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Brief Notice



Edwin Morgan. *Twentieth Century Scottish Classics*. Glasgow: Book Trust Scotland. 1987. 19 pp.

Edwin Morgan, retired Professor of English at the University of Glasgow, poet, translator, editor, critic, has, in this pamphlet, chosen fifty-four novels and collections of short stories by as many authors which he feels deserve the title "classic." His earliest choice is R. B. Cunninghame Graham's *Thirteen Stories* (1900), his most recent Frederic Lindsay's *Brond* (1984) in which Morgan finds "apparently deliberate echoes of Wringham and Gil-Martin in Hogg's *Justified Sinner*." Granted Morgan's decision to limit his choice to one book (or collection, as in Grassie Gibbon's *Scots Quair*) per author, it is still surprising that seventeen of the books are out of print. Most of the titles which have been reissued have appeared in the 1980s, many of them published by Canongate or Corgi. With a third of the selection not currently available, though, much remains to be done.

Readers will probably be familiar with Morgan's selection of more recent fiction: Gibbon's *Scots Quair*, Gray's *Lanark*, Gunn's *Silver Darlings*, Hind's *Dear Green Place*, McIlvanney's *Remedy is None* (although Morgan admits that *Docherty* was the more logical choice), and others. But it is interesting to look at the selection of earlier novels. Who, for example, would have expected George Douglas Brown's *House with the Green Shutters* (1901), that savage condemnation of kailyard portrayal of small-

town life, to be followed a year later by J. J. Bell's *The Wee Macgregor*. Even Morgan admits that "There are those who would see the continued popularity . . . of this book as a fearful indictment of Scottish taste."

As the twentieth century draws to a close, it is gratifying to take stock of Scotland's accomplishments in fiction. All indications are that the genre will continue to flourish.

ALEXANDER FRASER