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**Charles Murray. The Last Poems. Preface and notes by Alexander Keith, appreciation by Nan Shepherd. Aberdeen. Aberdeen University Press, for the Charles Murray Memorial Trust. 1969. xxii + 29 pp. 10s.**

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## BOOK REVIEW

Charles Murray. *The Last Poems*. Preface and notes by Alexander Keith, appreciation by Nan Shepherd. Aberdeen. Aberdeen University Press, for the Charles Murray Memorial Trust. 1969. xxii + 29 pp. 10s.

It seems altogether fitting that my first contact with Charles Murray was a nostalgic one when I, as a boy accompanying my grandfather on a trip to Scotland, spent a few glorious autumn days with him at the Forbes Arms Hotel, Bridge of Alford, in Aberdeenshire, for Murray was himself a nostalgic poet. At the turn of the century he wrote poetry in South Africa about his homeland and touched the hearts of his expatriate countrymen the world over in addition to creating a keen following in Scotland. In 1900 he published *Hamewith* which contained an enthusiastic introduction by Andrew Lang; this was followed by *A Soug O' War* (1917), *In the Country Places* (1920), and *Hamewith and Other Poems* (1927). A small body of verse, but carefully crafted and for the most part free from the sentimental excesses of so much of the Scottish poetry of the period. In fact Murray's work can be seen as the beginning of a revival of Lallans as a medium in which serious poetry could be written, leading to the spectacular use to which it was put by MacDiarmid and his followers.

The Charles Murray Memorial Trust has published an elegant little volume of hitherto uncollected poems, mostly from Murray's later years, which show the same command of the Scots tongue which brought him his early following. Charles Murray's place in the history of Scottish poetry, although modest, is secure.

G.R.R.