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David Crawfurd: A Forgotten Man of Scottish Letters

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David Crawford: A Forgotten Man of Scottish Letters

David Crawford, Eighth Laird of Drumsoy, though a shadowy figure on the London literary scene in the period around the year 1700, is of interest in a number of ways, not least because he was one of the earliest Scots to publish works of imaginative literature in one or other of the established genres and aimed at the English reading public. In the process he produced three epistolary novels of love intrigue, two comedies, and a volume of Ovidian verse epistles in decasyllabic couplets all within the space of four years. Then, having been appointed Historiographer Royal for Scotland by Queen Anne in 1705, he turned to history and wrote Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland which gave an account of events in the reign of Mary, Queen of Scots. But even in this instance, as if to underline Crawford’s close ties with the South, this work, despite its interest for Scottish readers, was first published in London and there is no record of an Edinburgh edition of it till 1753.

Under the circumstances it is a little difficult to understand why Crawford has dropped from sight so completely that even histories of Scottish literature give him only the briefest of mention while the standard biographies all seem to err in giving the date of his death as 1726, thereby providing him with some eighteen years of added life. What apparently happened was that he was succeeded by his only child, a daughter, and she, in turn sold Drumsoy to a great-uncle, Patrick Crawford, thus giving rise to the assumption that the latter was heir to his nephew when he acquired the estate in 1726. One piece of strong evidence in support of 1708 as the year of David Crawford’s death is the appointment of a new Historiographer for Scotland about the middle of that year though the office had been granted to him for life and not during the royal pleasure or during the lifetime of the sovereign as had previously been the case.¹ Another is Crawford’s own promise in a letter to the Earl of Cromartie that he intended to continue his historical writing; “If I live, I shall give the World the 2nd and 3rd part of the same Memoirs,”² a promise whose non-fulfilment would suggest that the conditional clause had become fact.

² William Fraser, Earl of Cromartie (Glasgow, 1876), II, 23.
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This appointment to an office in the gift of the sovereign Crawfurd apparently owed to Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat who, before his retirement from politics and elevation to the peerage as Earl of Cromartie, played a major part in Scottish affairs under four successive rulers: Charles II, James II, William of Orange, and Anne. The post of Historiographer seems indeed to have been Crawfurd's reward for services rendered over a considerable period as his secretary in both public and private concerns; at any rate, in the letter from which a short statement has already been cited, Crawfurd sets out in considerable detail the relationship between Cromartie and himself as he appeals to his former patron for aid in repelling the attacks of Whigs and Presbyterians on his Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland on account of its support for Mary and its hostility to George Buchanan, sentiments whose utterance they wished to ascribe to the master rather than to the man:

My Lord—

Your Lordship, when you left this place gave me the honour of a letter from Stanfords, telling me what would be the fate of my Memoirs. You have (I fear) foreseen too well in this affair, only one thing has escap'd your Lordship—that the unlucky brat would be laid to your door, and you would father the child you ne'er begot but endeavour'd to destroy in embryo. . . . If 'tis put to the vote, I'm satisfied to come off with loss; and if ever I serv'd your Lordship honestly, let me be sensible of the reward of standing up for me so far as to bring my bus'ness to a vote in the house. I most humbly beg your Lordship's pardon for this trouble and freedom; but I never had another master, and I still reckon myself one of your Lordship's family.

The informality of tone in this letter coupled with the note of subordination suggests the long-established man of confidential business who feels that his status gives him the right to protection by his erstwhile master. His remark, "I never had another master," hints at his long service under Cromartie, service which may well have extended over the twenty years or so following his departure from Glasgow University with his way to make in the world; then, too, with his patron out of office between 1696 and 1703, he would have had time for his literary activities in those years. At any rate, once Mackenzie returned to power, Crawfurd became keeper of the Secretary's house in Whitehall with responsibility for issuing passports to Scots travelling overseas. A little later, too, he seems to have acted as a go-between with members of the Whig opposition as a letter from Lord Glasgow to Cromartie makes clear:

8 Fraser, II, 22-23.
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My Lord, Having conversed with David Craufurd, your Lordship's servant, I was truly uneasy to understand that your Lordship should have received information that I stopped any business in the treasury. 4

Activities like these apparently engrossed Crawfurd's energies in the years following 1703 until, as Historiographer Royal, he turned his attention to Scottish history; at all events, there is no indication that he returned to literary composition once he had resumed his official duties.

But even taking into account the presumption that his tasks were lightened in the years round the turn of the century, the amount and the diversity of his publications merit notice. His three short epistolary novels in one volume, The Unfortunate Duchess for short, and his comedy of humours, Courtship-a-la-Mode, both appeared in 1700; Ovidius Britannicus, his collection of love complaints in verse with its lengthy prose preface that is a novel of intrigue in its own right, came out in 1703; and Love at First Sight, his second comedy of the Shadwellian type, was published in 1704 though it had been written some years before to judge by Crawfurd's prefatory remark, "I writ it four years ago at a vast distance from the Theatre. Since that time the Humour of the Town is chang'd . . . so I shall hardly be persuaded to defend in this Centry what I writ in the last."

Of his two works published in 1700, The Unfortunate Duchess was apparently the earlier since it is advertised as being for sale on the title-page of Courtship-a-la-Mode. In the three short novels that make up this collection, Crawfurd, following the example of the author of the Portuguese Letters, demonstrates his interest in feminine psychology for he probes the motives and actions of his central female characters in considerable detail while paying considerably less attention to his young men, only one of whom is developed in any detail.

Crawfurd subscribes to the elementary distinction between the romance and the novel enunciated by Congreve only a few years earlier in contrasting the "miraculous contingencies and impossible performances" of the one with the "intrigues in practice, . . . the accidents and odd events, but not such as are wholly unusual or unrepresented" 5 of the other. At this rudimentary stage in its development as a separate form, the novel still partook of many features of its parent type: concentration on high society, on exalted codes of love and honour, im-

4 Ibid., I, 231.

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probably romantic names for characters and places, interwoven stories holding up the main action. It differed mainly in a somewhat more direct approach to the narrative and in its closer approximation to the conduct of living persons. Such a literary diet, however, lacked substance and there is considerable evidence that prose fiction was under something of a cloud around the turn of the century.7 Crawfurd, himself, shows his awareness of the situation in the preface to his volume though we may recognize that both his diagnosis of, and his suggested cure for the malaise are faulty:

Novels of late have been so ill writ, and Consequently so little esteem'd, that 'tis reasonably to be suppos'd a Bookseller has not such another drug in his Shop. I was too weak to attempt the recovery of their lost honour, and therefore chose a new method of my own.

This may appear something odd to the Reader, because it intimates as much as if I had said, I writ Novels in Substance, but altered the Form. I confess I design to leave him in the dark; and he may suppose the stories so many real truths, or so many little Romances as his fancy or judgment shall guide him.8

It is noteworthy that Crawfurd's division of prose fiction into that which deals with actual persons hidden under pseudonyms and completely imaginary creations, bears a similarity to that of Congreve, with the reader being encouraged to search for originals if he thinks the characters sufficiently credible, though he is not told directly that any such are in existence. By his new method Crawfurd presumably means his setting of the tales in an epistolary framework with each of his stories as the matter of a single letter, the writer of which becomes a persona and stands between the author and the narrative. But in addition to this novelty, he has ideas about the proper language of such fiction; it should, he thinks, function as a means of moving the reader's feelings so that he "will find an excess of grief or joy express'd with measure, the better to move the passion, and as for what's purely narrative, I have us'd a natural way free from force or Affectation" (Preface). But with all his theorising Crawfurd does not seem to realise that it is the limitations of the novel as he inherited it that stand in the way of his success; it is his subject matter, love and intrigue in high society, that

4 In the Preface to his bibliography, English Prose Fiction 1661-1700, Charlottesville, Va., (1952), C. C. Mish has written that the closing years of the seventeenth century provided an "economically depressed market."

5 Several Letters Containing the Amours of 1. The Unfortunate Duchess; or, The Lucky Gamester. 2. Love after Enjoyment; or, Fatal Constancy. 3. The Unhappy Mistake; or, The Fate of Cross'd Loves. London (1700). Preface n.p. All subsequent references are to this edition.

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keeps his stories artificial and prevents him from moving towards realism. So, with all his innovations, what he has produced is only a little different from what has gone before: high flown sentiments couched frequently in ornate metaphorical expressions, characters with romantically impossible names, and intercalated tales holding up the main action unnecessarily.

The three tales themselves may be considered as exercises in two modes of narration, for *Love after Enjoyment* and *The Unhappy Mistake* are essentially the two sides of the same coin, consisting as they do of the account of Timandra's experiences in love sent in a letter to her friend Sirena, and of the latter's reply in similar terms giving her story. *The Unfortunate Dutchess*, on the other hand, is the story of what is alleged to be a recent scandal in high society told in a long letter by an observer of the comedy to the lady whom he has been wooing unsuccessfully. Crawfurd gives no clear indication of the situation of the two, but we soon gather that the gentleman lives in the city while the lady is a country dweller, possibly a native of Scotland. She has already heard something of the affair from him on his last visit but now she is getting the complete story to provide her with amusement in her rural retreat, the assumption being that she must require some entertainment since she is separated from polite society. This framework to the tale of the Duchess is handled with considerable finesse, providing a vignette in its own right with the romantic youth inviting the lady to share his feelings over a true tale as he is sure she will since she has shown sympathy for the heroes of fiction, the sign of "a tender soul and a large portion of wit" (p. 1).

Crawfurd achieves a considerable degree of psychological insight in this minor drama, allowing for the unlikely names he has chosen for the writer of the letter and its recipient: the young man unsure of himself, the lady drawing inspiration from romances such as the *Pharamond* of La Calprenède but keeping her emotions well under control. The novel's shortcomings arise from the unlikelihood of one extraordinarily lengthy letter being devoted to the circumstantial account of a single intrigue which, with its inset tales amounts to some seventy-five pages of octavo. Of this the story told by the maid servant accounts on its own for more than half, yet it is supposed to have been narrated just as her mistress was awaiting the arrival of a lover. Annoyingly enough, Crawfurd himself was fully aware of this artistic blemish; indeed he comments on it in his prefatory matter, "Daria's adventures are indeed too long, but I hope the Reader will not think so." In failing to correct what he recognised as a fault, he was of course maintaining
the pose adopted by many of his contemporaries of being a person of
good writing for pleasure rather than for gain, and sure enough, a
little further on comes his excuse for carelessness, "I write them for my
own pleasure and improvement in the English Language, and by con-
sequence strove not to be too nice or elaborate." But by 1700 such
an affectation of disdain was becoming sadly worn, and in any case it
hardly squares with what we may guess Crawford's circumstances at
that particular time to have been: heir to an estate encumbered with
debt, agent of a politician out of office, and friend and associate of
the professional men of letters of London's Grub Street.

In its essentials, putting aside for the time being the inset story
that Daria tells, the account that Crawford has Marcomire give in his
letter traces the career of Eriphele, the Unfortunate Dutchess of the
title, from the first unfolding of her youthful beauty to her casting off
from polite society as the result of her reliance on her charms to save
her from the results of her folly. Eriphele has been trained for the sole
purpose of making a great marriage and she succeeds, with the active
connivance of her father, in attracting a young man of high rank. Her
youthful husband is somewhat unsettled at first and to pay him out
the Duchess embarks on a course of intrigue that brings her under the
sway of a person of little account. In time she becomes more besotted
with her unworthy lover while her husband hardens in the face of her
infidelity and finally casts her off in disgust.

Such is the outline of the tale which is, as one might expect, by
no means realistic though there are numerous signs that Crawford was
aware of the ironies implicit in the situations that he has his naive
narrator describe. Thus, in the romantic catalogue of her charms is
the statement that Eriphele's principal value to her father is commercial:
"Her father loved her more than Honour; he blest the Gods for this
mighty gift and with pride saw himself the Master of a thousand
Hearts, by being the envied disposer of the lovely Eriphele" (p. 5).
Again, the rapport between father and daughter is stressed when the
simple mention that an eligible young man is coming on a matter of
business evokes the comment, "She understood the meaning of this
Advertisement, and carefully drest herself to the best advantage" (p. 5).
The long autobiographical account given by Daria, her maid, already
noted as an artistic defect, provides, with its stress on moral values in
education, an implicit criticism of an upbringing governed by ex-
pediency. And Eriphele's reaction to the story is interesting too; she
is struck by the contrast, resolves to model her conduct on its precepts

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and might do so perhaps, if her lover, Erinthus, had not appeared at that moment.

Of interest, too, is the depiction of the relationship of seducer and deceived husband. Crawfurd has shown Erinthus not as admirable but as a mean person concerned only for his own interests and safety, and he contrasts unfavourably with Eriphile's husband whose main weakness, besides some youthful amorousness, is his readiness to forgive his erring wife on her promise of amendment for the future. He makes the point that Entheon's refusal to avenge his honour by physical chastisement of Erinthus is just, because the latter is so ignoble as to be beneath contempt. Noteworthy, likewise, in the characterisation of the Duke is the way in which his nature is shown as developing, something unusual in novels of passion where figures tend to be flat and static. In *The Unfortunate Duchess* he begins as a green youth, romantic and eager to participate in the pursuits of the young men of fashion, but by the end of the tale he has hardened, becoming colder of personality as he loses his ingenuousness in the face of Eriphile's promise breaking. As a result, he is able to question his wife's conduct on moral grounds when he asks, "Was your honour (now inseparably tied to mine) a Trifle, and Marriage Vows a whim of Priesthood?" (p. 67).

The lady herself emerges as a figure whose good inclinations, left neglected by her upbringing, are insufficiently strong to resist temptation once she has tasted the pleasure of intrigue. The point Crawfurd seems to be insisting on is that beauty alone is inadequate equipment for life because its possessor, unable to distinguish worth, will be attracted to a nature equally flawed.

In its ironic touches and in its attempt at psychological soundness in delineation of character *The Unfortunate Duchess* has some claims on our attention. In place of the stock figures of the intrigue novel, the ludicrous deceived husband, the admirable gallant, the quick-witted wife whose lack of scruple gives a fillip to her character, we have an effort to create believable beings whose natures develop under pressure of events. Nevertheless, as already hinted, it fails to free itself from the past; its diction, despite its author's claims to plainness, is still too close to the highly wrought language of the romances especially where states of mind and emotions are being dealt with. In these places the tone is forced and heavily stylised, perhaps to give the sense of remoteness from the common life of these exalted beings and those who ape them. Increasing the sense of unreality is the bestowal on characters of exotic names so that they become even more remote, and this sense is
increased in Crawfurd's case by his giving fictitious names to his countries and cities. In fact, though, the reader has little difficulty in seeing the intended correlative of London for Clusa, and, noting that the epithets bestowed on Erinthus suggest his Dutch extraction, may suspect the presence of a political allegory. Nevertheless, the author's innovations appear as intrusions, for he has drawn from the prose fiction of the seventeenth century enough unrealistic features to negate his efforts at creating rounded characters whose actions have some discoverable motive attached to them.

And the same is true of the two other novels in the volume, *Love after Enjoiement* and *The Unhappy Mistake*. Each of them, indeed, though epistolary in form likewise, contains only one fully developed character: Timandra and Sirena, emancipated ladies both, the *persona* created by Crawfurd as his two correspondents. This time, however, the letters are in the category of confessions by the one lady to her friend and the latter's reply in similar terms: so closely are they linked, in fact, that a good case may be advanced for considering them as two parts of a single piece that transcends the usual bounds of novels of the time, has something of the complexity of the romances, their standards of values, and their digressive habits. Moreover, they are paged consecutively in the original edition so that *The Unhappy Mistake*, the lady Sirena's reply to her friend, begins on page 89 of the text, making it appear that whoever saw to the proofreading considered them as one within the framework of an exchange of letters recounting events in the past life of the narrator who, for the purpose of the fiction, is assumed to be providing a kind of private autobiography for the eyes of her friend alone.

In view of the involved plots—or rather, series of events arranged chronologically, for except in the most general sense incident does not depend on character—it is somewhat hard to accept the total recall that Timandra and Sirena both apparently have for the happenings of their youth, especially when such recollection involves the inset stories told by other characters, stories which themselves contain the adventures of yet other individuals, giving the Chinese-box effect of story within story within story. Under the circumstances, Timandra's apology at the beginning of *Love after Enjoiement*, "My memory can't answer the design of an Historian, nor a Man of Monsteur Scuddery's Employment" (p. 1), is something of an irony, especially in the fictional narrator's deprecating mention of herself in relation to the co-author of some of the best known *romans de longue haleine*. On the other hand, these tales contain an amount of incident that such romances notably lacked.
and in this respect they resemble more closely the intrigue novels of Mrs. Aphra Behn, greatly dilated by the addition of sentimental detail intended to involve the reader's feelings for the distresses of the main character.

This time the frame story is linked closely with the tales the two ladies tell but Crawfurd does supply a certain amount of incidental detail to provide reasons for the exchange of letters. Both ladies have retired from the world, Timandra to a religious house, the other to the country estate. In their respective retreats they have time to dwell on their unfortunate adventures in love and the former initiates the correspondence by writing out her story and asking for Sirena's in return. This she receives with a claim for its accuracy in giving "the Truth of every Accident, as far as Memory can serve" (p. 89).

In these tales, Crawfurd makes sporadic attempts to distinguish between the styles of his correspondents. Timandra, who appears to be the younger, is more self-conscious in the complimentary sections of her letter and her opening statement is very stilted

The few Accidents afforded in the History of my Life . . . are such as modesty sometimes forbids me the recital; and assure your self, that were it not I had a more than common esteem of her who lays this Command on me, I should no doubt conceal a great part of what I design to write (p. 1).

Sirena, however, seems more at her ease and the concluding paragraph of her letter, in breathless haste, with dashes substituted for more conventional punctuation, shows her picking up points at random from Timandra's and dashing off rejoinders without regard to unity. But the effort to distinguish consistently between two narrative styles is obviously too much for an inexperienced author whose models showed little regard for verisimilitude in the speeches they put into the mouths of their creations. As it is, though, Timandra usually has a slightly plainer form of diction given to her as a partial fulfilment of her promise, "My Style will be purely natural" (p. 1). But too many exceptions to this can be found, particularly in the use of elegant variations, circumlocutory clichés which the novel had taken over from the romances. Thus Timandra tells of the death of her husband in a duel in these unlikely words, "He left my Husband's Soul taking its flight from the passage he had given it in his left Breast" (p. 69); Sirena, too, uses similar improbable-sounding statements: "His perfidious Soul at last ow'd its passage to my Sword, and left his body motionless behind" (pp. 111-112), being as good an example as any of this unnatural diction.
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But to return to Timandra and the distinctive features of her expression. Crawfurd has her show that her feelings are aroused by having her use analogies drawn from classical myth and set in a kind of cadenced prose with the rhythm of blank verse:

So mighty Jove from distant Heaven look'd down, and saw Alcmene who he long had lov'd, now press and folded in a Mortal's Arms, a while with Love and Jealousie he burns, and to himself he mutters sweet Revenge, swears by his God head, when Amphitryon's fled, he'll lay his Thunder and his Sceptre by, descend, and in the dull Phlegmatick Husband's place, lay both a burning Lover and a God (p. 65).

This, of course, is the reverse of that lady's plain utterance when her passions are unawakened and its very contrast defeats its object, for the reader is conscious of a jarring incongruity rather than the strength of the emotion which it is intended to represent.

Sirena's normal narrative manner is, on the other hand, generally more ornate and in her search for language to depict the strength of her feelings she draws rather on comparisons of natural scenery than on myth so that the discontinuity is less evident. What is interesting is the way in which Crawfurd has her find correlatives for her own feelings in natural objects and has her seek out in solitude the kind of sensation that is more often equated with the Romantic sensibility than with the Augustan:

I sat beneath a mossy Rock, on each side Cliffs and frightful Precipices, dark recesses and solitary Caves not made by art, but owing their form to Nature. . . . nothing offered itself to disturb my contemplative Soul (p. 127).

In addition, the sight of a shipwreck calls up in her certain complex feelings which she analyses in terms anticipatory of those to be employed by Burke in his *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* as she notes that her strongest emotion is pleasure mixed with terror. Then, with the passing of the storm the young philosopher indulges in speculation on the causes of disasters and on the operation of providence in human affairs.

But there is one difficulty about this lengthy treatise on philosophy, ethics, and metaphysics, original as many of its ideas are for the year 1700; it is sprung on the reader too suddenly for him to accept it as Sirena's since nothing that she has said up to this point has prepared him for such an effusion. Immediately on the heels of this digression, indeed, there comes one of these strained metaphorical descriptions that takes him back to the unreal world of the seventeenth century novelist,
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"—But to return, the Clouds who had now shak'd their drooping (sic) Wings withdrew. The dismal Curtain furl'd up, and Heaven show'd a smiling Countenance, as if a Sacrifice of so many Lives had asswag'd its hungry fury" (p. 129). It is almost as though, in digressing, Crawford has taken too seriously the advice of his fellow-countryman, Sir George Mackenzie, who suggested in his one work of fiction, Aretina, that readers should expect instruction as well as pleasure;

"And albeit essays be the choicest Pearls in the Jewel house of moral Philosophy, yet I ever thought that they were set off to the best advantage, and appeared with the greatest lustre, when they were laced upon a Romance." *

But just as the seriousness of Aretina spoiled it as a work of fiction, so the attempt to lace choicest pearls of philosophy upon The Unhappy Mistake serves only to delay the action and provide a long discourse that can hardly be considered as in the character of Sirena; more important still, the expression of original ideas in an obscure work of fiction has deprived them of the attention which they might well have received as landmarks in the development of taste.

Of the tales themselves little need be said. They are involved narratives of passion and intrigue, each of which ends fatally for the male member of the central pair of characters as well as for nearly all the subsidiary personae. Under these circumstances it is easy to see why the two ladies, sated with experience, have decided to lead their lives in seclusion, employing themselves in the recall of memories.

Crawford's other essay in prose fiction, "An Intrigue betwixt two Persons of Quality," supplied as a lengthy introduction to his collection of Ovidian verse epistles, is equally sensational in its account of abductions, seductions, and concealments. Once again he uses a frame device similar to that in The Unfortunat Duchess; this time, however, the long letter to the lady in the country contains no contemporary scandal, for the writer claims simply to be giving her the edited version of an old manuscript he has found. This is a secret history of Edward III's time, with only the names of those participating changed to prevent recognition. The story itself is The Unfortunate Duchess in reverse: a young lady, educated by her father for marriage, is betrothed to a foolish youth then has her senses awakened when she meets a protege of her father's whose only lack is fortune. This time of course the outcome is tragic with the lovers suffering persecution and eventual death at the instigation of the implacable father.

* Aretina; Or, the Serious Romance (Edinburgh, 1660), p. 7.
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As will have appeared, Crawfurd's overriding weakness as a novelist is his unwillingness to free himself from the trammels of the past. He recognizes the shortcomings of the novel form as he inherited it but he made only sporadic attempts at reform of technique so that, despite the appearance of pirated editions of *Love after Enjoyment* (1755), and *The Unfortunate Duchess* (1759), interest in his novels waned with the publication of more realistic prose fiction drawn from middle-class life and appealing to the new novel-reading public drawn from that class. Even so, they deserve better than the total oblivion they have suffered if only for their ironic touches and for the admirations of the romantic sensibility they exhibit, and for their depiction of heroines who act of their own volition, in this last respect anticipating Mrs. Haywood's emancipated ladies who are usually credited with being the first such characters to have acted so.9

And a similar fate has befallen Crawfurd's two comedies, *Love at First Sight,*10 and *Courtship-a-la-Mode.*11 Like his attempts at prose fiction these look back to existing forms with plot situations and some figures, notably young men of fashion, drawn from Restoration comedy of manners, with flat characters from the old Jonsonian comedy of humours, with one individual Medler in *Love at First Sight*, as a direct descendent of Molière's Tartuflle, and with only Willie, the Scots servant in *Courtship-a-la-Mode* as anything of a novelty.

As in his novels, Crawfurd's chief plot interest is in the relations between one generation and another in respect to the choice of partners in marriage. The elders are concerned with disposing of their offspring to the best commercial advantage and look on the nuptial contract as just another business deal in which the feelings of the principals are not involved. The young people, notably the ladies, are determined, on the other hand, to marry as best pleases them and their choice usually alights on impecunious men of fashion who have to be brought up to the mark while, at the same time, developing qualities of ingenuity that will allow them to wed in the face of parental disapproval without forfeiting the fortune that goes with their wives.

In his handling of this theme Crawfurd uses the stock devices of Restoration comedy, including numerous sub-plots as a kind of accom-

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10 (London, 1704), played at the Haymarket Theatre in that year.
11 (London, 1700), performed at Drury Lane Theatre with a prologue written by George Farquhar, the playwright.
paniment to the main action. In Love at First Sight his attempt to carry on with four variations on the main theme leads to confusion because no sufficiently strong unifying principle is present to fuse the different parts of the action into a coherent whole; with Courtesies—a-la-Mode, however, his employment of Decoy as go-between among the various young people provides a focus and this is a comedy with considerable merit which has suffered undue neglect because it appeared at a time when the form was going out of fashion in the face of the new sentimental drama. Decoy, then, is the forwarding agent in the modish courtship whose employment by the young people enables them to approach their clandestine marriages without more than the most fleeting of meetings. The device provides opportunity for some satiric comment on the matchmakers usually employed by parents to sniff out eligible partners, particularly as this commercial lady works on her own account to bring together a seedy young fortune hunter and a cast-off mistress in a manner that might have seemed too far-fetched had not his friend Farquhar been caught likewise a few years later.¹²

Possibly because he felt the difficulty in handling witty repartee, Crawford relies less on wit than is normally the case with Restoration comedy. Instead he employs a considerable number of flat middle-class characters who are akin to the stock types of humour comedy. He has the wealthy miser; the foolish but rich Puritan merchant who ascribes his riches to his desert; the country squire, out of his depth in the city as he finally recognises in these words, "I came a fool from the country, and I shall go home Experimentally wise;" the modish fop; the dissolute son. And of course these have descriptive names to provide instant identification: Gripeall (a miser), Alderman Addle, Sir John Single, Medler (both as rotten fruit and as busybody). Then he has created the comic Scots servant, Willie who is earthy in his remarks, amazed at the wonders of the city, and, like many of his countrymen, has a good opinion of himself; nevertheless, his creator has mixed in with these features a certain rugged independence of mind, simple honesty, and a rooted fidelity to his not always worthy master. Such a genre character is something of a rarity of the English stage of the time, at least one with more than coarse humour and an uncouth dialect as his attributes. In Willie's case, though his speech is broad, it is not unnaturally harsh and he uses it to good effect in striking out some acute observations on people and manners in a manner suggestive of the homespun philosophers.

¹² Willard Connolly, Young George Farquhar: The Restoration Drama at Twilight (London, 1949), pp. 204-207.
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If, then, Courtship-a-la-Mode has literary values as comedy, why did it create so little stir? The obvious answer is that it is essentially a play in the Renaissance and Restoration tradition and this type of drama had already lost ground in the public esteem by 1700 so that even an outstanding example of mannered comedy, Congreve's The Way of the World, got a distinctly cool reception when it appeared in the same year in competition with the new "weeping" comedies that were beginning to hold the stage. As it is, then Crawford's comedy might have been of some account had it been written thirty years earlier when the situation it dealt with was still a novelty for dramatic handling. The change of emphasis from the affairs of the young people to the operations of their opportunistic go-between is, however, though interesting, not sufficiently revolutionary to allow the claim that his comedy is realistic, and the few sentimental traits he gives some of his character creations are not clear-cut enough to put his play among the lachrymose comedies of the eighteenth century. Still, it has values for the student of drama, and if it was written in ten forenoons as its author claims, it is something of a tour de force, showing a considerable sense of theatre and causing surprise that he seems to have written no more drama but went on instead to compose love complaints in the manner of Ovid as though he had lost interest in writing for the public presentation.

In like manner David Crawford may be charged with lack of perseverance as a writer of verse, for his sole published essay in this form is Ovidius Britannicus which his friend Charles Gildon saw through the printer's when it came out in 1703, at which time its creator was in Scotland. Of the 160 or so pages of this compilation, some fifty-odd are given to the prose narrative already mentioned, the rest is devoted to verse epistles in rhyming couplets setting out the feelings of ladies abandoned by faithless lovers or, as something of a novelty, the protestations of these lovers on the receipt of such complaints. Normally translations of this kind followed Ovid's formula of the Heroïdes fairly closely but Crawford attempts to imitate the form while using subject matter of his own choice, usually fiction created by himself. Of the fourteen letters in his collection, however, two are close to the original consisting as they do of Phaon's imagined answer to Sappho and of Theseus's supposed reply to the abandoned Ariadne, these instances being similar to popular and fashionable translations edited by Dryden and published in numerous editions by Jacob Tonson from 1680 on.

In these two replies, Crawford uses the decasyllabic couplet not for an outpouring of grief or bitterness but as a forensic weapon, hinting
at a possible legal training in his own background. Of the two, that of
Theseus to Ariadne is the more interesting piece of work, if only be-
cause the central male figure is so much better known than his counter-
part. As it is Pannon is reduced to echoing Sappho's complaints and
assuring her that he is still faithful; Theseus, on the other hand attempts
a full-scale justification for his actions and in the process emerges as
an interesting psychological study of the self-centered young man
disturbed by an importunate woman when he has much important work
do. In fact, the hero is made to defend himself, not on the grounds
that he is right but that Ariadne is at fault in so vehemently expressing
her sense of loss. Thus he cites the precedent of Dido and Aeneas,
noting that the hero was acting in accord with the commands of Jove
and indicating that he is, likewise, under orders from Bacchus that over-
ride all other obligations. As far as he is concerned, therefore, the
interlude is over and Ariadne would do well to regale herself with a
fresh lover instead of importuning him.

With Crawfurth, then, the love epistle ceased to be a vehicle for
the rhetorical expression of overpowering emotions and became a means
of reasoned persuasion in the case just cited, or as in some of his other
pieces, of reflection, or even narration though some or all of these ele-
ments are usually to be found in varying proportions. In the twelve
poems drawn from contemporary fiction, Crawfurth adopts various
devices for variation. Six of the pieces consist of letters and replies
passing between the pair of lovers who are the central figures in his own
prose "Intrigue betwixt two Persons of Quality" and these gain the
honour of extended mention in the Twickenham Edition of Pope's
poems, for Geoffrey Tillotson notes a number of correspondences be-
tween the Crawfurth's poems and the Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard,"13
some echoes being so close as to suggest direct borrowings by the major
poet.

Of the other pieces, the majority are single items consisting of
versified excerpts from romantic prose fiction; one pair, however, make
up a kind of short story on their own consisting as they do of a letter
from a lady of the town to a country squire and his reply. In these
particular statements are interlarded with generalisations which are,
themselves, forerunners of some of Pope's comments, especially those
on the feminine nature in "Epistle II: Of the Characters of Women,
and in "The Rape of the Lock." Of these, one example must suffice.
Crawfurth has his male correspondent praise the innocence of the lady
whom he is now courting, innocence which can "best secure a Lover's

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Mind, For Vertue better than a Face will bind," a significant adumbration of Clarissa's warning to the belles around Belinda that beauty is not enough and men should be able to say "Behold the first in Virtue, as in Face." In like manner, Edward Young expresses similar thoughts in language more or less identical so that in a very real sense Crawfurd seems to be breaking new ground in his detailed analyses in verse of female characteristics.

Of Crawfurd's versification competence may be claimed. He uses the couplet form with some skill though he looks back to Dryden in the number of his triple rhymes, just as in his metrical patterns he quite often alternates decasyllabic lines with Alexandrines. But once more he has been unlucky: the vogue of verse translation in rhyming couplets died almost as suddenly as it had arisen and Ovidian translation and imitation ceased to be a marketable commodity in an age which came to demand more and more a subjective rendering of personal experience and originality in style. A poet, then, who has nothing to offer but a collection of such outmoded pieces plus a few generalised reflections in couplet form and one or two lyrics embedded in his prose is not likely to appeal to subsequent ages especially as his work in other forms may be classed as old-fashioned likewise. Another factor leading to neglect of Crawfurd was his reluctance to put his name to his literary creations, reserving that for his Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland which he seems to have considered his major work.

His history was the last recorded work from Crawfurd's pen and its compilation stemmed, presumably, from his appointment as Historiographer Royal for Scotland in 1705 since the work came out in the following year. In it, as was fitting for a retainer of the Tory Earl of Cromartie, he set out the royalist position in the quarrel between Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Reformers, whose case had already been well established by George Buchanan's account. Nevertheless, like Ovidius Britannicus, the Memoirs were dedicated to one of the leaders of the Scottish Whigs, Boyle of Kelburn, Earl of Glasgow, a contemporary of Crawfurd's at university. Why the author took this step it is difficult to say, for one would imagine that the whole tenor of such a work would have been offensive to the Whigs; perhaps, however, he had in mind the idea of turning off criticism—though as we have seen earlier from his letter to Cromartie, he hardly succeeded in this—and it is possible that the dedication was not intended seriously at all but was meant to poke fun at Boyle. Credence is lent to the latter supposition by the fact that Crawfurd or Charles Giklon—it is not absolutely clear which—had already dedicated Ovidius Britannicus
to the worthy earl, extolling the antiquity of his family in the most fulsome fashion and praising its loyalty to the crown. The irony of this was that in the eyes of the Tories the Whigs were little better than traitors and that, in Boyle’s case at least, his long-established family tree was a myth as a contemporary historian indicates in scornful terms which help to explain why Glasgow might welcome such a left-handed compliment and to indicate the low esteem in which he was held:

Nothing pleased him so much as to dedicate a book to his Lordship; and he was sure to take it and its author into his protection, provided much and frequent reference was made . . . of his illustrious and ancient family, tho he and all the world knew his predecessors were not long ago boatmen, and since married to the heiress of Kelburn. 14

It is with the foregoing in mind, then, that we should read Crawford’s apparently deferential dedicatory remarks which, with thinly veiled irony, contain as part of their peroration these comments:

I ly under no necessity of flattering my Patron . . . A truly great man cannot be flattered; for if he is praised, it is but the just Reward of his Merit, and a Debt not due to him by any particular person, but by all the World. I have only this to add, My Lord, that these Memoirs, which boldly unmask Rebellion, naturally enough claim your Lordship’s Protection. Loyalty very often runs in a Blood and becomes hereditary with our Estates. 15

Leaving aside, however, the interesting speculations raised by the Epistle Dedicatory, it need only be said that Crawford’s Memoirs— to use a short title—provides few bibliographical problems since is was in his own day, and for a century after, his best known work, the first edition of 1706 being followed by a reprinting in 1708 and new editions in 1753 and 1767. In this work Crawford claimed to have edited a manuscript account of events in Mary’s reign written by a disinterested contemporary and putting a more favourable construction on her actions than the ultra-protestant Buchanan had done. From quite early in its existence, however, the Historiographer Royal’s “unlucky bratt” seems to have had doubts cast upon its legitimacy. The Bookseller’s Preface to the 1753 edition is at pains to defend Crawford’s editorial practices and to indicate that the original manuscript has disappeared and by 1804 Malcolm Laing’s strongly Whig History of Scotland is dismissing it as a “downright forgery,” claiming that the com-

14 George Lockhart of Carnwath, Memoirs Concerning the Affairs of Scotland from Queen Anne’s Accession to the Throne (London, 1714), p. 100.

15 Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland (London, 1706), XIX.
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piler, "having found a MS history of the times, expunged every passage unfavourable to Mary... and after compiling memoirs of his own, protests that without wrestling the words, he has adhered to the sense and meaning of the original."^{16}

Such, then is the fate of the Memoirs. And with its disappearance from serious consideration as historiography, so disappears almost entirely mention of David Crawfurd of Drumsoy from literary annals. To such an extent has this process of forgetfulness gone that even histories of Scottish literature tend to pass him by, and Agnes Mure Mackenzie, while noting his comedies, confesses her ignorance of anything but the existence of his novels and shows, moreover, no awareness at all of his Ovidius Britannicus:

David Crawfurd, Anne's Historiographer Royal, has already been mentioned for his lively comedies: he is also one of the pioneers of our novel, for he is said to have written three. But I have not even been able to learn their names."

To dispel that ignorance, then, has been the purpose of this study.

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^{16} 1, 15.

^{17} A Historical Survey of Scottish Literature to 1714 (London, 1933), p. 213.