are given in a single line in Low. But the day of the beautiful book is apparently over. What this book gives the reader is an exact text, just as it appeared in 1786. James Kinsley's standard text in his Clarendon Press edition of 1968, as a point of comparison, does not give the poem exactly as it appeared *in print* in 1786. For example, the first line of "The Twa Dogs" reads "'TWAS in that place o' Scotland's isle," in the Kilmarnock edition, but "'TWAS in that place o' *Scotland's* isle," in Kinsley. But what was Kinsley's authority for the italicized word? It does not appear in any of the authorized editions of the poet's works published in his lifetime. I have not checked the MS. copies of the poem, but we know that Burns read proof on the editions of 1786 and 1787, and that he corrected a set of the 1793 edition for use in setting that of 1794. If he intended the word "Scotland's" to be italicized surely it would have appeared thus in at least one of these volumes.

Professor Kinsley was, of course, creating a synthetic text drawing upon printed and MS. copy, determining which he considered to be the best in each instance and then listing what he considered to be significant variants. Obviously in the example cited he did not consider italicization to be significant. There is no perfect way to establish a text, and it is certainly not my intention to fault the Kinsley text, but when we are dealing with a particular edition of a work it is of the greatest importance to have available the text exactly as it appeared in that edition, and Low's is the first scholarly edition of the 1786 volume to do so. Parenthetically, Burns himself might not have been very concerned about this matter; in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop he wrote of printing poetry, "when you prepare it for the Press, you have only to spell it right, & place the capital letters properly: as to the punctuation, the Printers do that themselves.—" Still, even if Burns did not consider such things important, modern scholars do.

Dr. Low has placed glosses of dialect words in the margins, an extremely useful method which was used by Henley and Henderson in their Centenary Edition of 1896-7 but not in a major edition since. He also includes Burns's original Glossary in an appendix, and it is worth noting what words Low feels require glossing for today's reader with the words Burns included. Of course Burns thought of himself as writing for a purely Scots, and in fact local, audience, whereas Low's audience is a much broader one. For instance the poet gives "to toss the head in pride or wantonness" for "geck" in the line "Adieu, my LIEGE! may Freedom geck" in the poem "A Dream" (line 64) whereas Low settles for the more succinct "exult." Given the whole tone of the poem I would suggest that Burns adds to the humor with the gloss, but he was not spatially constrained since the word was not marginally glossed. Burns's Preface to his volume is also relegated to the appendix; I think it a pity that the Preface and Glossary were not placed before and after the poems so that the reader would have all the original text together.

In addition to supplying a definitive text of the 1786 volume, Low has added over forty pages of notes which are a model of accuracy and concision. In them the editor gives information about the genesis of the poem and identifies the people to whom the poems are addressed or who are referred to. Following eighteenth-century custom Burns used asterisks liberally—his verse epistle to James Smith, for instance, appears as "To J. S****" with the guessing game made somewhat easier by using one asterisk for each missing letter.

A short Introduction gives the reader a well-balanced overview of the poet, his roots and his achievement. Dr. Low, who is a Reader at the University of Stirling and one of the foremost active Burns scholars, has given us a really useful book. A further volume containing the additional material in the 1787 and 1793 volumes would be a welcome follow-up to this one.

G.R.R.

Selected Short Stories of R. L. Stevenson. Introduction by Ian Campbell. Edinburgh: Ramsay Head. 1980. 264 pp.

Fred Urquhart and Giles Gordon, eds. *Modern Scottish Short Stories.* London: Faber and Faber. 1982. xii + 213 pp.

This volume of shorter works by Stevenson includes two commentaries on the art of fiction, followed by nine stories. Some of the tales are truly intriguing or even infectious, but others are disappointing and flat. In this edition there is nothing as exciting as *Kidnapped* or *Treasure Island.*

"Thrawn Janet" is the first of the stories, and succeeds admirably in its combination of comedy and supernaturalism. It also provides interesting social information on Scottish folk beliefs in bogles, "the black man," and witchcraft. Yet the ending is lame, and seems to me to point to a fundamental weakness in Stevenson's fiction. The ending has irony and comedy, but its tone is ultimately sentimental and its supernatural atmosphere is unconvincing, tinny, and anti-climactic. Although RLS can evoke eerie feelings, it is my opinion after reading this collection of his stories that he almost always trivializes the sense of mystery, horror, and the unknown by writing about those qualities without discovering the universal depths of meaning that they contain. There are plenty of skeletons, fog, and other special effects, yet unlike Conrad, Faulkner or James Hogg, Stevenson never quite seems to reach through to the eternally-satisfying or challenging questions about the nature of man, the universe, life and death, or good and evil.

Stevenson's "The Body-Snatcher" is another case in point. The last sentence of this short tale, as two grave-robbers unwrap their parcel, is fairly typical. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* would be one obvious exception, but I suggest that in general Stevenson's use of horror or the supernatural descends into mere spookiness.

On the other hand some of the later stories in this collection look ahead to greater writers like Chekhov or Conrad in their subtle evocation of mystery connected with the sea. Another interesting feature is Stevenson's use of the narrative frame, which he develops with superb effect in "Thrawn Janet" and "The Body-Snatcher."

The Introduction to this volume by Ian Campbell is good, but not as good as other work by Dr. Campbell. It succeeds well

in offering stimulating comparisons with Thomas Hardy or James, yet it fails to supply dates of composition or publication, or other basic information. No reason is given for the use of the 1912 posthumous text. I wondered why the two quotations on pages eight and nine were simply attributed to Stevenson's "Collected Poems." And in some cases it is impossible to tell whether the footnotes to the stories (for example, the one on page forty-four) have been supplied by the editor or by RLS.

Fortunately the twenty-nine authors in Fred Urquhart's and Giles Gordon's *Modern Scottish Short Stories* have not obeyed Stevenson's dictum that art should divorce itself from life. The stories in this fine collection are all "realistic" in one sense or another, and they gain immeasurably over RLS's work by their self-challenging acceptance of the reality of suffering, war, poverty, and hatred. Even the few supernatural tales, such as Naomi Mitchison's "The Sea Horse" and Neil Gunn's "The Ghost's Story," place the burden of belief or disbelief on the reader, through their use of enigmatic narrators who may or may not be deluded. "I know it is hard to believe," says the story-teller near the end of "The Sea Horse," "and it does not fit in right with the clever kind of world we have made" (p. 31).

Although the stories by Mitchison and Gunn both describe supernatural events, they also question the nature of war and its effects on ancient and modern Scottish life. On just a few occasions I felt that Neil Gunn had veered too much to the opposite extreme from Stevenson, in imposing an obvious political massage on his otherwise simple tale of thirteenth-century life. In some passages the author becomes a lecturer, and most readers will feel manipulated, even though we may all agree with the political vision which he expresses. The freedom and the illusion of fiction are destroyed.

Most of the works in the book tell about ordinary people in mundane situations and develop simple, universal themes with humor, pathos, and compassion. Edward Gaitens' "Growing Up" and Margaret Hamilton's "Bung" describe the hard lives of men who work (if they can find work) in the shipyards on the Clyde. Muriel Spark's "A Sad Tale's Best for Winter" is a wry tale about a down-and-out fellow who receives a legacy from his aunt on the one condition that he reform himself and abandon "the sin of whisky." Luckily the lawyer chosen to oversee this proposed reformation has a taste for whisky himself, and he ends by

proposing as a toast, "Here's a short life and a merry one!" Less amusing but very touching is George Friel's "A Couple of Old Bigots," a tale of Catholic and Protestant families in a mining community, with the theme of the reconciliation of opposites.

Often these stories show the disparity between an author's ideal of unity, and the painful disunity that exists in the lives and minds of his characters. Giles Gordon's "Liberated People," an ironic telling of how it feels to reach middle age, manages to suggest symbolic implications that recall past divisions in Scottish history. Somewhat similar is "Joy As It Flies" by Eric Linklater, in which a middle-aged man terminates his affair with a young woman by telling her, "Go home . . . for you're wasting your time. There are no words for it in any language. Joy's inenarable . . . . " J. F. Hendry's "Peepshow" is faintly reminiscent of William Blake in its presentation of a small boy's vision of "that irrupting magic" which he hopes to preserve by taming a butterfly. The inevitable defeat, which clinches the identity of boy and artist, comes at the end.

Politics figure largely in a few of the tales, but the editors Urquhart and Gordon have had the sense to avoid works that are too obviously polemical, as well as to include pieces by authors of various persuasions, without too much emphasis on "relevance." Angus Wolfe Murray's "I Want to Go Now," all about a future Scotland gripped by socialist revolution, seems to embody a plea to escape from politics and factionalism to a realm of free imagination and love. This story faintly echoes the events of 1746 with its depiction of a Highland family waiting to be executed by the revolutionary soldiers of the government in Edinburgh. Nationalism, like politics, is sometimes quietly stressed in these tales, but I suspect most non-Scottish readers would be surprised that nationalism does not play a larger role in the collection.

Most of the irony in these twenty-nine stories is of the general kind that invites us to take a broader view of life, rather than the more directional irony which points at a specific moral or social target. In "Bung" by Margaret Hamilton the protagonist is too short-sighted to notice the obvious signs of his wife's infidelities. Robin Jenkins' "Exile" tells of a lonely retired schoolteacher in Spain who forgets her misery on receiving a parcel "of inexhaustible riches" containing letters from her eight-year-old former pupils. Perhaps the funniest story of the lot is

Elspeth Davie's "Allergy," a very inventive account of a man whose allergy to eggs comes to dominate his vaguely amorous relations with his landlady until eventually eggs become a metaphor of human life.

Fred Urquhart and Giles Gordon deserve praise for their gathering of this kaleidoscopic collection of tales from the 1960's and 70's. They have brought together a wide variety of pieces which illustrate both the strength and diversity of Scottish life and Scottish writing. The only reservation I can suggest is that the style of the writing is too uniform, and it sometimes seems as if all the stories might have been written by the same person. This criticism is one that would apply to almost any modern collection of short stories, however, and it mainly reflects the ascendancy of the realistic plain style at the present time. At times I felt myself regretting that the admittedly naive style and outlook of former writers like Robert Louis Stevenson has been so thoroughly outlawed in the current stage of literary progress.

Scotland is of course the country which virtually invented the modern short story, thanks to James Hogg and, to a lesser degree, other *Blackwood's* story-tellers of the 1820's and 30's. It is pleasing to see the continuity of this tradition through later writers like Stevenson and on up to the present day.

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Alexander Broadie. *The Circle of John Mair: Logic and Logicians in Pre-Reformation Scotland*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1985. viii + 280 pp.

Everyone is conscious of the important contribution of the Scottish Enlightenment to letters and philosophy. That tradition is still a living one for most students of philosophy through the severe logic and hard thinking of David Hume. Few students, either in philosophy or literature, have been imformed of a forerunner of the Scottish Enlightenment which took place on the eve of the Reformation. *The Circle of John Mair* is the name of a group of Scottish scholars, mainly in Logic, Philosophy and Theology, who distinguished themselves at the University of Paris from approximately 1495 to 1540. These scholars returned

from Paris to Scotland and set out the foundations of university learning at the University of St. Andrews, the University of Glasgow, and the University of Aberdeen. The laying out of the foundations of such a tradition of learning, which has continued down to our own time, would be a sufficient monument in itself to the vision and character of these scholars. The fact that these writers produced works of great merit in Logic, Philosophy and Theology is a sure sign that they ranked high among their European peers. Yet, for centuries, the works of these thinkers have been a closed book to all but a few antiquarians and historians.

And yet the sceptic may ask: "What current value could dusty old tomes on Logic and written in Latin have for a technological and scientific twentieth century student?" It is the judgment of Alexander Broadie in his new book *The Circle of John Mair* that the works of the Scottish Logicians in the Pre-Reformation period "are of great value not only as serving antiquarian concerns but also as making a contribution to topics of lively interest to logicians working in twentieth-century problems." Does Broadie prove his case? The answer is an unequivocal *yes*! In a work, which is a model of careful logical, linguistic and philosophical analysis, Alexander Broadie has recovered a long-forgotten part of Scottish philosophy and language analysis from the hold of past time.

Still, Alexander Broadie does much more. He has exposed the travesty which has passed for the name *Medieval Logic* especially since the time of the Renaissance. The new method, whether in the form of the rhetoric of Petrus Ramus or the new logic of science in Francis Bacon, looked on its Medieval predecessor as an ancient forebearer which multiplied syllogisms. In this, the properly Medieval contribution to logic and language study was forgotten. It is highly significant that an account of syllogistic argument, that is, of Aristotle's notion in the *Prior Analytics* does not figure as the title of any chapter in Broadie's book. The matter is treated, of course, in reference to the subject-matter of the various chapters, especially in chapter seven in connection with *Consequences*. Broadie correctly emphsizes those logical theories which we owe to the Medieval Logicians. First, the treatment of the logical properties of terms in the Middle Ages made major advances on Aristotle. Second, the doctrine of supposition enabled the medievals to give a clear

account of the way "quantifier expressions signify." Third, "the doctrines of ampliation, restriction, and alienation are also characteristically medieval doctrines, not investigated by Aristotle, but clearly of the greatest logical importance in view of the need to be able to state, for example, the truth conditions of past- and future-tensed propositions, an area which has been within the fold of modern formal logic, since the late Arthur Prior's seminal work on tense logic." Fourth, the medievals provided an account of exponible propositions. Indeed, medieval logic "stayed close to natural language and sought to formulate rules of valid inference for propositions in natural language." Fifth, in the area of the syllogism too, advances were made by the medievals.

It is to the credit of Alexander Broadie that he achieves for the study of major Scottish logicians of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a kind of work which is on the same scholarly and analytic level as that done for the better known medieval philosophers and logicians such as St. Anselm, Abelard, William of Sherwood, Peter of Spain, Roger Bacon, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. The past twenty years have seen enormous advances in the study of Medieval Logic Emphasis has shifted from the study of one or two great logicians to a careful study of logical traditions. Indeed, since the logic of the high and late Middle Ages conveniently divides into *Terminist Logic* and *Modistic Logic*, it makes for more comprehensive study to present a broader picture of all those medieval logicians, known and anonymous, who contributed significantly to the subject. The recently published *Cambridge History of Later Medieval philosophy* (1982), ed. Kretzmann, Kenny and Pinborg, is a sure guide to the present state of the scholarship. And the more recently published papers of the Sixth European Symposium on Medieval Logic and Semantics, under the title *The Rise of British Logic* (1983), ed. P. Osmund Lewry, although something of a mis-nomer in that all the representatives in the volume are Norman English (that is, there are no Welsh, Scottish or Irish representatives), shows the importance, indeed the necessity, of a careful study of all known treatises on logical matters in the Middle Ages. In fact, the combination of the latter volume and *The Circle of John Mair* goes a long way towards setting out the foundations for the scientific study of logic by Scottish and English scholars in Medieval Europe.

The first chapter, which is biographical, is brief. Nevertheless, all the essential facts are accounted for. Brief biographies are presented for James Liddell (Ledelh), John Mair, David Cranston, George Lokert, Robert Caubraith, Gilbert Crab, and William Manderston.

The second chapter presents a discussion of the word *Term*. It consists of a discussion of the nature of the *Definition* and the *Term*. A definition is described not as a *propositio* but as an *oratio*. An *oratio* is defined in turn as "an aggregate of several *dictiones* [words] having a due mutual grammatical connection." The discussion of the definition and *definitum* in the works of David Cranston and Gilbert Crab will remind the modern student of the distinction between *Use and Mention*. The reference to this matter on p. 11 in the quotation from Gilbert Crab might have been elucidated with reference to modern notions of *Use and Mention*. Broadie judiciously points out that these logicians, like G.E. Moore in modern times, recognized that some terms are indefinable in virtue of their unanalyzability. The signification of terms, specifically, the manner in which syncategorematic words signify is treated well. Broadie presents John Mair's definition of *Term* on p. 19. The first of five definitions presents the *Term* as "every sign placable in a proposition."

In chapter three entitled *Properties of Terms*, Broadie presents a carefully condensed account of signification, material and personal supposition, the supposition of relatives, ampliation and restriction, truth conditions and ampliation. It is impossible in the course of this review to do adequate justice to Broadie's accomplishment. He has packed an enormous amount of very thorough logical analysis into seven long chapters. Moreoever, he has presented topics in this and the following chapters which could be subject-matter for further study. He rightly presents the definition of signification as having to do with representing things to a cognitive faculty. He shows that these logicians by no means confused grammatical and logical form. These logicians have a very strict understanding of "a mental proposition." Indeed, it is one which is fully consonant with modern formal logic. Thus, what does not contribute to the signification of a mental proposition by signifying in that proposition is not part of the proposition. As John Mair puts it, "Spoken words were invented in order that we may be able to signify our concepts easily to others, for we do not understand

like angels" (*Term*.3rd).

Chapter four continues the discussion of *Terms*. It gives an account of division, singular and common terms, and opposed terms. The modern student of literature and language will find great value in chapters two to four. From these chapters, the student will learn, maybe for the first time, that Medieval Logic is closely tied to *Semantics*.

In Chapters five, six, and seven, the modern student will find an excellent example of the way in which the natural language used by the medieval logician lends itself to formalization in a modern mode. In Chapter five, Broadie judiciously presents the similarities and differences between medieval and modern accounts of the Categorical Proposition. In presenting the account of Hypothetical Propositions, he alerts the reader to a significant difference in meaning from modern accounts (p. 127). Considerable detail is presented on hypotheticals, illative conditionals, promissory conditionals, conjunctions and disjunctions. All of this is presented in a manner which makes the medieval Latin text accessible to the modern student of formal logic. Chapter six presents an account of expoible propositions. Broadie tells us that "an exponible proposition is a proposition which contains an exponible term signifying exponibly rather than materially, and an exponible term is one whose presence in a proposition renders that propostition exponible" (p. 172). The reader wonders whether such circumlocution is really useful. Yet, the account of the term "exponible" in the medieval writers, does, as Broadie points out in a witty manner, leave the reader seeking some help. Broadie tells the reader that "exponible" could be translated as "appropriate for [or even "in need of"] exposition." He presents John Mair's definition as follows:

> An exponible proposition is a proposition which has an obscure sense by reason of a sign placed in it. Two differentiae are set out in this definition. First, 'has an obscure sense' is said. Through failure to obey this condition 'Fire is hot' is not exponible. 'By reason of a sign placed in it' is said. Through failure to obey this condition this and its like are not exponible: 'A man's *a* ass every brayer is not' . . . That proposition is not exponible, since its obscure sense does not arise by reason

> of a sign, but by reason of this, that a term is distributed in relation to two terms of which one has determinate supposition and the other has merely confused supposition in relation to the term. What are the signs at issue? I think this depends more on usage than on art. [Ex.3vb] (p. 173)

Further, Broadie tells us that the word "exponible" became a kind of umbrella under which logicians listed words which they thought it worth investigating. The crux in the above quotation is of course the status of *a*. This may appear like hair-picking to the modern reader, but in strict logical terms the little words and letters play a role, often a vital role in meaning. The inability of these logicians to come up with a successful account of exponible in terms of a logical langugage is acknowledged by Broadie. Moreover, he presents a good account of John Mair's discussion of exponibles. In this account, he again allows the modern reader to see clearly the important relation and distinction between grammatical and logical form.

In chapter seven, Broadie presents an excellent modern "translation" of the rules of vaid consequence. Using the *introducorium* of John Mair as his source he presents the rule from Mair's work, and follows with a modern formalization of the rule. For example, Mair: [Rule 1] The contradictory of the consequent of every valid consequence implies the contradictory of the antecedent. And if the contradictory of the consequent does not imply the contradictory of the antecedent the first consequence was not valid . . . etc. This rule can be represented symbolically as Rule I: P——> Q ∴ -Q——>-P. This is an elementary example. The book abounds in many such formalizations, especially in chapters five to seven.

In conclusion, one can praise the author for his Bibliography I: Logical Works of John Mair and His Scottish Associates, and Bibliography II: Modern Writings. I note just one work which might be included in the bibliography, namely Arnold Fleming's *The Medieval Scots Scholar in France*.

The bibliographical chapter, the first, is of course, very brief. The work, therefore, of the historian remains, as indeed does the work of the experts in other areas of philosophy, as well as in theology. One's sense that much more wealth of learning is hiddend in other works by these Scottish Logicians should alert

scholars to the fact that this "first" Scottish Enlightenment was broad and deep. Indeed, the fact that John Knox was a pupil of John Mair, and that he said of him "that his 'word was then held as an oracle on matters of religion'" should alert modern scholars to the very great treasure which needs to be uncovered for modern readers. Because, in the fields of Logic (including Semantics), Philosophy, and Theology, Scotland has maintained a long and ancient tradition, which, it is evident, is still a living tradition in our own times.

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Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson. *Poems*. Ed. Alexander Manson Kinghorn and Alexander Law. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press and The Association for Scottish Literary Studies. 1985. xxxv + 225 pp. The Scottish Classics Series.

F.W. Freeman. *Robert Fergusson and the Scots Humanist Compromise*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 1984. viii + 249 pp.

When Drs. Kinghorn and Law took up the task of completing the Scottish Text Society edition of Allan Ramsay after the deaths in 1957 of the editors of the first two volumes, Drs. J. Burns Martin and J.W. Oliver, Ramsay studies were at a rather low ebb. By the time the sixth and final volume of the S.T.S. set appeared in 1974, Kinghorn and Law had done much to establish Ramsay as a major influence in eighteenth-century Scottish poetry. A natural outcome of the S.T.S. set, the early volumes of which were out of print by this time, as well as Matthew P. McDiarmid's two-volume S.T.S. edition of Robert Fergusson, was a selection of the poems of Ramsay and Fergusson in one volume, edited by Kinghorn and Law, published in 1974. This volume has now been reissued in paperback, which should make it readily available to students and general readers whose incomes have not gone up as much as has the price of hardbound books.

The text remains the same as it was in the earlier edition. Like most poets, Ramsay and Fergusson benefit from selection. The editors tell us that, with two exceptions from Fergusson

("The Author's Life" and "On Night"), all the poems included in their selection are in Scots because these are "representative of their best and most typical work." No one, I think, would quarrel with this statement. Starting with James Watson's *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems* (1706-11) the revival of Scots vernacular poetry gave readers a chance to enjoy poetry written in the language of their everyday speech. This is not to suggest that "English" poetry was no longer written by Scots—think of James Thomson, Robert Blair and James Beattie—but by the end of the century there was a vernacular triumvirate too: Ramsay, Fergusson and Burns. Devotional literature, of course, continued to be written in "standard" English, as were schoolbooks [see Alexander Law's "Scottish Schoolbooks of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *SSL*, 18 & 19]. So the acceptance of the vernacular was something of an uphill fight during most of the century, although scholars such as Mary Jane Scott have recently pointed to the "Scottishness" of Thomson, but over a half-century after *The Seasons* Beattie still felt it incumbent upon himself to publish his *Scoticisms, Arranged in Alphabetical Order, Designed to Correct Improprieties of Speech and Writing.*

I do not want to suggest that truly Scottish material cannot be written in "English" (most of the vocabulary of Walter Scott's long poems is standard English), but the innovative use of Scots in poetry certainly owes a great deal to the poems we find in this collection.

The Gentle Shepherd was probably never frequently played, but in this work, too, we have Ramsay demonstrating how the vernacular is appropriate for dramatic use. It certainly was an eighteenth-century best-seller. The editors point out in their Introduction, however, that Ramsay had some difficulty with the rustic speech of his characters: as Patie, Roger and Peggy rise in social status they "lose much of their racy Scots" whereas Jenny, Bauldy and Mause retain theirs. Ramsay may have been changing his characters' speech to make it more appropriate to their stations, but I think that he was also having a sly dig at his audience, at least some of whom disdained their native tongue.

The Introduction remains as it was in the earlier edition, but the editors have enlarged the Select Bibliography to take into account recent scholarship, notably P. Zenzinger's *My Muse is British: Allan Ramsay und die Neubelebung der Schottischen*

Dichtkunst im 18. Jahrhundert (1977—Zenzinger sees Ramsay's Scottish and English work as equally important), and F.W. Freeman's book on Fergusson. The Notes remain unaltered but a useful half-page on Latin quotations has been added.

F.W. Freeman's closely argued, but I think not quite so closely reasoned, study of Fergusson pits an eighteenth-century Scotland "dominated by Presbyterian, Moderate and Whig" against a Scotland dear to Fergusson represented by "the older culture of Episcopacy, the Tory and the Jacobite." Freeman begins by examining the vernacular revival, demonstrating that Scotland was a nation divided when it came to the vernacular, citing instances of opposing reactions to its use held occasionally by the same person. The universality of Latin, Freeman argues, served as a basis for Fergusson's Scottish poetry by providing "literary models for imitation and a sound basis for the enrichment of the vernacular." Fergusson's concerns, which Freeman equates with early eighteenth-century Scots humanism, are with "order in society" coupled with "a deep reverence for law," and "the continuity of traditions" pitted against Whiggism with its belief that "luxury and superfluities bring the maximum benefit to the nation." Freeman sees in the poet too the struggle of the depraved nature of man in which the "mind must liberate the humanist from the lure of the world and from the dictates of fortune." Briefly put, Fergusson here sounds pretty much like the Presbyterian of his century, and much of this book is given to persuading the reader that the poet's work really does come to terms with the concerns mentioned. Not an easy thing for Fergusson to do in his century, or for Freeman to convince us of in this century.

Freeman's is very much a thesis book and he relentlessly goes through many of Fergusson's most important poems line by line, making his point over and over. In his search for "humanism" everywhere in the poet's works, Freeman makes some statements which are hard to accept: of "Elegy, on the Death of Mr David Gregory, late Professor of Mathematics in the University of St Andrews," one of the great mock-elegies in Scots, Freeman states, "Fergusson's contempt of mathematics was a strictly humanist taste for reducing men to statistical principles and disbelief . . . in controlling destiny through calculations." I think that here Freeman is making claims against the humanist tradition which are not borne out by the facts. "Elegy on John

Hogg, late Porter to the University of St Andrews" is, according to Freeman, another and better "example of humanist satire on the sentimental elegy and Whig values," as though being a "gloatingly proud spouter of scriptures" and "above all . . . a business-man" were ever specifically Whig values. Here, as elsewhere throughout the book, Freeman reads into the poet's text what he wants to find there, forgetting that much of what Fergusson wrote could be quoted to disprove Freeman's theses. Above all Fergusson was a great comic poet, and a good deal of his success was achieved by exaggeration, which Freeman frequently appears to take at face value. For instance when discussing lines 161-94 of "Auld Reekie" Freeman comments that these lines are a "mannered scene of the Presbyterian funeral, Edinburgh is transformed into a city of the dead, a veritable hell on earth." Nowhere does the author hint that Fergusson is mocking the custom, leading us to laugh at the participants of whom "Says Death, They'r mine, a dowy Crew, / To me they'll quickly pay their last Adieu." In commenting on the couplet "As if they were a Clock, to tell / That Grief in them had rung a Bell" Freeman calls this "a frontal assault on false appearance, unnatural emotions, and the entire philosophy of the moral sense, where men are but emotional mechanisms." He fails to note how Fergusson had undercut the passage by using the word "Saulie" in the preceding line. Surely no reader can take very seriously a passage which reduces the great law giver, bastion of Presbyterian belief, to that diminutive.

Sometimes Freeman draws quite extraordinary conclusions from the lines he reads. He finds in the third stanza of "Braid Claith" that "The hard 'k' sounds express the contempt of the haves for the have-nots." What then must we make of Walter Scott's beautiful celebration of Donald Dhu:

> Come as the winds come, when
> Forests are rended;
> Come as the waves come, when
> Navies are stranded.

In Fergusson we find six "k" sounds in as many lines; in Scott four in that number. This is, in my opinion, pure reading into a text what one wishes to find in it. The newest criticism would have it that we recreate a text every time we read it, and that

each reader does so. Unsaid in such a statement is that there must be some logical basis in language for the claims we make of that language. In the case cited I do not feel that Freeman has shown the reader that such a logic exists, although it may in fact be hidden there.

This is the first book which has concentrated on a close reading of the text of Fergusson's major poems, and, although I do not fully agree with Freeman's bias, nor do I think that he has consistently proven his theses, it is an important book. Where it goes wrong, I think, is in its too facile equations: by the 1770's in Scotland not all people by any means fell into one of the two categories postulated by Freeman—Presbyterian, moderate and Whig, or Episcopacy, Tory and Jacobite. Unlike Thomas Crawford's *Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs* which was a close reading broadly conceived, this is a close reading on a much narrower level.

Robert Fergusson had a wonderful sense of humor and could laugh at the high seriousness of his contemporaries; I don't feel that Dr. Freeman always appreciates that humor for what it is. The book contains his view of Fergusson's poetry, but I wonder if it would be Fergusson's.

G.R.R.

M.K. Goldberg and J.P. Seigel, eds. *Carlyle's Latter-Day Pamphlets.* Canadian Federation for the Humanities (Distributed by P.D. Meany, Port Credit, Ontario). 1983. 594 pp.

This extraordinarily well-researched and well-organized edition of Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets* is an attempt on the part of Goldberg and Seigel to provide not only a scholarly edition of these writings, but also a sort of apologia for the sentiments they contain. In this study the editors have reprinted nine works, the eight pamphlets first published in 1850, and the essay "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question," which Carlyle himself added to the 1858 edition of the *Pamphlets.* As the editors point out, these pamphlets have as their unifying theme the imminent, destructive power of democracy, a theme which raised hackles on both sides of the Atlantic. In England,

Matthew Arnold, who had already broken with Carlyle, called him "a moral desperado"; in America, northern liberals were enraged over Carlyle's description of the black man and the necessity of keeping him under control, as expressed in "Discourse." One of the things Goldberg and Seigel argue is that rather than expressing solely anti-democratic sentiments, the pamphlets define Carlyle's need for a "meritocracy," a world in which the best and the brightest would naturally lead; after all, his three great heroes—Burns, Dr. Johnson, and Cromwell—could hardly be called aristocrats. These pamphlets were also written at a time of great turbulence in Europe and in Carlyle's personal life; although written carefully over the course of two years, these are the works of a man under great pressure, someone almost too in tune with the more tragic events of his time. The editors' intention is to rehabilitate these pamphlets, at least to retrieve them from obscurity and to emphasize their value to contemporary students of Carlyle.

It is hard to imagine a more wholistic approach to any group of writings. This edition contains not only the pamphlets themselves, but an introduction giving the background of their writing; annotations throughout the pamphlets, explaining allusions to contemporary events which may not be clear to today's reader; and a comprehensive account of the bibliographical problems facing the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* scholar. At the end of the book is a reproduction of various cartoons and drawings which appeared as illustrations for and reactions to the pamphlets. And most valuable to the researcher, there is a lengthy list of titles of contemporary reviews and responses to the writings; quotations from these, given in the introduction, are in themselves reasons enough to read the book.

One of the real problems in any kind of textual examination of these works is the lack of extant manuscripts for any one entire pamphlet. There are existing *fragments* for each pamphlet, scattered throughout various libraries; but the editors were informed by Chapman and Hall, the first publishers of the pamphlets, that any correspondence with Carlyle concerning these works had apparently been destroyed. The editors thus take their copy text from that first printing, incorporating only the thirteen substantive changes in wording that are contained in the 1858 and 1872 editions of the pamphlets, editions that Carlyle is said to have had a hand in revising. But all places in which these

changes have been made are duly noted, including spelling, abbreviations and punctuation marks; the reader may thus have his choice of whether he wants a noun to be preceded by an article, as in the 1850 printing, or to stand alone as it does in the 1872 edition. As the editors point out, none of the changes makes any real difference in the meaning of the text; but it is an indication of their writing skill that even the least bibliographically-minded reader is likely to worry over the loss of the original manuscripts. G.B. Tennyson speculates that some of these manuscripts may be in private hands; as proof of this, the editors point out Jane Carlyle's habit of handing out bits of original manuscripts, such as *The French Revolution*, as momentoes to her husband's admirers.

It is a measure of the success of this work that one feels that the editors have accomplished their purpose. It is impossible to imagine what more could be added to a scholarly study of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* other than more critical essays by twentieth-century authors on the pamphlets themselves. This is a clearly written, well-structured study which is a must for anyone seriously interested in the works of Thomas Carlyle; and those interested in doing their own textual research of other works of Carlyle, or even other writers, would do well to follow the excellent guidelines laid down by Goldberg and Seigel.

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