A Bibliography of the Scottish Ballad Manuscripts 1730-1825: Part I

William Montgomerie

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WILLIAM MONTGOMERIE

A Bibliography of the Scottish Ballad Manuscripts
1730-1825.

Part I

Scottish ballad manuscripts, and the libraries
where they are deposited

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sigla</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFM</td>
<td>Mrs. A. F. Murison's MS. [ca. 1873]. Harvard College Library, 25262.2*.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFT-B</td>
<td>Alexander Fraser Tyler's <em>Brown MS.</em> [1800]. Aldourie Castle, Inverness, Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>Amelia Harris's <em>Collection of Traditional Antient Ballads and Fragments</em> [ca. 1830 &amp; after]. Harvard College Library, 25241.17.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL(B)</td>
<td>Alexander Laing of Brechin's <em>Ancient Ballads &amp; Songs, &amp;c., &amp;c., from the Recitation of Old people, never published, 1829</em> [1829-35]. Harvard College Library, 25242.14*.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL(NT)</td>
<td>Dr. Alexander Laing of Newburgh-on-Tay's MSS. [ca. 1873]. Harvard College Library, 25241.43*.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATC</td>
<td>Mrs. A. T. Creighton's <em>A Collection of Old Songs</em> [1818]. Ewart Public Library, Dumfries, Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td><em>Beith Papers</em>. Archives of the University, Glasgow, Scotland.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CKS (2), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13), (14), are in Broughton House, Kirkcudbright, Scotland.

CKS (1), (3), & (4). Not found.

CKS (5) is MS OL.
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CM Charles Mackie’s MS. Not found.

DL David Louden’s MS. [ca. 1875]. Harvard College Library, 25241.52*.

EC Elizabeth Cochrane’s Song Book [ca. 1730]. Harvard College Library, MS. Eng. 512.


GB Collection of ballads from Glenbuchat [prior to 1818]. 4 vols. King’s College Library, Aberdeen, Scotland. MS 2181.

GG Gavin Greig’s Manuscripts of Airs, and Words Aberdeenshire Traditional Ballads and Folk Songs. King’s College Library, Aberdeen, Scotland.

GG 705-8 MSS of G.G’s Folk Music Collection [1906-1910].

GG 711-774 Folk Songs (Words). 64 vols. [1905-1912].

GG 775 Folk Songs of the North. Collected and arranged by Gavin Greig. [1906].

GG 776-780 Traditional Versions of old ballads. Collected by Gavin Greig. 5 vols. [1909].

GG 781-784 Transcripts of old Scottish ballads and songs. Music and words.

GG/JBD 785 Traditional Ballad Tunes. Collected by the Rev. James Bruce Duncan and Gavin Greig. [1913].

GG 790 Six foolscap files. MSS of music, words, notes, etc. Nos. 1-6.
Index of the Tunes and Words:
GG 701, 702, 703, 704, 709, 710, 2212, and an Index compiled recently by Mr. P. Shuldhams-Shaw.

GRK I-VI George Ritchie Kinloch’s MSS. [1826 & after]. Harvard College Library, 25242.12.

[4]
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H II (EUL)  One folio from H II in Edinburgh University Library, La. 358.2 (pp. 173-4).

H-C  The Hume-Campbell MS. Not found.


JBD 786  Folk-song airs of the North East, collected by the Rev. James Bruce Duncan from the singing of Mrs. Gillespie (his sister) and others. [1905-1917]. King's College Library, Aberdeen, Scotland.

JBD 788  Folk-song words belonging to the North East. King's College Library, Aberdeen.
See also GG/JBD above.

In King's College Library, there is also an Index of J.B.D.'s Folk Song Music (MS 787) and an Index of Words and Titles (MS 789).

JHB  John Hill Burton's MS. [1829-30]. Broughton House, Kirkcudbright, Scotland. (4 items only). Most of his Ballads are in GRK.

JG  James Gibb's MS. [1863]. Harvard College Library, 25241.50.


JS  James Skene of Rubislaw's MS. Largely a transcript of OL. Not found.

M I-VI  William Motherwell's MSS. [mainly 1825 and after]. These are in Glasgow University Library, except M II which is a Ballad Note-book in Pollock House, Glasgow, Scotland.

M (Ch.)  MS. Ballads of Motherwell, mentioned by F. J. Child, and not in above MSS.

NL 893  Miscellaneous Collection of MSS in National Library, Edinburgh, MS 893, bound in one volume.

OL  The collection of an old lady's complete set of ballads (Sir Walter Scott's title) [1805-7, 1818, as dated by w. mk.]. Broughton House, Kirkcudbright, Scotland.

PB (BM) I-II  Peter Buchan's Ballads of Scotland [1828 onward]. British Museum, Add. MSS. 29408.9.
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PB(H) Peter Buchan's Ballads of Scotland [1816-27]. Harvard College Library, 25241.10.5.

PB:SSS Peter Buchan's Secret Songs of Silence [1832]. Harvard College Library, 25241.9.


RW Robert White's Papers. Not found.


TP (3) & (4) Thomas Percy's Papers, MSS. sent from Scotland [after 1765]. Harvard College Library.


WC Manuscript Collection of Wm. Christie of Monquhitter (father of Dean Christie). King's College Library, Aberdeen, Scotland. MS. 793.


WS Sir Walter Scott's Ballad MSS (numbered as in Wm. Macmath's Bibliography [see CKS above]). Wm. Macmath's transcript of W. S.'s Ballad MSS. is in Broughton House.


6) Miscellanies. Abbotsford Library G 1 ('Study D 3' on flyleaf).

7) Abbotsford Collection of Border Ballads, with Airs, bound for Charlotte Lockhart (Mrs. James Robert [6]
SCOTTISH BALLAD MANUSCRIPTS

Hope [-Scott]) about 1850. Abbotsford.
(8) A few single copies. Abbotsford.


WT-B(JR)  Joseph Ritson's transcript of WT-B. Harvard College Library, 35241.37.5*.

Some other Sigla used in this Bibliography

In the cross-references under each item I have sometimes used the sigla "a" or "z." These two letters refer respectively to the first line (a) of the ballad or song, and to the last line (z).

If they are unmodified, the line denoted by "a" or "z" is identical with the corresponding first or last line of the example described above the references. "a" or "z" in italics (a or z) signify that the line is fundamentally the same in meaning, though not identical. Brackets round these letters [(a) or (z)] signify that the line indicated is entirely different. (a) (z) is shortened to (az) which indicates that both first and last line are quite different.

If the whole reference is in italics, this signifies that the ballad or song thus indicated is identical with the item described at that place in the Bibliography, thus

Ch. 53A  Young Beichan.

Collections of Printed Ballads &c. denoted by Sigla in the Following Bibliography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sigla</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AK:LL</td>
<td>Alexander Keith's Last Leaves of Traditional Ballads and Ballad Airs (Aberdeen, 1925).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR:TTM</td>
<td>The Tea-Table Miscellany, (Edinburgh, 1723-1727).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CKS:BB</td>
<td>Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe's A Ballad Book, (Edinburgh,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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1823). Reprint by David Laing, (Edinburgh & London, 1880). Reprints by Edmund Goldsmid, 1883, 1891.¹

DNB
Dictionary of National Biography.


GRK:BB George Ritchie Kinloch's The Ballad Book, (Edinburgh, 1827). Reprint by Edmund Goldsmid, Edinburgh, 1885.¹

HH Hans Hecht's Songs from David Herd's Manuscripts, (Edinburgh, 1904).

HS David Herd's Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads, etc. (Edinburgh, 1769); 1776 (2 vols.); 1791. The 1776 edition is that usually referred to, unless otherwise stated.


JM:NBOB James Maidment's A New Book of Old Ballads, (Edinburgh, 1844). Reprints 1885, 1891.¹


MGL:TW M. G. Lewis's Tales of Wonder, (London, 1801).

MM William Motherwell's Minstrelsy: Ancient and Modern, (Glasgow, 1827).

NQ Notes and Queries. London, 1850-


PB:GSOB Peter Buchan's Gleanings of Scarce Old Ballads, (Peterhead, 1825).


RB Robert Burns. The best edition of his songs is a fine piece of scholarship, The Songs of Robert Burns by James

¹ Four books of Choice Old Scottish Ballads (reprints of CKS:BB, 1824; JM:NCG, 1824; JM:NBOB, 1844; and GRK:BB, 1827). T. G. Stevenson (publisher), (Edinburgh, 1868).
SCOTTISH BALLAD MANUSCRIPTS


Introduction

The Ballad in Print and Manuscript

In making a bibliography of the Scottish ballad manuscripts, it is helpful to arrange these MSS.—at least tentatively—in some order, with reference to a scale of values. In this bibliography the MSS. are dealt with chronologically.

The 19th century, apart from the few editors, put the popular printed collections first. The manuscript sources were never accessible all at one time, until Professor Francis J. Child, at the end of the century, gathered the ballads from them into The English and Scottish Popular Ballads.

To take one example of a popular printed collection, Sir Walter

\[9\]
Scott's Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border took a very high place. Its manuscript sources—David Herd's MSS, the Glenriddell MS, the Old Lady's MS, Mrs. Brown's MS, Thomas Wilkie's MS IV and the MSS written or collected by Sir Walter himself—would have been of importance, in the first place, as sources for the Minstrelsy, rather than in their own right. But, between the publication of the Minstrelsy at the beginning of the 19th century and of Child's collection at the end of the century, no scholar could have brought this important group of MSS together in one place.²

It was probably too early, in 1902, to grasp all the implications of Professor Child's work, so that T. F. Henderson's edition of the Minstrelsy in that year was a very complete example of the 19th century approach. Sir Walter Scott's ballads were printed as he had edited them, and the MS sources were dealt with in the notes.

But this scale of values, by which the popular ballad collections are seen as the accepted texts, and the ballad MSS as sources for the printed texts, had been finally inverted by Professor Child's work. When printing ballads, versions of which are found in these printed collections—those of Bishop Percy,³ Sir Walter Scott and others—Professor Child, where possible, gave precedence to the MS version over the printed version.⁴

For the 20th century then, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* has superseded all previous popular collections, and has substituted for these collections printed copies of ballads from the MSS, where these are available. 18th and 19th century printed collections of ballads have become secondary.

It must be understood, of course, that Professor Child confined his attention to the traditional ballads. Everything else in the ballad MSS.

² Professor Child was able to achieve this by visiting Britain to consult available MSS, and using copyists—e.g. William Macmath—to copy others. He failed to find MSS WT-B and AFT-B, which became available only when I had nearly finished the first volume of this bibliography.

³ See Bishop Percy's *Folio Manuscripts*, ed. J. W. Hales and F. J. Furnivall (London, 1867-68), 4 vols. Largely inspired by Professor Child, this work prints the MS, and refers to the Reliques in the notes. The Reliques and the MS. are shown to be, to a large extent, two different things.

⁴ Professor Child reprinted ballads from the Minstrelsy until, in 1890, William Macmath gained access to Sir Walter Scott's ballad MSS in Abbotsford. Ch. 209B contains the first reference to WS (4). Thereafter, Scott's MSS. are used in preference to the Minstrelsy. See Ch. IV 519, where, before Ch. 191C (WS (4) 164) is the note: Substitute for Scott's Minstrelsy. See also William Montgomery, "William Macmath and the Scott Ballad Manuscripts," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, I (October 1963), 93-98.
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is outside his field, unless it throws light on the traditional ballads. But there are other things in the ballad MSS. They are sometimes overwhelmingly song MSS, they contain imitation ballads and folk songs, and poems that are neither ballads nor songs. They contain singing games and nursery rhymes.

I have called the approach which puts the printed collection first, and the MSS. second, a 19th century approach. In the 18th century, Bishop Percy had refused to make his folio MS. generally accessible, but in the 19th century before Professor Child organised the research the majority of the ballad MSS. were inaccessible — for various reasons — and students of the ballads had of necessity to rely on the printed collections.

For a detailed examination of the real nature of ballads, the 20th century scholar must first accept the reversal of values brought about by F. J. Child. It has of course become a commonplace of scholarship that a manuscript, where available, has primacy over print. And although Professor Child gave precedence to MS. copies of ballads, it has to be shown that there are still cogent reasons why the original MSS. are still much more fundamental than Professor Child's accurately printed ballads.

Not all ballad MSS. approach that perfect abstraction by which they would consist of traditional ballads only. But suppose that Professor Child had dealt with such a MS. all of whose items he chose to print. He would first of all have separated the ballads, rearranged and numbered them, and printed them — each in its own section — each with other variants of the same ballad. The items would have been accurately preserved, but the manuscript with its unique qualities would have been destroyed.

Such an ideal MS., unaccompanied by items that are not ballads, could be accepted as the ballads that were known to one person, in one place, at one time. But The English and Scottish Popular Ballads was

*e.g. Herd's MSS.
*e.g. H I 99, 103.
*e.g. WS (4) 213.
*e.g. TW I 154.
*e.g. H I 98.

This is usually different from the number of ballads that would have been known to one singer, in one place, at one time, though an adequately annotated MS. would give one that knowledge. MSS. OL, J-B, WT-B, AFT-B and ATC are MSS. where one singer supplies the whole MS. This however is exceptional.
the maximum number of ballads that could be known to an American scholar, who was never more than a short-term visitor to Britain, late in the 19th century, with a limited number of correspondents whose theoretical outlook was necessarily limited by the century in which they wrote. Professor Child too was limited by his conception of traditional ballads as poems whose nature could most accurately be apprehended in MS. form.

Even if all the MSS. had been ideal, consisting only of traditional ballads, all of which had been accurately printed in Child's five volumes, that collection would have been something different from the sum of the MSS.

It would be very useful to print a supplement to Child's collection, consisting of the hundreds of variants discovered since the editor's death. It would be still more useful to re-edit the whole work, thus eliminating the present confusing supplements of Additions discovered while the work was in progress, incorporating the new supplement and revising the Index, but a completed canon of Child ballads would still suffer from the limitations of its conception. A new work on a similar scale would have to be more comprehensive in ways that will become clearer as this introduction develops.

It would probably be wise at this point to add that the scholarly accuracy, comprehensiveness, and seeming completeness of The English and Scottish Popular Ballads were very impressive when first published, and still are. The twenty years and more that went to its editing were at that time necessary, no one else could have done the work better; it will probably remain for the rest of this century the first reference book for traditional ballad texts. The effort to place it within a wider field of study must not be understood merely as an effort to belittle the work. Revaluation is necessary because more than half a century of research has passed since its completion.

The immense work has an editorial impersonality that differs essentially from the anonymity of the ballads. It is a reference book. But each ballad manuscript has a uniqueness, within which the personality of each singer is evident. This difference is clearest in those MSS. which are not abstract ballad MSS., but include specimens from a wider range of rhymed folklore.

It is necessary also to compare the MSS. with the printed collections, especially when the book is derived in some degree from the MS. There

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\textsuperscript{13} e.g. MS. G. is such a MS.

\textsuperscript{14} e.g. MS. H, but especially MSS. TW, and Gavin Greig's MSS. in King's College Library, Aberdeen.

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is no uniformity of treatment here. Bishop Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry and his Folio MS. can now be compared, for the MS. has been accurately printed.

At this point, two scales of value become apparent. Historically, the literary value of the Reliques is very great, and its influence European. Scientifically, for a study of the ballads as folklore, the MS. must come first. Indeed, from this point of view, the value of the Reliques is negligible, and to be classed along with the "translations" of James Macpherson (also work of great literary and historical value), and R. H. Cromek's Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song (1810).18

David Herd's MS.

David Herd's MS. is more of a problem. In it there are 189 items. But in Herd's Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads, etc., (1776) there are 370 items, only 93 of which are also in the MS. Thus there are 96 items in the MS. which were not printed in Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs.

Francis J. Child extracted traditional ballads from the MS., for his English and Scottish Popular Ballads, and Professor Hans Hecht from the same MS. extracted the songs for his Songs from David Herd's Manuscripts. It would seem to be safe to rely on those two works for a complete record of the contents of the MS., but this is not so. 15 items are neither in Child nor Hecht, though 7 of the 15 are in Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs. Seven seem to be still unprinted.14

In addition to this confusion, Professor Hecht — whose work is otherwise admirable — has rearranged the order of items from the MS., which demands constant reference to his Index. Yet the work of Child (who uses 33 traditional ballad items from MS. H.) and Hecht between them is so nearly complete, without being entirely so, and so well annotated, that Herd's MS. will probably be one of the last to demand printing as it was written.

18 Sir John Stirling Maxwell lent me a notebook of Wm. Motherwell. As the contents were never published it may be unfair to Motherwell to call them forgeries.

Robert Jamieson's Brown MS.

Robert Jamieson's Brown MS. is the second MS. that can be considered adequately from the point of view of a book partly printed from it. *Popular Ballads and Songs, from Tradition, Manuscripts, and Scarce Editions; with Translations of Similar Pieces from the Ancient Danish Language, and a Few Originals by the Editor* — (Edinburgh, 1806) — a title which accurately describes the contents — though published four years after Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy*, was begun about the same time. MS. J-B contains 26 items, of which nine are not in *Popular Ballads and Songs*. The two volumes of this printed collection contain 117 items.

Volume I has 47 items. 29 of these are called tragic Ballads, and one is by the editor. 13 humorous Ballads include five translated from the Danish, and of the other eight only three are traditional. Five songs are included in this volume.

Volume II has 70 items, listed as *Miscellaneous* and *Songs*. Included are 17 traditional ballads from oral, manuscript and printed sources. There are two ballads translated from the Danish. Of the songs very few are directly from oral tradition.

MS. J-B (17 items out of 26) is dispersed among the 117 items of *Popular Ballads and Songs*, and destroyed as a unity, cutting us off from direct contact with the ballads that Mrs. Brown sang. In addition, Robert Jamieson adds considerable portions of his own composition (which he encloses in brackets) to some of the ballads, and makes minor modifications which can be checked only when there is an original for comparison. At least four ballads from Mrs. Brown are not mediated by manuscript copy.

Thus, MS. J-B is destroyed as an entity by dispersing 17 ballads from it through the printed collection, and some of the ballads are destroyed as evidence by the large additions and small modifications.

Professor Child printed 23 traditional ballads from this MS., but this ignores three items in the MS. 17 Again the MS. as an entity is destroyed by dispersal, and omission of the three items. The only place where the MS. is complete is in the one original copy in Edinburgh University Library.

' Found on ff. 2b, 10, 13, 15b, 23, 25, 34, 38b, and 41.
' R.J.PBS. I, pp. 135, 139; II, p. 44.
' ff. 2b, 6b, & 38.
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Sir Walter Scott's Ballad MSS.

Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-3) has been, in the past, the normal introduction to the manuscripts in Sir Walter’s possession. T. F. Henderson’s edition of the *Minstrelsy* approaches the MSS. from this angle. Professor F. J. C.;13d used ballads from the *Minstrelsy*, until William Macmath’s work in Abbotsford made the MS. versions available, after which he made use of the MSS. rather than the *Minstrelsy*. This was a new approach, to the *Minstrelsy* from the MSS. It is probably a novel suggestion that the MSS. exist in their own right, and should be printed as they were written, that indeed there is a very good case for treating the MSS. as in certain respects superior to the texts in the different editions of the *Minstrelsy*. The chief argument for this is that they are one stage nearer oral tradition.

The most important of Scott’s ballad MSS. is *Scotch Ballads, Materials for Border Minstrelsy* (WS (4)). Excluding Thomas Wilkie’s MS. which is bound with other material in WS. (4) but which I have listed with the other Wilkie MSS., there are in WS. (4) 146 items. 70 of these are traditional ballads and are printed in Child’s *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.18

In WS. (4) there are 60 poems19 which have little or no connexion with traditional ballads or songs from oral tradition.20 A few of them are in Sir Walter Scott’s hand, but they are of little poetic value.

There are 6 ballad versions21 which, for various reasons, were

18 Nos. 1, 3, 3a, 4, 4a, 4b, 5, 9, 11, 11a, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20a, 22a, 22b, 22c, 22d, 22f, 22g, 22h, 25, 27, 28b, 29, 30, 31, 75, 76, 77, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 86a, 87, 90, 90a, 91, 92, 96, 96a, 97, 107, 108, 113, 117, 127, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 146a & 147.

19 Nos. 2, 4c, 4d, 6a, 7, 8, 10, 19, 19a, 21, 22 (ff. 57, 59b, 61b), 24, 24a, 28, 80, 80a, 93, 94, 94a, 95, 98, 99, 100 (1, 2 & 3), 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 109, 110a, 111, 112, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124 (ff. 227 & 228), 124a, 124b, 124c, 125, 126, 132 (f. 243b), 134, 138, 149 & 150.

20 As these poems have only one version, and have no significance for traditional ballads and songs, no purpose would have been served in giving the detailed analysis I have given to ballads and songs which vary from singer to singer (or reciter). In each case I have noted the first line.

21 Nos. 226, 78 (the controversial *Old Maltland*), 89, 110, 137 & 145. *Old Maltland* was printed by Scott in his *Minstrelsy* “from the recitation of the mother of Mr. James Hogg, who sings, or rather chaulns it, with great animation.” In WS. (4), 78, it is called a very “antient song.” I quote these two sources to bring out the ambiguity of the words “recitation” and “chaunts,” which refer to one of the folk who claimed to be a singer.

[15]
not printed in the Child collection, though noted in at least four cases. There are also 9 songs.\textsuperscript{22} The proportion of ballads to songs suggests further abstraction in Sir Walter Scott's approach to oral tradition. Comparison with Thomas Wilkie's MSS., whose traditional items were collected in the Scott border country during Sir Walter's own lifetime, the Scott ballad MSS. suggest a process of selection from the material in the mouths of the folk, presumably a selection for poetic quality, but also a selection of one kind of item, ballads, in preference to another kind, songs. This probably involved a rejection of songs when they were not also ballads. This source of bias must be taken into consideration in any attempt to recreate a picture of the folk lore tradition at the beginning of the 19th century.

Sir Walter Scott's admitted ignorance of music is another source of abstraction.\textsuperscript{23}

As my preoccupation is primarily with the MSS., I shall make no attempt to trace the evolution of ballads, stanzas, phrases and words, through the different editions of the \textit{Minstrelsy}.\textsuperscript{24} I have provided one instrument for this purpose in the present bibliography, as Professor Child did in his \textit{English and Scottish Popular Ballads}. The next advance in this direction may be an edition of Scotch Ballads, \textit{Materials for Border Minstrelsy}, with or without the verse items, accompanied or not by Scott's other ballad MSS. It would be a valuable work, bringing more scholars than can consult the original MSS. behind the scenes of the \textit{Minstrelsy}, and into closer contact with oral tradition.

A description in similar terms of Sir Walter Scott's shorter ballad MSS. would do little to modify the conclusions come to above. A direct examination of the bibliography of these MSS. tells as much as a detailed description in this Introduction.

It is to Scott's credit that he preserved the original MS. sources of his \textit{Minstrelsy}, unlike Allan Ramsay, who altered his originals, and left no record of what they were.

\textsuperscript{22} Nos. (f. 10b), 3b, 6, 12, 14, 28a, 77a, 114a & 148.
\textsuperscript{23} See Introduction to MS. WT-B, for Sir Walter's note on this subject, from his copy of MS. WT-B; as well as Scott's Journal for Nov. 20, 1825, and his letter to George Thomson [1806] in his published Letters I 295.
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The Ballad in Manuscript and Oral Tradition

The necessity for a new scale of values becomes urgent for an
evaluation of ballad MSS. considered in this Bibliography which have
no popular printed collections derived from them. The English and
Scottish Popular Ballads applied a very definite scale of values to the
manuscript and printed ballads organised in the pages of that collection,
and that evaluation was adequate for a summing up of the situation
at that time. But the evaluation was limited to traditional ballads, and
to work done on manuscript and printed ballads in library and study.
There was no field work, no collecting directly from oral sources by
the editor himself.25

By much more than chance, the next development in Scotland came
out of the county of Aberdeenshire. In the year (1898) of Professor
Child’s death, and of the publication of the last part of his monumental
work on ballads, the Folk-Song Society was formed. The story of this
society and the name of Cecil Sharp are much more familiar than the
name of his great Scottish contemporary, Gavin Greig,26 schoolmaster
at Whitehill, New Deer, in the County of Aberdeen.

When the New Spalding Club, in 1904, instructed Gavin Greig to
prospect and report as to the feasibility of making a collection of “the
older popular music of the north-east,” he had already begun collecting
the material which fills his 80 notebooks of ballad and song texts, and
his volumes of MS. music.27

25 “I have been able only to do such correspondence as was necessary to
secure two or three manuscripts that I had heard of — none of first-rate
importance — and to induce certain persons in or near Aberdeen to exert them-
se"  selves to collect the ballads, which are still preserved in memory there. I
hoped to find good copies of some of the ballads put forth by Buchan.
Hitherto, owing to the sluggishness of the people I have addressed — or ought
I to say to their not being able to give up their time to the business of
collection! — I have not made much progress at Aberdeenshire, but I am
expecting a newly made acquaintance, from the very heart of that region, to
go out to Scotland this year — a man who says that his own mother has more
than a hundred ballads in her memory — and he has promised his services.”
F. J. Child to Svend Grundtvig, in a letter. 15th March, 1877. From Ballad

26 See Gavin Greig: a Memoir in Last Leaves of Traditional Ballads and
Ballad Airs Collected in Aberdeenshire by The Late Gavin Greig, ed. Alex-
ander Keith. (Aberdeen, The Buchan Club, 1925), p. xi. See also William
Montgomerie, “Proposal for a Scottish Folk Song Society,” Scottish Studies, III
(1959), 108-110.

27 In the Library of King’s College, Aberdeen. Alexander Keith estimates
Gavin Greig’s records of folk song airs at 3,100.
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Only a fraction of this has been printed,28 but of that the traditional ballads and their airs have received most attention.

In 1906, in Folk-Song in Buchan,29 Gavin Greig was already making very mature statements about ballads and songs, as he had received and studied them in Aberdeenshire. The whole of his lecture to the Buchan Field Club is worth study, but its chief function here is to give us a few fixed points from which to survey the ballads with special reference to the MSS. in this Bibliography. It is a phenomenon of history that progress into the future is like ascending a mountain; it gives us, as we advance into the twentieth century, a view further into the past than could be obtained at the end of the 19th century and, in some respects, a clearer view than could be obtained, by the people of the past, of themselves. The following sentence from Gavin Greig is slightly generalised by omission of a limiting factor:

A good deal of ink used by Rison, Chappell, Glen, and others . . . might have been saved, had they depended less on the testimony of books and manuscripts, and gone more to oral and traditional sources for their information and for the material from which to construct their theories.30

This gives us, in the 20th century oral tradition, one of our vantage points. This oral tradition is mirrored more clearly in Gavin Greig’s ballad and song MSS., more accurately, more completely, as well as more comprehensively than in any previous ballad and song MSS. of items from oral tradition. “The contents of the rustic singer’s wallet are usually somewhat mixed,” another observation on the same page, is confirmed by examination of his notebooks, and suggests one way of evaluating our ballad MSS.

The Herd MS., for example, has this mixed character. A much better example, because it is still more comprehensive, is Thomas Wilkie’s collection. Thus, at three points, we can examine the quality of the oral tradition, within which ballads were preserved—in the 18th century Herd MS. (1776), in the Wilkie MSS. of the early 19th century (just before 1815), and in the early 20th century before Gavin Greig’s death (in 1914).

28 In addition to Last Leaves, see Folk-Song of the North-East, I, II, (Peterhead, 1914). These latter volumes have no music.
30 Ibid. p. 11.
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Thomas Wilkie’s MSS.

Though the number of ballad items in Thomas Wilkie’s MSS. is small in proportion to songs and other material, this proportion is a more accurate reflection of the relative number of ballads to songs and other items in oral tradition, than is suggested by the more abstract, because selected items in the MSS. of Robert Riddell, the Old Lady, Mrs. Brown of Falkland and Sir Walter Scott.

On the other hand, there are about 80 songs in the Wilkie MSS., in addition to a number of ballads and songs copied from printed collections, over a dozen children’s singing games, a dozen preludes to games, over half-a-dozen rhymes, and an imitation ballad, Auld Wilkie.

The mixed contents of Thomas Wilkie’s MSS. may be partly inspired by David Herd’s printed collection, many of whose songs appear in Wilkie’s MSS. In one respect, Wilkie’s MSS. are more valuable than the Herd MS.; their notes are fuller, and from them we gather that, in the majority of cases, he recorded his ballads, songs, and other folk

81 About 30, on the following pages: TW I 45; II 122; III 23, 39, 45, 55, 59, 81 & 143; IV 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 16, 18, 20, 22, 31, 50, 55, 57, 63, 64, 71, 79 & 80. For Child, the ballad canon, within the limits of his material, was fixed. A new mind, coming to a wider selection of material, cannot be so certain that Child’s canon was absolutely correct. In this study there are no absolutes; the frontiers, like other frontiers, may be in dispute. I use the words “ballad items” as these fragments vary from four lines to what are usually called ballad variants.


83 These are clearly distinguished in the Bibliography. Though these add nothing to the list of known songs, they have, in a number of MSS., the secondary function of encouraging the collector to begin, or continue, collection from oral tradition. Sometimes, if not here, they draw the reader’s attention to unfamiliar sources of printed songs.

84 I pp. 135, 139, 154, 159, 161; III pp. 148 (The Game of Guisart), 155, 158, 159 & 168.

85 III pp. 6, 40, 44, 62 (2 items), 64 (2 items), 72, 76 (2 items), & 80 (2 items).

86 I, p. 145; II p. 156; III p. 42; IV pp. 46, 79 & 80 (2 items).

87 II p. 148.
lore, directly from oral tradition. This is not so certain in the case of Herd, whose notes are much scantier. Such notes often put us in touch with the folk, whose ballads, songs, and folk lore generally, are the most valuable parts of the MSS., after the texts. These notes are very incomplete, but some information can be gathered from them. Thus, David Herd mentions twelve times, without recording the air, that the ballad has an air. Thomas Wilkie gives the same information fifteen times, also without recording the airs. Herd and Wilkie also record the songs without the airs. Five times Wilkie calls his ballads songs, but with one exception, Willie Wood, does not record songs from recitation. His use of the word "recitation" is ambiguous, for on three occasions in TW IV the word is synonymous with "singing," and is interchangeable with it, for both are used in reference to the same ballad.

From the viewpoint of oral tradition the ballad MSS. fall into order, partly derived from our knowledge, or lack of knowledge, of

88 "To understand folk-song we must have a lively and constant apprehension of the fact that, like the speech of the child or the pure illiterate, its acquisition is a matter of imitation, and its retention a matter of memory. This applies to the words generally, and to the music always. It is the key of the situation, and must be firmly held and constantly applied. For people who always conceive of language as represented in print, and of music as represented in notation, it is most difficult to realise the standpoint from which the folk-song man regards the words and especially the tunes of his ditties. . . . The rustic singer has to pick up his tunes by ear, and carry them in his memory without even a mental picture of their notational representation." Gavin Greig. Folk-Song in Buchan, (Peterhead, 1906), p. 53.

89 One of these is Edward (TW II 64 [Ch. 13]), which Bishop Percy received from Lord Hailes, and published without mentioning that it had been sung. See Cecil J. Sharp's English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, (New York and London, 1917), p. 46, for one recording of the air to one variant of this ballad.

90 TW III 39; IV pp. 9, 11, 16 & 57.

91 TW IV 43. Of course the narrative element in the song gives it one quality of the ballads.

92 Nos. 64 (Ch. 209), 69 (Ch. 279), 71 (Ch. 65), & 72 (Ch. 290). See Wilkie's notes on these three ballads. The same ambiguity in the use of this word "recitation" is found in Nat. Lib. MS 893 f. 15, and in J. E. Shortreed's "Conversations with my Father on the subject of his Tours with Sir Walter Scott in Liddesdale," Hawick Archaeological Society's Transactions, (1932), p. 58. This was first printed in the Cornhill Magazine for September, 1832. The "ballad" here sung and recited is the Frou of Suport of which there are three variants in WS (1). Sir Walter Scott, however, gives only the text in each case.
how accurately the MSS. record this oral tradition. Thus, the ballads
sent to Bishop Percy from Scotland, by Principal Robertson (TP 3)
and George Paton (TP 4) have to be taken on trust; there are
no notes referring to their source in tradition.

Relying on David Herd’s notes we are, in his MS., little nearer oral
tradition. There are two songs contributed, directly or indirectly, by
the Irish Harper (1 54); The Bonny Heyn, copied from the mouth of
a Milk Maid in 1771 by W. L. (1 113b); and The Duke o’ Milk taken
down in the Country from Recitation — by One — William Bell from
Annandale, about 1770. (1 120). There is no evidence that David
Herd himself had recorded any items directly from the folk.43

Robert Riddell’s collectors make no references to the ultimate
sources of their ballads, though four at least are mediated by MS. and
one is from a printed broadside. One ballad, The Blind Harper of
Lochmaben (G 42), has an air copied from “a MS Collection of Mr.
Henderson.”

The Old Lady was presumably a singer or reciter of ballads, and
wrote her own MS., but though we feel directly in touch with one of
the folk, in her crabbed writing, we lack the knowledge even of her
name.

Mrs. Brown of Falkland, a singer of ballads, had her songs from
an aunt — Mrs. Farquharson of Deeside — her mother, and a maid
servant. In her three MSS. (two with airs), her letters to Robert
Jamieson, and Professor Thomas Gordon’s letter to Alexander Fraser
Tyler, there comes alive for the first time the whole background of
ballad singing. Joseph Ritson rejected her ballads as lyric poetry,44
and Gavin Greig criticised the airs as “noted by a man of defective
musicianship.”45 But Mrs. Brown, though she was a professor’s daugh-
ter, and married a minister, does not show in her letters that she
had a command of language adequate for composing parts of the
ballads she sang. Sir Walter Scott and Dr. Robert Anderson rejected
this theory, and T. F. Henderson, an editor of the Minstrelsy who
repeats the supposition, had to be corrected by Mr. M. R. Dobie46 for

43 It is interesting comparing Herd’s MS. with the MSS. of the Rev. William
Findlay who collected much of his material from the district where, over a
century before, David Herd had spent his youth. In Findlay’s notes there are
constant references to the sources of the ballads, songs, and folk lore, and we
feel in touch with oral tradition all the time.

44 See his letter to Alexander Fraser Tyler, 17th July 1794.
45 Folk-Song in Buchan, p. 52.
46 “The Development of Scott’s Minstrelsy.”
exaggerating this fault in Sir Walter Scott's Minstrelsy, and by Alexander Keith for levelling the same charge at Peter Buchan. It is T. F. Henderson's scholarship that is shown to be defective.

Mr. M. R. Dobie sums up her significance in a sentence: "The Romantic section of the Minstrelsy, which is largely indebted to Mrs. Brown, is perhaps that part of the work which is best known to-day."48

Yet it is a pity that her ballads should be known only through Scott's Minstrelsy, Robert Jamieson's Popular Ballads and Songs and Professor Child's English and Scottish Popular Ballads.49 Her ballad MSS, her letters and the letters she inspired, along with a description of her relations with Scott, Jamieson, and Dr. Robert Anderson, as well as with the Fraser Tytler family, supply enough material for a fascinating little book. Everything is complete and well-documented, now that William Tytler's MS. of her ballads, with airs, and Alexander Fraser Tytler's MS. are again available after a century and a half.

Sir Walter Scott's MSS. have been dealt with elsewhere in this introduction, but the result is surprising when they are looked at from this point of view, namely from the oral tradition. In all the known ballad MSS. in Sir Walter Scott's possession, there are only four items to prove that he had taken anything direct from oral tradition.50 This is on the evidence of his handwriting, and the evidence is not conclusive even for these four. There is, of course, overwhelming evidence that his correspondents had written their ballad contributions largely from oral tradition, but the almost complete lack of ballads in Sir Walter's own hand, and the extreme scarcity in the Minstrelsy of ballads of Sir Walter's own collecting tends to throw great doubt on the theory that Sir Walter was, to any appreciable extent, a collector at first hand of ballads from oral tradition.

There is other evidence pointing in the same direction. Much, for example, has been made of Sir Walter's raids into Liddesdale. Seven of these raids were made in the company of Robert Shortreed, Sheriff-Substitute of Roxburghshire, whose account has been re-

47 Last Leaves of Traditional Ballads and Ballad Airs, (Aberdeen, 1925), p. xxvi.
48 "The Development of Scott's Minstrelsy," p. 73.
49 Professor Child could not use either MS. WT-B or AFT-B, and relied for the former largely on Joseph Ritson's copy.
50 WS (1) Nos. 2 & 5 (two variants of The Fray of Sapor), 3 & 4.
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corded.54 The writer is J. E. Shortreed, son of Sir Walter Scott's
companion on the raids:

J. E. S. "And how did Sir Walter obtain all the Liddlesdale Ballads?
Was it from recitation or how?"

Father. "Not one o' them was got from recitation, but the Fray
o' Support. Dr. Elliot of Cleugh-head had a great turn for that
kind o' lore himself, and had collected a vast deal o' the old
Ballads o' the Country for his own amusement, and when Sir
Walter came in quest o' that kind o' thing, he got all that the
Doctor then had collected, and seeing his great fondness for
them, the Doctor was induced to exert himself in gathering
a great many more. I think with the exception o' the Fray o'
Support (and he had an imperfect set of it too) and a very few
that had been printed before in the Hawick Museum they war
all gotten in MS. from Dr. Elliot."

Sir Walter's log-book, the notched sticks, "a' maist hail wallets
fu' o' them", which he had 'a' hanging in their order above him, by
a string alang the ceiling o' his room — (as you'll see Rhubarb in a
gardener's house) — wi' mony mae o' the same kind about the High-
lands,"55 were not all necessary to remind Sir Walter of the words of
one "ballad." Robert Shortreed's own evaluation of the raids was that
they supplied Sir Walter with material, not for his Ministrelsy, but for
his novels.

The theory that Sir Walter's memory, without the aid of these
mysterious notched sticks, could record the ballads accurately has been
dealt with by Mr. M. R. Dobie56 and found to be inadequate.

The incomplete state of Sir Walter Scott's manuscript, Scottish
Songs (MS., WS (2)) suggests that, to save rewriting, the editor of the
Minstrelsy sent his one copy to the printer. But a detailed examination
of the sources of items in the Minstrelsy does not adequately com-
penstate for the almost complete lack of written evidence, in Sir
Walter's own hand, in his ballad MSS., that he had collected very
much, at first hand, from oral tradition.

There are then only four definite MS. items, all in MS. I, which are
available for an examination into Sir Walter Scott's accuracy in re-
cording. We know, from Robert Shortreed's account,57 and elsewhere,

53 Hawick Archaeological Society Transactions, 1932, p. 58.
54 Ibid. p. 62.
55 "The Development of Scott's Minstrelsy," p. 84 & n.6. See also William
Montgomerie, "Sir Walter Scott as Ballad Editor," Review of English Studies,
VII (April 1956), 158-163.
56 p. 58. See also Scott's letter to Robert Surtees on 17th Dec. 1806, and
his note to The Fray of Support in the Minstrelsy.

[23]
that Sir Walter Scott and Robert Shortreed made a raid into Liddesdale "for the express purpose o' hearing the air of the Fray o' Suppor frae Jonathan Graham, the lang quaker as he was called," but in the three examples of the Fray in WS (1) (two in Sir Walter's hand) there is no note to indicate whether the "ballad" was sung or not.

*John o' Cockie law* in the same MS. also lacks this important information, though airs have been recorded elsewhere. 85 *John the little Scot*, the fourth item in the same MS., in Sir Walter's hand has no note about music, but *Scottish Songs* (WS (2) 24) has a copy of the ballad, with the air, transcribed from William Tytler's Brown MS. (MS WT-B).

Sir Walter Scott's admitted ignorance of music, his omission of any indication in these few instances that the ballad was sung or not, a fault which is much commoner in the Minstrelsy, and his regular use of the imprecise term "recitation" confuse our understanding of the oral tradition from which the bulk of his ballads must have come.

Sir Walter Scott at the beginning of the 19th century was primarily an editor, who preferred to collect MSS. and individual ballads from other collectors, than to collect ballads at first hand from oral tradition. Lacking the scholarly accuracy of Professor Child at the end of the century, he is much closer to him than to Gavin Greig of the early 20th century, who was primarily a collector, and in the end had no time left to edit his immense collection. Looked at from the viewpoint of oral tradition, Sir Walter Scott's MSS. and Minstrelsy are full of darkness and confusion, to lessen which it is necessary to search through his letters, and contemporary accounts of his activities written by James Hogg, Robert Shortreed's son and others. Mrs. Brown, singing within the oral tradition, and Gavin Greig, recording within it, give us certainties about that tradition; Sir Walter Scott leaves us with questions and problems when, in his work, we try to see that tradition clearly.

**The Ballad in Print and Oral Tradition**

In my Introduction to Elizabeth Cochrane's *Song Book*, (MS. EC) I have listed forty songs derived from Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Mis-

85MM Appendix p. XXI (No. XXII), & AK:LL p. 94, which notes that Gavin Greig made seven records of airs to this ballad; four Aeolian, and three Dorian. Four of these are printed.
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collany. Most of the contents of Elizabeth Cochrane's MS. collection have very little connexion with folk songs from oral tradition. If the writer of it had not included five traditional ballads, the MS. could safely have been ignored here. It has its use in giving us 140 specimens of songs which, almost certainly, were sung by Miss Cochrane in drawing rooms, the type of song prepared by Allan Ramsay for that purpose. These are often parodies of folk song, but they were created primarily for print.

The number that were actually derived from print, in this manuscript, can be decided only after a check list of early 18th century printed songs has been prepared. Such songs have usually one form, as they have not evolved variants within oral tradition. There is therefore little purpose in giving a full analysis of stanza formation and number of stanzas, whose primary function is comparison of such variants.

Agnes Thorburn Creighton's manuscript book (MS. ATC) was written from the memory of her mother. On the evidence of the letter sent to me by Miss Williams, the songs—or some of them—seem to have come from "ballad singers." This is now impossible to prove, but if it could be it would also provide—in the MS.—the extent to which, on the west Borders at that time, (1818), songs had passed from print into oral tradition in south-west Scotland. It would not be an unspoiled folk song tradition.

One ballad sent by Principal William Robertson to Bishop Percy [TP (3) No. 3] is from print. Eight items in Herd's MS., five in WS IV, fifty in Thomas Wilkie's MSS. (largely from Herd's printed collection) and a number in Mrs. Creighton's MS, are openly or demonstrably from print. But their presence in the MSS. does not prove that they had passed back into oral tradition.

Research will almost certainly be done on the printed chapbooks, and other song-sheets with or without music. Their number, and the extent to which—having begun their life in oral tradition—the ballads and songs passed from print back into oral tradition, is very much greater in Scotland than was at one time suspected. The chapbooks are important, but till the whole question has been thoroughly

54 See his Introduction to Tea-Table Miscellany.
55 See my Introduction to MS. ATC.
investigated, the printers and retailers listed, and the chapbook and other printed versions of ballads and songs compared with those surviving in oral tradition and MS., conclusions about the purity of oral tradition, and the MS. items from oral tradition, cannot be assessed, nor the extent to which printed ballads and songs enriched or debased that tradition.

Thus, to evaluate the MSS. it is necessary to assess the accuracy with which these MSS. record oral tradition, which normally comes before the MSS., and to measure the extent to which that oral tradition has been modified by printed texts which, in the period considered here, were seldom accurate recordings of that oral tradition. The manuscripts are seen most truly, not as isolated and to be studied in themselves, but as existing between oral tradition and print.

The Significance of the Year 1825

The year I have chosen to end the first part of my bibliography is very important in the history of ballad study. Something happened in that year which immediately modified profoundly the method of recording and editing ballads. It was a letter sent by Sir Walter Scott

In my own collection of chapbooks, there are examples printed in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, as well as in Stirling, Greenock, Haddington and Fintry. See The Lorn Shiels by G. M. Fraser, (Aberdeen, 1908), p. 109, for the Fintry Press.

The Scottish Poet's Boxes in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee (not in Aberdeen, as Mr. Marcus K. Milne, City Librarian, assures me) supply more material for such study. See the collections in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, and in Edinburgh Public Library and The Glasgow Herald of 17th March 1926, 12f.

"In consequence of Mercer's first letter, I had begun to enquire, and write down from the repeating of old women, and the singing of the servant girls, everything I could hear of, and was constantly aroused by vexation at two circumstances, namely, finding how much the affectation and false taste of Allan Ramsay constantly annoyed me instead of what I wanted, and had superseded the many striking and beautiful old songs and ballads of all kinds that I got traces and remnants of; and again, in discovering how much Mr. Scott had been too late — from the accounts I received of many men and women who had been the bards and depositories of the preceding generation." From Recollections of Sir Walter Scott (1802-1804) by William Laidlaw, in Hawick Antiquarian Society's Papers, 1905, p. 66, from a MS. in Edinburgh University Library.
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to William Motherwell 3rd May 1825. In one sentence Sir Walter defines his own method of editing, and finds it wanting:

   In fact I think I did wrong myself in endeavouring to make the best possible set of an ancient ballad out of several copies obtained from different quarters, and that in many respects if I improved the poetry I spoiled the simplicity of the old song.00

It is a definition, toward which criticism of the Minstrelsy has been moving since T. F. Henderson’s edition of 1902, corrected by Mr. M. R. Dobie’s study published in 1940.

But, in addition to defining an attitude to Sir Walter Scott’s editorial method, it had at the time an immediate effect on the recipient of the letter. It is possible to measure this effect in the modification of William Motherwell’s methods as an editor in his Minstrelsy: Ancient and Modern (Glasgow, 1827) published two years later. The editor’s new attitude is defined at length in his long Introduction to that collection of ballads, while the later examples in the book are more purely oral tradition — following Sir Walter’s advice — than the earlier edited items — following Sir Walter’s example.

This letter to William Motherwell had a secondary, though much wider effect on the history of ballad editing, when it was discovered by Svend Grundtvig in 1874. In a letter to Professor F. J. Child, Professor Grundtvig wrote:

   ... I met Mr. L[eighton] at the “English Pension,” [at Interlaken] a very nice quiet little home-like place, where we both lived some days together, and in the same house I happened to find a volume, that I did not know before, but which was of no little interest to me, viz. The Poetical Works of Wm. Motherwell with a memoir of his life. (Boston, Ticknor, etc. 1865). That which interested me more than anything else in that volume was a very remarkable letter of the 3rd May, 1825, from Sir Walter Scott — I have not seen it before, I am sure; though I wonder very much, that Motherwell did not print it in his Introduction of his Minstrelsy — in which he expresses the very soundest principles with regard to Ballad editing which it is a great pity he did not follow himself in his Border Minstrelsy — but the principles were of a later date than that work. ... A very remarkable letter, quite agreeing with the principles, I had found out and worked upon, without knowing that I had such an

authority to fall back upon; and in fact that same authority was quoted against me when first (in the year 1847) I set forth my principles, and with some reason, for his doing was very unlike these later words of his. You know the whole letter, I dare say; if not, you must read it — and use it."

Professor Child did read it and use it. Backed by the authority of Professor Svend Grundtvig, it defined his own position as an editor of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads.*

*(To be continued)*

*Broughty Ferry, Angus*