Sir Walter Scott as Historical Novelist: Part III

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Sir Walter Scott as Historical Novelist

Part III

Old Mortality

Old Mortality is written, as a musician might say, in unusually regular or strict form; that is, not only the historical framework but also the details of the novel, seem to be derived for the most part from contemporary Covenanting annals, except for one or two drawn from the English Puritans. The exceptionally individual—in fact, the unique—character of the 17th Century Puritans in Scotland and England may explain why Old Mortality could not very well go far afield for detail; while, in any case, the abundance of contemporary historical material of the lively, biographical sort made it unnecessary to do so. Our illustrations of Scott's debt to his sources should therefore be given, in this case, simply in the order of their occurrence in the novel. But one method of sub-division offers itself. The Covenanting writers used a very characteristic scriptural style, Scott's imitation of which is quite as remarkable as his pillaging of the annals for incidents. In the following paragraphs, accordingly, incidents are given first, as they occur in the story, then turns of phrase. Scott's most "serious" and reliable authority is Robert Wodrow's colossal history of Presbyterian tribulations between 1660 and 1688—a partisan but moderate, honest, and overwhelmingly documented work; but he draws quite as much and more upon Patrick Walker, the Cameronian pedlar,¹ whose lives of Presbyterian champions came out as chap-books about 1720,² and John Howie of Lochgoil, whose Biographia Scoticana, or Scots Worthies was published early in Scott's life-time. These writers, however factually unreliable, are a better index than Wodrow to the feelings and beliefs of the Scottish peasantry, and as such were valued and used by Scott. The Narrative of 1679 by the extremist Covenanters


² James Maidment, in Anecdota Scotia, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1834-37), II, 377, says that the reprinting of Walker's lives in 1827 as Biographia Presbyteriana had been suggested by Scott. Maidment was a personal friend.
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James Russell, published in Sharpe's Kirkton, is very important. There is a little, but not a great deal, from the royalist writers, Creichton and Turner, whose military reminiscences were probably more interesting to Scott than their anti-Covenanter attitude.

At Niel Blane's Howff, early in the story, the Covenanter Burley challenges the royalist soldier Bothwell to wrestle a fall with him; Patrick Walker and Howie, narrating the life of John Semple, tell how that Presbyterian worthy offered to wrestle a fall with an armed man who had held him up at pistol-point.

An outstanding passage of this novel describes the visitation of Milnwood House by a party of dragoons under their sergeant, Bothwell, in search of the murderers of Archbishop Sharp. Several incidents have authority. Bothwell's demand that the inmates shall drink the King's health is supported by Wodrow, who reports several cases of Covenanters who were asked to do this, and refused.

When the Covenanting zealot Mause Headrigg is asked to renounce the Covenant, her son, playing upon Bothwell's theological ignorance, induces him to accept the renunciation of the Covenant of Works, which, it appears, was the heresy of the Dutch theologian Cocceius. Scott himself, in his anonymous review of his own novel, gives Defoe's History of the Church of Scotland as his source for this anecdote, quoting the passage in full. Defoe is not a good source for matters of fact, but as a visitor to Scotland at the period of the Union, he can supply some sub-contemporary tradition. Defoe's soldier, however, is not so ignorant theologically as Bothwell, but accepts the Covenanters' quibble for reasons of humanity. In this case, therefore, Scott represented the royalist in darker colours than did his source. The question of Scott's partialities is however reserved for later consideration.

Old Milnwood is obliged by Bothwell to speak in condemnation of the murderers of Sharp. Here again there is warranty in Wodrow, although for the years following Bothwell Brig rather than the short period between the murder and the rebellion. He cites, for example,

5 Ibid., I, 143; Wodrow, II, 265, 303.
6 Old Mortality, I, 144.
7 Review, Tales of my Landlord (Prose Works, XIX, 42).
8 Old Mortality, I, 145.
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orders sent to soldiers in the Bathgate area in 1684, in which the Privy Council directs them to examine every person, demand the Oath of Abjuration, execute upon the place all who own the late Declaration (of the Society people, abjuring the King’s authority), and so on.9 In response to this and similar orders, Wodrow says the troops went about administering what became known as the “Soldier’s Catechism” whereby the persons interrogated were expected to acknowledge the King as their lawful sovereign, to stigmatise the Bothwell Bridge affair as rebellion, and Sharp’s death as murder.10 Old Milnwood, asked for his views on Sharp’s death, played safe by picking out and reading aloud the most indignant phrases of the Government proclamation which Bothwell had put in his hand—“bloody and execrable—murder and parricide—devised by hellish and implacable cruelty—utterly abominable, and a scandal to the land.” Wodrow prints the proclamation,11 which actually has the phrases “late horrid and bloody murder,” “barbarous and inhuman assassination and parricide,” “bloody and execrable attempts,” “hellish and insatiable cruelty.”

When the fact emerged that Henry Morton had given a night’s lodging to one of Sharp’s murderers, his uncle, old Milnwood, bribed Bothwell with gold. Creichton, in his Memoirs, records how he was bribed with a horse by a gentleman whose wife had been detected attending a conventicle, and Scott repeats the story in Tales of a Grandfather.12

It will appear then, that few fictitious episodes can be better grounded in the record than this one.

The wooden horse, formerly used as a kind of pillory for the punishment of disciplinary offences by soldiers, is mentioned by Sergeant Bothwell,13 and Scott says in a note that this apparatus stood outside the guardhouse in the High Street of Edinburgh. He proceeds to quote a story about Queen Anne’s son, the Duke of Gloucester, inflicting such a punishment on a tailor; but it is likely that Scott had in mind the Diary of John Nicoll, a “whilily-whaw body,” as Summertrees said of Provost Crosbie, whose politics were those of the party in power. His journal contains an entry to the effect that an English soldier during Cromwell’s usurpation, had been made to “ryde

9 Wodrow, II, 435.
10 Ibid., II, 349.
11 Ibid., II, App. XI.
12 Grandfather, III, 220.
13 Old Mortality, I, 164.
the meir, at the Croce of Edinburgh, with ane pynt stop about his
neck, his handis bound behind his bak, and muskets hung at his feet,
the full space of two hours, for being drunk."

As the royal force approached Drumclog, Bothwell gave orders to "couple up the parson and the old woman," i.e. Kertledrummle and Mause Headrigg, prisoners under his escort; later, as the dragoons approached nearer to the enemy, the soldiers forced the prisoners to leap their horses over drains and gullies, or to push them through swamps, laughing heartily at their distress. Wodrow reports that Claverhouse bound his prisoners two and two on the march to Drumclog; and in his account of the year 1683 he states that Bonshaw, a dragoon commander, tied some prisoners in pairs on horses which were galloped for some miles.

According to Cuddie Headrigg, the Covenanting preacher Kertledrummle had such a powerful voice that "ye might have heard him a mile down the wind"; Captain Creichton contents himself with saying that John King's voice was audible at quarter-of-a-mile.

The circumstance of the psalm-singing by the Covenanting army before battle is given by James Russell, as also is the existence of a "great gutter or stank" between the two forces.

As for Bothwell's manoeuvre of attacking the rebels from the rear while the main body of the royalist force engaged them in front, there is nothing about this in the sources; but Russell, in his narrative, tells how the murderers of Sharp moved about the country on horseback (so did Burley), put up at change-houses (Burley at Blane's Howff!) and private houses (Burley at Milnwood!) and joined a

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15 Old Mortality, I, 249.

16 Ibid., I, 267.

17 Wodrow, II, 46.

18 Ibid., II, 291.

19 Old Mortality, I, 252.

20 Swift, X, 120.

21 Old Mortality, I, 272.


23 Old Mortality, I, 282-289.
converticile at Fintry Craigs, where the attacking troopers "went about the back side of the hill, and came up at a pass, not expecting it."24

During the fighting, Kettle-drumme ensconces himself behind a cairn,25 somewhat to the detriment of his reputation. In like manner, according to Sir James Turner's Memoirs,26 two preachers, Welsh and Semple, present at Rullion Green in 1666, went up a hill, "and by doing so I thought both of them had provided indifferently well for their own safety."

Mause Headrigg's invitation to Claverhouse, fleeing after his defeat, to "bide the afternoon preaching"27 is ascribed by James Russell to King, the preacher mentioned already, who had been captured by Claverhouse and taken along to Drumclog—exactly like Kettle-drumme in the novel.28

Great offence was given by the character of Habbakuk Mucklewrath, the insane and fanatical Covenanting preacher;29 yet he had a prototype in Meikle John Gibb, a lunatic dissenter, disowned even by the Cameronians. Scott gives, in his Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, details about this religious maniac, derived from Wodrow, Walker, and Howie.30 None of these details are reproduced in Old Mortality; Gibb and Mucklewrath have only the general trait of lunacy in common. Gibb had apparently no connection with Bothwell Brig.

The siege of Tullieudlem by the Covenanters has the air of a fictitious addition, but Scott may have had two hints for it. Sharpe quotes a statement31 that Earlston, a well-known Covenanter, on his way to join the rebels at Bothwell Brig, passed by Thrieve Castle, where Charles II had had a garrison in 1650, and recalled that he, Earlston, had taken the place and put the garrison to the sword. Further, Wodrow reports32 that some Covenanters took Hawick Castle before going on to Bothwell Brig.

24 Kirkton, pp. 428 ff.
25 Kirkton, pp. 302.
26 Old Mortality, I, 297.
28 Old Mortality, I, 302.
29 Kirkton, p. 439.
30 Old Mortality, II, 21.
31 Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, p. 81 (Prose Works, XXIX).
32 Kirkton, pp. 471-2.
33 Wodrow, II, 267.
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The Tillietudlem garrison were summoned to surrender by the Laird of Langcake, who walked with a conceited air which moved Lord Evandale to a smile, and spoke in a "shill" "shar" disrespectful voice, "without any of the usual salutations or deferences." This comes straight out of David Hume's History, if not from Hume's source, Clarendon; Langcake's prototype is a couple of citizens of Gloucester, who, during the siege of 1643, appeared before the King with "sharp and uncouth" faces, and, "without any circumstance of duty and good manners," spoke in a "perr, shill, undismayed accent."°

Henry Morton's attack on Glasgow seems to follow Creichton, who speaks of a Covenanting attack in two columns, repulsed by the government forces from behind two barricades. (But Creichton's account of Bothwell Brig differs materially from Scott's.)

Morton left Hamilton to visit Milnwood and Tillietudlem, "for he saw no reason why he should not assume a license which was taken by everybody else in this disorderly army." Wodrow mentions that "people came and went off from the camp just as they pleased."

The embassy to Monmouth at Bothwell Brig, and his promise of intercession for the rebels if they laid down their arms within half-an-hour, is given by Wodrow. James Russell accused the ambassadors of "going over to tamper with the enemy"; hence, no doubt, Mucklewrath's charge against Henry Morton that "he had made himself brethren in the camp of the enemy."

Scott represents the day of the battle at Bothwell Brig as having been appointed a day of humiliation; according to both Wodrow and Russell, such a fast was appointed, although it does not appear to have taken place.

The seizure of the pulpit by the extremist Mucklewrath from

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29 Old Mortality, II, 60-61.
34 Hume, VI, 525.
30 Old Mortality, II, 83.
35 Swift, X, 129 ff.
31 Old Mortality, II, 91.
36 Wodrow, II, 55.
37 Ibid., II, 66.
38 Kirkton, p. 467.
40 Old Mortality, II, 161.
41 Wodrow, II, 56; Kirkton, p. 460; Old Mortality, II, 159.
42 Old Mortality, II, 159.

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the "Indulged" Poundrext is grounded upon the narrative of Russell, who states that "Mr. Hume [a moderate] thrust Mr. Douglas [extremist] from the place where he was going to preach, and preached himself, crying up the King's lawful authority." This suggests, and the suggestion is supported by Wodrow, that the moderates were more active in controversy than the extremists; whereas and behold, it is the extremists who make all the running among the rebels in Scott's narrative.

Just before the battle, when confusion has broken out among the Covenanters in consequence of Mucklewrath's frenzied oration, Scott says that some of the rebels began "moderating a harmonious call, as they somewhat improperly termed it, to new officers." Wodrow gives, as a proposal by the moderates, "that all places in the army be declared vacant, and officers now harmoniously chosen." Once again, it was the moderates who took the lead in real life.

The defence of the Bridge by Morton and Burley rests upon Wodrow, who says that orders to abandon the bridge were given by Hamilton of the extreme party, and that each faction accused the other of treachery. Wodrow states that the differing accounts of the action are irreconcilable; this seems to be correct, for Creichton says the bridge was not defended at all, but abandoned after a royalist cannonade. Scott follows the Presbyterian authority.

The dramatic episode of Morton's falling into the hands of a group of fanatics after the battle is stated by Scott himself to have been derived from the experience of a supervisor of excise among smugglers. There is, however, an interesting hint in Sharpe's Kirkton, which quotes Hamilton, the extremist Covenanting leader, as follows: "... a company, who, after the break at Bothwell, sat down in the Old Clachan of Galloway, and plotted and determined to take away my life for my... opposing and disowning of the Hamilton Declaration." Here again, Scott transfers an action attributed to the moderates in the record, to the fanatics in the novel.

44 Kirkton, p. 460.
45 *Old Mortality*, II, 163.
46 Wodrow, II, 64.
47 *Old Mortality*, II, 168 ff.
48 Wodrow, II, 67.
49 Swift, X, 133.
50 *Old Mortality*, II, 177 ff.
51 Kirkton, p. 452.
The dossier produced by Claverhouse after he has rescued Morron from the fanatics contains information about disaffected persons, supplied by the curates to the government. Wodrow relates that in 1685 parish clergy were ordered to compile complete rolls, with particular accounts of rebels, fugitives, etc.

The tendency of Mause Headrigg to lead her son by the nose into rebellion, and then to expect him to testify for the Covenant before the Privy Council may be connected with a passage by Sharpe, in his Biographical Notice of Kirkton. "It is astonishing to consider how anxious the female zealots at that time were to make their husbands, nay their favourite preachers, obtain the martyr's crown through the medium of a halter." 'Potter on the scaffold seemed to hesitate... but his wife seizing his arm almost pushed him off the ladder and said, 'Go die for the good old cause my dear.'" This quotation is a typical specimen of C. K. Sharpe's writing; Scott's tone is of course entirely different.

Several features in Scott's account of the torture of Ephraim Macbriar before the Privy Council can be identified in Wodrow. At the interrogation of James Mitchell in 1678, accused of the attempted murder of Sharp, he declined to acknowledge a former confession, whereupon "the Preses said, Sir, you see what is laid upon the table (the Boots), I will see if that will make you do it." Scott goes one better, as he often does, by causing a curtain to rise at the ringing of a bell, to reveal the hangman standing behind a table loaded with instruments of torture.

The phrase "Take the best" used by Macbriar in offering his right leg to the torture, is acknowledged by Scott in a footnote to his text as a borrowing from Mitchell's trial.

Wodrow says, "At the ninth stroke Mr. Mitchell fainted through the extremity of pain, upon which the executioner cried Alas my Lords he is gone." Scott again goes one better; for the fifth stroke, a longer wedge is introduced into the boot, and the prisoner sets up "a scream of agony," whereupon a surgeon present announces, "He has fainted, my

52 Old Mortality, II, 204.
53 Wodrow, II, 317.
54 Old Mortality, II, 213.
55 Kirkton, ix-x.
56 Old Mortality, II, 221-3.
57 Wodrow, I, 512.
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Lords, and human nature can endure no more.” There is no mention of a surgeon in Wodrow’s account of James Mitchell, but there is in the case of Arthur Tacket, tortured in 1684.58 “The chirurgeon present desired he might desist a little, and taking the Advocate aside told him that Arthur was very young and his leg so small that a few strokes would crush it to pieces.” The reading of the sentence of death over Macbriar by the Dempster, “And this I pronounce for Doom,” occurs in Wodrow’s account of Mitchell, the Dempster being named as Adam Auld. Macbriar’s farewell speech, declaring his conviction that death will be a happy exchange, is a short epitome of dozens of such speeches given in books like the Cloud of Witnesses.

Gilbert Burnet’s statement 59 that members of the Privy Council had to be compelled to witness the torture of prisoners by the boot, is worth mentioning, if only because Scott did not use it in defence of the royalist government.

After Dundee’s victory at Killiecrankie, Lord Evandale proposes 60 to bring about the defection of the Life Guards from King William to King James; we have already seen that Captain Creichton, when under Mackay’s command, actually corresponded with Dundee with a view to such defection; he stated that Lord Kilsyth intended to go over. 61 Mackay’s Memoirs confirm this and name Creichton; but the movement took place—and aborted—before Killiecrankie, not after.

When Basil Olfant’s men shot Lord Evandale, Cuddie Headrigg promptly shot Olfant from behind a hedge. 62 According to a statement quoted by Sharpe, “during the engagement [at Drumclog], one of the parishioners of Evandale, concealing himself behind a hillock, fired eight shots at Claverhouse.” 63 The incident itself is not particularly distinctive, but the coincidence of the word Evandale is curious.

It will now be clear that Scott did not use Walker and Howie for facts in the sober history of the Covenant. But these authorities, however late, are completely reliable as expressions of the Cameronian spirit, and Scott uses them as such by the extensive and brilliant imita-

58 Ibid., II, 375.
60 Old Mortality, II, 258.
61 Swift, X, 179; Mackay, p. 28.
62 Old Mortality, II, 352.
63 Kirkton, p. 444 (n).
tion of their style. The dialogue which Scott puts in the mouth of his Presbyterians is certainly not parody; it is hardly fair even to call it pastiche, for the use of that word implies something vouchsafe, whereas Scott speaks the language like a native. This perfect familiarity is the principal evidence for the proposition that Scott was steeped to the bone in Presbyterian history.

In Niel Blane's Howff, Burley 64 says to Bothwell, "I will forthwith make thee an example to all such railing Rabshakehs." Walker and Howie, in the Life of Alexander Peden, both quote a prediction of Peden 65 to the Earl of Loudon's factor: "You shall be set up as a beacon to all such railing Rabshakehs."

"The preparing of a table for the troop, and the furnishing a drink-offering to the number," quoted from Scripture by Mause when flying at the dragoons 66 in Milnwood House, appears in the Cloud of Witnesses (Ed. 1871, p. 369. James Nisbet: against paying cess), and doubtless elsewhere.

Kettledrummle inveighs, on the road to Drumclog, 67 against "an ambitious Diotrephes, like the lad Evandale; a covetous and world-following Demas, like him they ca' Sergeant Bothwell." Similarly, Howie's Appendix on persecutors, 68 (which shows how they all came to a bad end), under the heading of Archbishop Sharp, ascribes to that prelate "the ambition of Diotrephes, the covetousness of Demas;" etc.

When Burley declares, after Drumclog, that "this booted apostle of prelacy," Lord Evandale, must die the death, he uses a favourite phrase, which may be found, for example, in Howie's Appendix under Thomas Kenneway, 69 or even in the moderate Wodrow. 70

When Kettledrummle, preaching after Drumclog, speaks of Charles II as a "nursing father to none but his own bastards," 71 he is reproving a term, "nursing father," very commonly used by the right-wing in the 17th Century for the King's relationship to the Church. He may

64 Old Mortality, I, 76.
65 Biog. Presb., I, 50.
66 Ibid., I, 155.
67 Ibid., I, 261.
69 Howie, App. p. 31.
70 Wodrow, I, 214.
71 Old Mortality, I, 311.
be echoing Howie's Appendix on persecutors, which speaks of Charles II's "numerous brood of bastards begot on other men's wives," as part of its critical biography of that incorrigible person;²² or even Cargill, the Cameronian preacher, who "ran the parallel . . . between Charles II and Coniah . . . ."²³ Kettledrummle, however, did not call Charles Coniah, but "Jeroboam, Omri, Ahab, Shallum, Pekah, and every other evil monarch recorded in the Chronicles." Perhaps Scott was using some other source here, or perhaps he was simply drawing, after the Presbyterian manner, on his own unequalled knowledge of the Bible.

In connection with one of Burley's quotations, "The sons of Zeruiah are yet too strong for us,"²⁴ it is worth noting that this phrase occurs in Somers' Tracts²⁵ in the mouth of an English Independent; as a reminder that the English Puritans used this style of speech as well, and may therefore claim some share in the genesis of Old Mortality.

The insane Mucklewrath declares, "my name is changed to Magor-Missabib, because I am made a terror unto myself and unto all that are around me,"²⁶ thus adopting a quotation which occurs in Howie's Appendix on persecutors.²⁷ Scott shows every sign of knowing this pamphlet well;²⁸ indeed, it was just the thing to entertain him—good, vigorous, sustained invective. Poor Mucklewrath had been a prisoner on the Bass Rock, well known as the place of detention for, among others, Peden and Blackader.

"To your tents, O Israel," heard as a cry from a section of the disorderly army at Bothwell Brig,²⁹ is a standard enough Bible quotation; yet it is interesting to note that Scott, annotating the Somers Tracts,³⁰ records that Charles I had it hooted at him in the streets of London on the way back from his visit to the Guildhall in January 1642: another little English detail.

The Covenant who said to Claverhouse, before being shot dead

²² Howie, App. p. 33.
²³ Biog. Presb., II, 10.
²⁴ Old Mortality, II, 4.
²⁶ Old Mortality, II, 25.
²⁷ Howie, App., p. ii.
²⁸ It appeared first in the second edition of Scots Worthies (1781-82).
²⁹ Old Mortality, II, 164.
³⁰ Somers, IV, 347.
by the dragoons, "Mischief shall haunt the violent man,"51 was using a phrase applied to Irvine of Bonshaw in Howie's Appendix on persecutors,52 and in Walker's Life of Cameron. Mucklewrath's dying words 53—one of Scott's supreme passages—end with the appeal, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge the blood of thy saints!"—a quotation which, from its appositeness for a persecuted sect, occurs not seldom in the literature and may be seen, for example, in the introduction to the biography of James Renwick.54

On the day of his departure for foreign parts, Morton is advised by Claverhouse not to waste too much pity on Ephraim Macbriar, who would cheerfully have condemned Morton to death, if the opportunity had presented itself, on the strength of a single text, for example, "And Phinehas arose and executed judgement," or something to the same purpose.55 In fact, Howie's Appendix, so often quoted already, gives this very text as a defence of the murder of Sharp.56

It is not surprising that royalist quotations are very few in comparison, since the "establishment" party, then as at other times, was relatively conventional in its thought and expression. Lady Margaret Bellenden's declaration57 that she "had rather that the rigs of Tillieudlem bare naething but windle-streasa and sandy lavlocks than that they were ploughed by rebels to the King," is a quotation from Lauderdale, as reported by Lauder of Fountainhall.58 Scott liked it, and quoted it again in Tales of a Grandfather.

Major Bellenden's dislike of civil war is expressed in the words "It's a hard thing to hear a namely Scotch tongue cry quarter."59 Similarly, Defoe's Cavalier (in Memoirs of a Cavalier) expresses this feeling in a passage quoted by Scott in his article on Defoe,60 and uses the words "It grieved me to the heart . . . to hear a man cry for

51 Old Mortality, II, 194.

52 Howie, App. p. 32.

53 Old Mortality, II, 197.

54 Biog. Pref., II, 2.

55 Old Mortality, II, 226.

56 Howie, App. p. 27.

57 Old Mortality, I, 125.

58 John Lauder, Lord Fountainhall, Historical Observes. . . ., ed. Adam Urquhart and David Laing, Bannatyne Club No. 66 (Edinburgh, 1840), p. 94; see also Grandfather, III, 228.

59 Old Mortality, I, 207.

60 Lives, II, 255.
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quarter in English." This is another little English borrowing, of course. (Defoe’s Cavalier is fiction; but Scott believed it had some traditional basis.)

Sergeant Bothwell recounts how, as a mercenary soldier in France, he once had to stand guard for six hours, in full equipment, under a baking sun, for absence from parade; Robert Monro, a Scottish soldier of fortune in sober reality, relates precisely the same experience; his tour of sentry-duty lasted nine hours instead of Bothwell’s six, so that in this case the strangeness of fact is not fully exploited in the fiction. Monro took a prominent part in the Civil Wars after his continental experience in the Thirty Years’ War, in which respect he offers a close parallel to Sergeant Bothwell, though at the distance of fully one generation.

Rob Roy

The historical borrowings for Rob Roy (1817) can be conveniently set out under character headings. This novel has three quite clearly-marked groups of characters—the English or Osbaldistone group, the Lowland Scots, and the Highlanders.

The English group is the least interesting; but two points are to hand. The name Osbaldistone occurs in Somers Tracts as Osbaldstone; this seems to indicate that the name should be pronounced with the accent on the initial vowel, as if it were “Oswald’s town”—to risk a Pinkertonian or Oldbuckian derivation. The other point concerns Justice Inglwood, surely the most “alive” of the group. This Jacobite gentleman had been a non-juror, like everyone else in his very Jacobite neighbourhood, but was obliged to qualify as a J.P. by taking the oaths to government, under pressure from his fellow-squires, who saw the game-laws falling into disuse for want of a magistrate to enforce them. In this matter, Inglewood is impersonating our old friend the Master of Sinclair, who says “I must take oaths to King George because nobody of our party would accept of being Justice of Peace if I did not, and in that case the whole country would be left to the

Ibid., II, 252.

Old Mortality, I, 161.


Somers, VII, 108.

Rob Roy, I, 213.

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mercy of the Whigs." Observe Scott's slight improvement in the interests of the humour of the piece.

In the Lowland Scottish group, precedence obviously belongs to Bailie Nicol Jarvie. (The talk of Andrew Fairservice, his only rival, though the richest of vernacular outpourings, seems to owe little to the historians except perhaps to Spottiswoode, in reference to the protection of Glasgow Cathedral from Reforming violence.) There was published in Rob Roy's lifetime a catch-penny biography of Rob called The Highland Rogue, sometimes ascribed to Defoe; though not by Scott, who mentions it in the Rob Roy Introduction. It contains the following interesting passage:

His creditors grew almost past hopes of recovering their money; they offered a large reward to any that should attempt it successfully . . . at length a Bailiff, who had no small opinion of his own courage and conduct, undertook the affair. Having provided a good horse, and equipped himself for the journey, he set out without any attendance, and in a few hours arrived at Craigmorson, where, meeting with some of Rob Roy's men, he told them he had business of great importance to deliver to their master in private. Rob Roy, having notice of it, ordered them to give him admittance. As soon as he came in, the Captain demanded his business: Sir (says the other), though you have had misfortunes in the world, yet knowing you to be in your nature an honourable gentleman, I made bold to visit you on account of a small debt, which I don't doubt you will discharge if it lies in your power.—Honest friend (says McGregor), I am sorry that at present I cannot answer your demand, but if your affairs will permit you to lodge at my house tonight, I hope by tomorrow I shall be better provided . . . Rob then caused an old suit to be stuffed with straw and hung from a tree, informing the bailiff that this was the corpse of a bailiff who had dunned him for debt; the man fled in terror.

This is certainly the germ of the most interesting part of Rob Roy. The Bailiff becomes the famous Bailie, whose self-conceit is equal to that of his original, and whose errand to Rob Roy is the very same. In the course of the Bailie's classical visit to Rob Roy's country, no suit stuffed with straw is hung from a tree; but Jarvie goes one better and hangs from a tree in person, 'like an auld potato bogle.'

Sinclair, p. 12.


Rob Roy, I, 58.

Rob Roy, II, 226. The quotations from the pamphlet will be found in The Highland Rogue (London, 1725), p. 28 ff.
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owing his safety to the "gude brae claith" of which his dress was made. In the light of all this Scott's remark on the pamphlet acquires additional interest: "Some few of the best-known adventures of the hero are told, though with little accuracy; but the greater part of the pamphlet is entirely fictitious."100

Some of the Bailie's conversation is derived from historical matter. When he talks101 of Glasgow's trade with America—sorbable cargoes, Stirling serges, Musselburgh stuffs, Edinburgh shalons, and goods from Manchester, Sheffield, and Newcastle—the lynx-eyed reader wonders how all this commercial prosperity could have burgeoned within eight short years of the Union; the explanation is that Scott here reproduces, practically verbatim, a passage in A Tour through Great Britain . . . by a Gentleman, 4th Edition, 1748, of which the first edition was by Defoe. Such a passage could scarcely have been written earlier; but as we have already seen, Scott was not the man to worry much about an anachronism of the sort. This borrowing was first pointed out by Robert Chambers, in his Illustrations of the Author of Waverley;102 a book which contains much unsupported speculation about Scott's sources, but does make a few good points.

Robert Jamieson, the ballad collector, issued in 1818 an annotated edition of Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland, to which he added, by courtesy of Walter Scott, extracts from a MS. of Stewart of Invernabyle, and from a MS. by Graham of Gartmore on the causes of rebellion in the Highlands, written about 1747. As Rob Roy came out just before Jamieson's edition, Scott must have been looking at these MS. about the time when he was writing the novel, and accordingly we find that Jarvie's lecture103 to Osbaldstone and Owen on the state of the Highlands in 1715 contains verbatim quotations from Graham's MSS of 1747—the 250 Highland parishes including Orkney, each with 800 examinable persons, plus something for non-examinable persons under nine years, making a total of 230,000, of which 57,500 are fighting men—all this is common to Jarvie and Graham.104 Scott's quotation is, of course, free in places; when Jarvie says that the Highlanders work as if a plough or a spade burned their fingers,

100 Ibid., I, 59.
101 Ibid., II, 122.
102 See ed. 1884, p. 110 ff.
103 Rob Roy, II, 130 ff.
104 See Burt, App. IV, p. 338.

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Scott is not quoting Graham, but a Lowland ploughman he met in Shetland in 1814 \(^{105}\) (the saying seems proverbial, however).

Eager to assert the importance of the merchant class, Bailie Jarvie \(^{106}\) quotes Baker's *Chronicle* ("no great authority perhaps" as Scott said \(^{107}\) in *Somers Tracts*) to the effect that "the merchants o' London could gar the Bank of Genoa break their promise to advance a mighty sum to the King of Spain, whereby the sailing of the Grand Spanish Armada was put off for a hail year." The story does not seem to occur in Baker, but it is in Burnet,\(^ {108}\) who derived it from a traditional source.

Instead of admiring the scenic beauty of Loch Lomond, the Bailie calculates the possibility of draining it, "to give to plough and harrow many hundred, ay, many a thousand acres." Thomas Pennant, in his *Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides*,\(^ {110}\) mentions the scheme of Golbourne, to lower the surface of Loch Lomond, and recover some thousands of acres. Scott goes further, and makes the Bailie see a vision of coal-barges passing between Dumbarton & Glenfalloch over the remaining portion of the loch.

The only other Lowland characters to offer any point of historical interest are Galbraith of Garschattachin and the "Duke" (of Montrose, apparently, judging by the reference to his "great ancestor").\(^ {111}\) For the benefit of these two persons, Scott disinterred some lines which he had found "in a MS. note on Spottiswoode's *History*" and had already quoted in the *Somers Tracts*:\(^ {112}\)

\begin{quote}
Earl of Guile and Lord for Lorn thou goes,  
Leaving thy native prince to serve his foes.  
No faith in plaid, no truth in tartan trews,  
Cameleon-like, they change a thousand hues.  
(Craig of Rose-Craig).
\end{quote}

The last couplet of this anti-Campbell verse is quoted by the

\(^{105}\) Lockhart, II, 352-353.  
\(^{106}\) *Rob Roy*, II, 145.  
\(^{107}\) Somers, II, 453.  
\(^{108}\) Burnet, I, 357.  
\(^{109}\) *Rob Roy*, II, 328.  
\(^{110}\) *Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides, 1772*, 2 parts (London, 1790), I, 177.  
\(^{111}\) *Rob Roy*, II, 263.  
\(^{112}\) Somers, II, 518. Scott seems to have altered Alexander Craig's lines, which are printed in John Scot of Scotstarvet's *Staggering State of the Scots Statesmen* (Edinburgh, 1754), p. 6.
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"Duke" and the pun on Argyll's titles is given to Garschattachin when in his cups at the Clachan of Aberfoyle. This Galbraith's estate of Garschattachin lay in Strathendrick, and there were in fact Galbraths of Ballgair in Strathendrick in the 18th Century, he may thus rank as semi-historical.

As in the case of Waverley, Rob Roy contains information about Highland life before 1745 which might, or might not, have come from one particular source; the sticking a dirk in the tavern table, for example, as a sign that there is to be no brawling, occurs in Burt's Letters, but might be well enough known otherwise. One does not always find such an obvious quotation as Bailie Jarvie's from Graham of Gartmore. The traditions about Rob Roy himself on which Scott drew are to be found in Scott's own Introduction; but, as was his way, he took a leading idea in his novel, not from the traditions about Rob, but from those of another cateran of the period, John Gunn, who infested Inverness-shire. In his notes to The Lady of the Lake, Scott tells the story of an officer carrying money to Inverness to pay the troops in garrison there, who was so afraid of freebooters that he incursively pressed his fellow-guest at an inn, a complete stranger, to be his companion and guide, though the man was obviously unwilling. He did better for himself than he knew; the reluctant guide was John Gunn, who had been proposing to rob him, but who felt bound in honour to desist after accepting the traveller's confidence. In the same way, the "shield Morris," an excise officer, was carrying money to Scotland, and was so afraid of highwaymen that he incursively pressed his fellow-guest at an inn, a complete stranger, to be his companion and guide. In this case, however, Rob Roy displayed no such honourable scruples as John Gunn; he and his confederates duly robbed Morris, although Rob at least went along with John Gunn so far as to accept the confidence of the traveller with marked reluctance, having already formed designs against him. Rob Roy is really a much less romantic novel than people who have never read it are apt to think.

113 Rob Roy, II, 263.
114 Ibid., II, 191.
115 Ibid., II, 183.
117 Burt, II, 119.
118 Poetical Works, VIII, 221.
119 Rob Roy, I, 164-165; I, 236.
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For the brawl at the Clachan of Aberfoyle, one might think Highland tradition supplied material enough; and yet the exclamation\textsuperscript{120} of the Highlander—"If ye be pretty men, draw!"—seems to be an echo from the *Memorie of the Somervilles*\textsuperscript{121} edited by Scott two years previous to the composition of this novel, and in which a Capt. Crawford says to a Somerville of Drum, "If you be a pretty man, draw your sword."

Finally, the groups of characters being disposed of, there is a word to be said about the historical probability of the plot of the novel. Upholders of the romantic view of *Rob Roy* may be surprised, on examining the plot, to find how very modern it is historically. Rashleigh Osbaldistone, the Jacobite conspirator, although a dreadful stage villain of the old school, has a new way of bringing his enemies to their knees: he proposed to use economic and financial weapons. Some Highland gentry, we are told, had sold their woods to English firms, including that of Osbaldistone and Tresham; on being paid in bills of exchange, they had raised money on the bills and spent it. By engineering the ruin of Osbaldistone and Tresham, Rashleigh hoped to raise claims against these Highland proprietors which they could not meet, and thus drive them into rebellion.\textsuperscript{122} There were also hopes of a disastrous run on the Bank of England when the rebellion should break out.\textsuperscript{123}

There is nothing out of keeping in all this. At that time the Darien affair was recent, and we were within five years of the South Sea Bubble; the attempt of the York Buildings Company to develop Highland estates was yet to come, but the purchase of Highland woods by Mason, an Englishman, is recorded as early as 1632; Lockhart of Carnwath asserts that there was a run on the Bank in 1708, when the Old Pretender appeared in the Firth of Forth with a fleet, though unable to land.\textsuperscript{124} All this makes the plot of *Rob Roy* reasonably probable. There is an authentic touch, too, about Mr. Owen's mention\textsuperscript{125}

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{Ibid., II, 177.}
\footnote{*Rob Roy*, II, 142 ff.}
\footnote{Ibid., II, 342.}
\footnote{George Lockhart of Carnwath, *Memoirs concerning the Affairs of Scotland* . . . (London, 1714), pp. 367-368.}
\footnote{*Rob Roy*, I, 124.}
\end{footnotesize}
of the depreciation of the French coinage; Sir John Dalrymple men-
tions this, as something forced on Louis XIV by the burden of his
wars.

All the same, plausible as the story is, there does not appear to be
any historical foundation for it. It seems fairly certain that the idea
arose out of Scott's own financial affairs; from 1813 to 1817 he was
in difficulties with bills of exchange, and the financial passages in
Rob Roy are reminiscent of Scott's business letters in these years. The
publication of the novel on 31st December 1817 makes it, in a
sense, a fitting epilogue to Scott's first and less fatal spell of financial
difficulty.

The Heart of Midlothian

The obvious historical features of The Heart of Midlothian (1818)
are of course the Porteous Riots of 1736—which had to be faithfully
narrated, as already well-known—and the story of Helen Walker; on
both of which Scott has much to say in his prefatory matter and notes.
And yet one might almost call this a Covenanting novel, so prominent
and pervasive is the character of David Deans, that eloquent veteran
of the Killing Time. His delightful talk is the apotheosis of Covenant-
ing style, as displayed in the writers of the "high-flying" groups,
especially Patrick Walker, whom Scott was quoting as early as the days
of the Minstrelsy (see his notes on the Historical Ballads). Scriptural
phrases like "a polished shaft in the temple," "the carved work of the
sanctuary," "right-hand extremes and left-hand deflections," "breathings
of a gale upon the spirit," and a host of others, are the small change
of Puritan literature; but there are a number of things which appear
sufficiently individual to deserve special notice.

David refers to his first wife as "that singular Christian woman
whose name was savoury to all that knew her for a desirable pro-
fessor," and so does Patrick Walker: "Barbara Brice and Marion
Kinloch my first wife (whose names are savoury to all who knew
them for two desirable Christians." Walker's "Address to the
Reader" and "Life of Cameron" display the phrase "nation-wasting and
church-sinking abominations of union, toleration and patronage."
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The distinctive adjective “heaven-daring,” used by Deans to describe the degenerate times he lived in, occurs in the same pamphlet and is repeated in Howie’s “Appendix on Persecutors” (p. 40), in the account of Queensberry. When Deans objects to the employment of a certain advocate in his daughter’s defence, on the ground that he is a “Cocceian,” he is probably recalling precious Mr. James Renwick, who boggled over his ordination in Holland at the hands of a Cocceian divine. It is perhaps doubtful whether a Scottish advocate in 1736 was really likely to deserve this epithet. “Ye’re a silly callant, Reuben, with your bits of argument,” says Deans; thus Sandy Peden in his life by Walker: “Ye’re a vain man, James, with your bits of papers and drops of blood.”

Honest David has a story to the effect that a conventicle congregation once abandoned their devotions to assist a black man at the nearby ford, who had got into difficulties and was being carried downstream; when a rope was thrown to him, he proceeded, with supernatural strength, to drag a dozen of his assistants after him; but the minister, John Semple, identified him as Satan, and warned his followers to quit the rope. The story, as told by Walker and Howie in their lives of Semple, stops here; but David Deans continues: “Sae we let go the rape, and he went adown the water screeching and bullering like a Bull of Bashan.” This detail, to all appearance a romantic addition, seems to have been supplied from Sharpe’s edition of Law’s Memorials, which quotes the account of a man who shot “the foul thief but he gaed doon the water like a meikle bill roaring,” instead of drowning like flesh and blood.

David’s description of himself as “a humble pleader for the good old cause in a legal way” corresponds to “humbly pleading for the good old way in a legal manner,” in Walker’s Life of Cameron and in many other places. The list of Cameronian varieties—“MacMillanite,

131 Heart, I, 220; Biog. Presb., I, 242, 314.
132 Heart, I, 234.
133 Biog. Presb., II, 25. This Life is by Michael Shields.
134 Heart, I, 236.
135 Biog. Presb., I, 71.
138 Heart, I, 352.
139 Biog. Presb., I, 228; I, 214, etc.

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Russellite, Hamiltonian . . . Harleynite . . . Howdenite," answers to a practically identical list in the Appendix to Walker's Life of Peden. 140 David's lamentation over the inferiority of the "second temple" of 1689 to the "first temple" of 1639,141 echoes John Howie's account of John Dickson.142 Another good phrase of David's describes the inordinate desire of young ministers for "Kirks, stipends, and wives"—this again is in Walker's Life of Cameron.143 David's perception that the 1689 settlement was not wholly evil is not merely a reflection of Scott's commonsense; it is founded on Walker.144

Even a single word may on occasion demonstrate Scott's familiarity with Presbyterian tradition. David Deans deplored among other things, the fact that established clergymen were obliged to "homologate" an Erastian constitution and the Union of 1707145 by taking oaths to government. Gilbert Burnet, speaking of his early missionary efforts in the Covenanting West of Scotland on behalf of the episcopal establishment, says that the peasantry were well-informed dialecticians in the matter of church government;146 on another page, he says they were much given to using this word "homologate" in discussion. Burnet's statement, incidentally, would seem to help in justifying the attribution, by tradition, of a high intellectual character to the older Scottish peasantry. It does more; it enables the modern reader to visualise these 17th Century Covenanters as the analogue of 20th Century working-class socialists (possibly themselves a dying race?) with their set phrases—"class conflict," "exploitation of man by man," and so on. It is a great pity that the socialist classics of modern times lack the literary merits of their predecessors.

The foregoing account of David Deans' roots is reasonably long, but is yet far from exhaustive. Scott himself, in the annotation of his novel, acknowledges some debts to the Cameronian writers, to which our present list is merely a supplement. A number of sayings—such as "his gifts will get the heels of his grace" have a proverbial air which rather excludes them from consideration. Finally, the points made here are simply things noted in passing by a reader of Scott during

140 Ibid., I, 122-123.
141 Heart, I, 357.
142 Howie, p. 525.
143 Biog. Presb., I, 228.
144 Ibid., I, 231, 237; Heart, I, 357.
145 Heart, II, 295.
146 Burnet, I, 247, 293.
the perusal of his sources; another reader would see other things. A complete account, if it were possible, would be a world's wonder.

It is worth remarking again that Scott drew upon these sub-contemporary propagandists, not for facts so much as for atmosphere. He says: "It is from such tracts as these [Walker's] written in the sense, feeling, and spirit of the sect, and not from the sophisticated narratives of a later period, that the real character of the persecuted class is to be gathered." Obviously, Scott could use such material much more freely in novels than in formal history.

Some other borrowings from Covenanting writers appear in *The Heart of Midlothian*, though not put into the mouth of Deans. Reuben Butler is reproached with "a sort of bastard and fiery zeal" which echoes Walker's "wild-fire of bastard zeal" in Cameron's *Life* (*Biog. Presb.*, I, 249). Deans is jeered at by a fellow in the crowd at the Parliament Close, on the day of his daughter's trial, as a "ruling elder . . . [come] . . . to see a precious sister glorify God in the Grassmarket." This seems almost proverbial: it is given by Burnet as from the Duke of Lauderdale, as well as by Howie, who says of Robert Garnock that when he was brought out of Greyfriars Churchyard, a bystander "in way of jeer, said I had a face to glorify God in the Grassmarket." Mrs. Saddletree's invective against the female sartorial vanities of "cockups and fallal duds" is authentic, as cockups are reported to have been preached against as worldly vanities by Peden (*Biog. Presb.*, I, 138) and by Kirkton. The passage from Walker is actually quoted by Scott in his review of Kirkton.

The enemies of the Covenant contribute comparatively little. The wicked Laird of Dumbiedikes, father of Jeanie Deans' wooer, is said to have "Soughed awa" in an attempt to sing "Deil Stick the Minister"; that this was a popular anti-clerical ditty is proved by Lauder of Fountainhall, who reports that at Stirling "one is con-

147 *Heart*, I, 259.
148 Ibid., I, 386.
149 Burnet, I, 416.
150 Howie, p. 398.
151 *Heart*, I, 443.
152 Kirkton, p. xix.
154 *Heart*, I, 156.
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vened for reviling the minister, in causing the pipes to play 'Deil Stick the Minister.'" (He was an episcopal minister, doubtless, and one might suspect the reviler of being a Covenantter, but for the circumstance of the pipes.) "Ye're welcome, Whigs, frae Bothwell Brig," chants another person in the Parliament Close crowd; this was actually a popular anti-Covenanting song.156

"Bible Butler," the English Independent trooper who remained in Scotland to settle, when Monk marched South to bring about the Restoration, preserved a muster-roll of his troop, commanded by Captain Salathiel Bangretc, which contained such fantastic names as "Obadiah Muggleton, Sin-Desipe Double-knock, Stand-fast-in-the-faith Gipps, Turn-to-the-right Thwack-away."157 This type of thing seems to reflect royalist satire more than Puritan practice. Scott no doubt believed, with the royalist Cleveland,158 that Cromwell had beat up his drums clean through the Old Testament; that you might learn the genealogy of our Saviour by the names of Cromwell's regiment, and so on. Hume's History159 quotes from Broome's Travels in England a jury-list containing names like "Standfast on High," "Fight the Good Fight of Faith," "Kill Sin, Pimple of Witham"; but Scott's names seem rather less blasphemous. The allegation that Monk got rid of unsuitable men before his march to London, seems to be authentic, as Nicoll states that Monk "cassered" the disaffected before leaving Scotland.160

There is a curious quotation from Irish history in this Scotch novel. During Jeanie's famous interview with Queen Caroline, she innocently makes a very tactless remark, whereupon Argyle161 thinks "she has shot dead by a kind of chance-medley, her only hope of success." Speaking of a Dr. Sheridan (grandfather of Richard Brinsley), who inadvertently preached on the text "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" on the birthday of the Hanoverian King, Swift says that "by mere chance-medley, [he] shot his own fortune dead with a single text."162 Swift was, of course, a wittier man than Scott.

157 Heart, II, 179.
158 Hume, VII, 230.
159 Ibid.
160 Nicoll, p. 252.
162 Swift Memoir, p. 276.
Strangely enough, both Swift and the Laird of Dumbiedikes always insisted on having a good fire.

There is an even more curious importation from English history. Dalrymple's *Memoirs of Great Britain* relate how Lord William Russell, condemned to death on account of the Rye House Plot in 1683, took leave of his wife before execution. His eyes "followed hers while she quitted the room: and when he lost sight of her, turning to the clergyman who attended him, he said, "The bitterness of death is now past." So Effie Deans, on trial for child-murder, when her father was carried unconscious from the court, followed by Jeanie, "pursued them with her eyes so earnestly fixed, as if they would have started from their sockets. But when they were no longer visible, she seemed to find . . . courage . . . "The bitterness of it is now past," she said." One observes the gratuitous addition concerning the eyes starting from their sockets. There is an intriguing contrast between the two versions of this incident in the matter of historical and social setting.

*(To be continued)*

**EDINBURGH**

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Pte. I, Bk. I, 32.

Heart, I, 421.