Book Reviews

Across the Tweed by Theodor Fontane. Phoenix House, London 1965. Pp. xv+220 +illus. 30s.

For the German tourist, perhaps the best known structure in Scotland to-day is the railway bridge across the Tay. Certainly he will have heard of it a long time before he ever reached Scotland, and even if he never does get to this country, an impressive and lasting mental picture will nevertheless be his, because of a ballad he will almost inevitably have learned in his schooldays. This ballad was written by Theodor Fontane on 6 January 1880, under the impact of the Tay Bridge Disaster of 28 December 1879, the tragic event also chronicled by the inimitable verse of a not unknown Dundee poet and tragedian. Fontane's treatment differs from that of the Dundonian not only in rhythmical qualities, it also heightens the natural drama of the catastrophe by two devices, at once intensifying and narrowing the human element and extending the causes to the cosmic and supernatural. In 'Die Brück' am Tay' the engine driver of the fateful train is the son of the bridge-keepers who are eagerly awaiting him home for a late Christmas in their house at the far north end of the bridge. His plunge into the waters of the Tay when the bridge crumbles and collapses is representative for the death of the other two hundred[1] who perished in the disaster. At the other end of the scale, Fontane's ingenuity links the three witches of *Macbeth* with the event, prefaces the ballad by their consultation about their evil plans ('When shall we three meet again?'), and concludes it with their smug satisfaction and retrospective gloating over the destruction and unhappiness they have just caused. A poem which still never fails to chill in the simplicity of its language and the supernatural backcloth of individual and collective human drama.

This Tay Bridge ballad, although obviously an immediate reaction to the disaster, is also a late echo of a tour of Scotland which Fontane and his friend Bernhard von Lepel undertook from 9–24 August 1858. Something of a realist and almost of a naturalist in his prose writings, he nevertheless came to this country as a romantic. He had already written the Mary Stuart cycle (1846–7), 'Edward, Edward' (1852) and 'Child Harry' (1855) after Percy's *Reliques*, and at least 'Archibald Douglas' (1854) after Scott's *Minstrelsy*, and the Scotland he visited was that emerging from the latter work, as well as Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, or *The Lord of the Isles*, or the *Tales of a Grandfather*, and, need we say it, *Macbeth*. It was a pilgrimage which he and his companion were not the first to make and which has been made by millions since then. It would therefore be less than fair to expect from the account of these travels, published in 1860

as *Jenseits des Tweed: Bilder und Briefe aus Schottland* (and containing for the first time the printed versions of his renderings of 'Thomas the Rhymer', 'The Soutars o' Selkirk', and 'What can a young lassie'), anything like the kind of information which we should like to obtain about Scotland in the middle of the nineteenth century, especially as seen through the eyes of an intelligent foreigner who had come to enjoy and appreciate and not simply to criticise and compare.

Nevertheless his observations are well worth reading, and it is good to know that the Scots themselves, even if they do not read German, can now check on what Fontane had to say about them, in a recent English translation of his travelogue published under the title *Across the Tweed*. If it sounds surprising that it should have taken more than a hundred years for a translation into English to be made, one must register even greater surprise at the fact that the first English rendering of one of his novels since the author's death was published not much earlier. Certainly German readers would find this difficult to understand as far as the writer of 'Effie Briest' is concerned. To them it is only right and natural that an author who has been admired so much for the strength of his prose style and the drawing of his characters should at present undergo a literary renaissance and that one publisher should have decided to make available an edition of his collected works in 22 volumes in time for his 150th birthday on 30 December 1969. Perhaps Scots will share this sentiment when they hear that Fontane composed a very acceptable German version of 'Scots Wha Hae' ('Schotten, schwört und tretet her').

The deliberate and forceful simplicity of Fontane's prose is not only noticeable in his novels, it is also apparent in his biographical sketches and in his several travel accounts of which *Across the Tweed* is one, and although the translation does by no means always match the peculiar qualities of the original (or present an absolutely reliable and complete text), it undoubtedly mirrors its main characteristics. Read his description of an open-air preacher in Edinburgh's High Street ('He dealt out his sentences like a dealer dealing out cards, then he shuffled the pack and began afresh'), or his account of his visit to Culloden Moor ('I have passed over many battlefields but none has left so definite an impression on me'), his observations on a Sunday in Perth ('A Sunday in Scotland is for the traveller like a thunderstorm at a picnic. You get wet, you can't go on and all your good humour vanishes'), or his word picture of Staffa and Fingal's Cave ('When the God Vulcan had done his work and sent up ten or a hundred thousand basalt pillars into the light, Staffa stood there like a tightly bound bundle of stone pine trees'), and you will understand why Fontane is still read to-day. It is his descriptive rather than his analytic powers which are the most convincing, and the reader gladly notices the absence of any Prussian bias and the willingness to be impressed, and he believes the modern literary historian who claims that Fontane never mistook 'Berlin and Prussia for the world'. *Across the Tweed* is a book worth reading and worth having, even if it confirms, rather than adds to, our knowledge of mid-Victorian Scotland.

NOTE

1 Thus the commentary on p. 742 of Theodor Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 20: Balladen und Gedichte (Munich 1962). According to *The Times*, the number of people on the train was initially estimated at 150–200, shortly afterwards even at 300. Not until the end of the first week in January 1880 was the more realistic figure of 74 or 75 fully known. Something like 200 must have been the figure in Fontane's mind when he wrote the poem. McGonagall says 'that ninety lives have been taken away'.

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

1 *Scottish Fishing Craft* by Gloria Wilson. Fishing News (Books) Ltd, London 1965. Pp. 140, 33 photographs. 25s.

2 *More Scottish Fishing Craft* by Gloria Wilson. Fishing News (Books) Ltd, London 1968. Pp. 170, 16 photographs, 3 plans. 45s.

For those of us whose seafaring has for some years taken place in the sheltered waters of George Square, Edinburgh, these books have the authentic call of the main sea. It is, no doubt, extremely pleasant to swan around in sublimated Scaffies, Baldies and Fifies in the quiet academic pursuit of the provenance and distribution of these historic Scottish fishing craft, but no one will accuse Miss Wilson of living in a precious little world of her own. To gather her information she has trudged through the boatyards and gone to sea with the fishing fleet. She has, on the other hand, nothing new to tell us about the historic sail-boats; all she gives us in that direction is a derivative and conventional introductory chapter on the early boats in the first book, and one equally conventional on the Fifies and Zulus in the same volume. Discussion is not pursued: 'Baldies . . . came into being as a result of the enlargement and strengthening of clinker-built open boats, and may have preceded the larger Fifies' (1, p. 26). So much the casual browser among the display cases in Chambers Street or South Kensingon might also have got to know.

What Miss Wilson does display, for our good, is two complementary and original studies of present-day Scottish fishing craft (the emphasis is very much on the east coast) and all their modern fittings—their scantlings, diesel power, Echo sounders, and electric logs; right down to the w.cs. which figure prominently on their plans (2, pp. 32 and 156) and their galleys with (1, p. 64) 'sink-unit etc.'

In spite of these familiar domestic touches, however, the books are seamen's books and no invincible landsmen will be much at home with them. He either makes something of . . . 'she is similar to mechanised fifie *Galilee* . . . having little sheer, a similar

entry, full round bilges, and her hollow floors being only very slightly flatter and forefoot more rounded' (1, p. 61), or he does not. It may be, of course, that the remarkable interest in boats and boat-building of our time will have bred considerable numbers of non-professional people who understand the jargon. At any rate, the books go on and on like this. There is no let-up, and no glossary. Furthermore, Miss Wilson also gives us masses of modern mechanical and electronic jargon which my small head, at least, just cannot carry.

One thing must be said about the modern conveniences and that is that the old enemy has not become any the less blind or cruel because of them, or the situation envisaged in Rev. XXI. 1. any nearer fulfilment. It is clear, indeed, that the idea of the seaman as hero has not quite faded from human consciousness, and Miss Wilson gives us an occasional stark paragraph to keep us mindful of this. There was the *Daisy* of Peterhead, for instance, (1, p. 89 and photograph p. 58) which foundered in a gale of wind 40 miles east of Orkney and whose crew were spotted by aircraft after having been adrift for 20 hours in a blessedly modern life raft.

Nevertheless, these books are not specially concerned with such high endeavour at sea. On the contrary, they are very cool and factual affairs indeed and the endeavour is cool endeavour in the builder's yard, with a calculating eye (which sometimes misses —1, p. 85) on the Grants and Loans of the White Fish Authority and how Scottish builders and fishermen have applied their traditional skill and seamanship towards meeting a world shortage of protein. Even Miss Wilson herself sometimes wonders if her packed and often tabular statements are vivid enough. Take the *Loch Kildonan*, for instance, which was Herd and Mackenzie's first essay in a steel vessel and a remarkably fine job they made of her. Her crew called her a 'perfect lady' (2, p. 130, photograph p. 88) and the lady survived, apparently with elegant disdain, some pretty coarse weather down north. Obviously, she was a fit subject for an epic poem, but Miss Wilson finds herself compelled to give her four pages of concentrated facts: 'I give her details in full as I have found a hunger for details among my fishermen friends and many writers gloss over or omit these vital details' (2, p. 131).

This, it seems to me, is very significant. No one, who has ever listened to the conversation of an east coast fisherman, with his amazingly detailed memory for dates, boats, crews, family relations, registration numbers and such like can be in any doubt about it. Moreover, it is specially significant for dialectologists and lexicographers because the notion that the terminology of special trades is gradually being levelled is here demonstrated—but with an important rider. It is being levelled, certainly, but apparently the neologisms are coming to be accepted, and even enthusiastically accepted. What else can we make of: *Main Engine*: Ruston and Hornsby 6 VEBM, 335 b.h.p. at 500 r.p.m. with 2:1 reverse/reduction gear, 7.5 KW 220 volt generator, and GGG pump driven off a forward extension shaft? (2, p. 135). If they hunger after this sort of detail in Buckie, then it occurs to me that not only do I work in an old Edinburgh square but I actually *am* an old Edinburgh square whose researches have

not yet advanced much beyond old-time favourites like 'stellum', 'pedlas', and 'fore-sheet brodds'. Some day some enterprising and nautically minded linguist must do some up to date field-work in Scotland and he can begin with Miss Wilson's books. He can look into some collocations with 'unit' for a start. The galley 'sink-unit' we have already noticed. Then, apparently, the hydraulic system of a line-hauler must have a 'deck unit' and (below the deck) a 'pump unit' (2, p. 29). Decca navigators have 'receiver units' (2, p. 41). There is also a 'display unit' on a 'Decca D202 transistorized marine radar' (2, p. 59). Echo sounders must have a 'magneto strictive unit' (1, p. 81). Furthermore, Miss Wilson tells us that 'The Echograph is combined with the Fischlupe in such a way that the same transducer element serves both units . . .' (2, p. 72). But will any of this, one wonders, ever enter into the common conversation of fishermen sheltering under the lee of a gable? The trade names certainly might. Miss Wilson's books are full of them and they seem to have proliferated wildly since the old sail-boat days when everyone had a 'Beccles' capstan but very little else. 'Decca', of course, is certainly here to stay, but when Miss Wilson tells me that it has 'a 4ft. slotted wave guide unit having a beam width of only 2 degrees, and side lobe characteristics better than those demanded by the M.O.T. type specification' (2, p. 59) I suspect that she is trying to blind me with science; just as when she tells me that some bulkhead or other is 'treated with galvafroid to combat rust' (2, p. 69) or that wet fungus in seine-netters can be prevented 'by extensive Celcurizing' (2, p. 89), I suspect she is trying to sell me something.

However, these books are packed so full that in and out of the electronics wizardry even simple students of custom and belief can find something. There was that madcap *Victory Rose* which did a couple of strange unmanned trips on her own (1, p. 49). Do we add this to the *genre* of Slocum's *Spray* and the 'pilot of the *Pinta*'? There are still unlucky boats too, dogged eternally, it seems, by some mishap in the building or launching (1, p. 97). One builder, at least, puts carved wooden fish in his boats, perhaps to ensure that 'they always have fish aboard' (1, p. 111). And if anyone wants to study the colours of Scottish fishing boats he will find that Miss Wilson's passion for detail will serve him. (The only other source I can think of is R. Stuart Bruce's 'Colours of Scottish Herring Boats' in *Mariner's Mirror*, vol. 26, p. 199).

I hope, indeed, that the detail in these books will serve all sorts of specialists. Obviously, Miss Wilson has learnt her business thoroughly. She talks the language too. So perhaps she will allow a some time sea-lawyer—defined by Smyth as 'an idle litigious long-shorer'—after he has disposed of the misprints (which are on 1, pp. 30, 31, 64 and 2, pp. 23, 88, 133, 156 (Plan)), one small point in linguistic sailorising: throughout her books she spells 'wale' and 'gunwale' as 'whale' and 'gunwhale' (although we do get 'gunnel' in vol. 2, p. 42). I am sure that both Elder Brethren and Regius Professors would unite in asserting that the word is *wale*, O. E. *walu*. My guess is that Miss Wilson's zeal for the fishing industry has taken her a bit too far this time.

J. Y. MATHER

Type and Motif-Index of the Folktales of England and North America, by Ernest W. Baughman. Indiana University Folklore Series No. 20. Mouton & Co., The Hague 1966. Pp. LXXVII+606.

The scarcity of the longer folktales—international *märchen*, novellas or hero-tales—among the English-speaking races has long been an evident and a puzzling fact. Moreover such tales are apparently most likely to be found in areas where English overlaps with another language, such as the Gaelic of Ireland or Highland Scotland. This does not seem to be a recent development: at least, one of Dr Baughman's conclusions from this immense catalogue is that 'the preference for short rather than long tales' can be found in America as well as in Britain, though 'it is difficult to generalise about the presumed scarcity of Märchen'.

There is one very good reason for this. English vernacular prose writing was almost extinguished by the Norman Conquest, and could not compete with the older tradition of verse composition until the age of printing came. Almost all long narratives in Middle English or Middle Scots were written in verse. The conservatism of oral tradition has kept it so up to the present century: a long story is properly presented as a ballad, and where recent collectors in both Britain and America have been hard put to it to find prose hero-tales, it has been much easier to find heroic ballads. Many of these, of course, are native to the British Isles, or have Continental affinities whose codification awaits some future Aarne or Thompson; but some of them may represent the only form in English of a well-known international folktale. For instance AT 506, the story of the man who rescues a princess from slavery and is later rescued himself by the spirit of a man whose burial he has paid for, does not appear in Baughman's list at all: but it was known in English in the form of *The Turkey Factor*, a ballad presumably of broadsheet origin which I am told was sung in the early years of this century both in North and South Ronaldsay. The form of AT 326 usually found in Gaelic also appears in Scots as the ballad of *Thrummy Cap* (Robert Ford, *Auld Scots Ballants*, 1889: 1), which likewise circulated as a broadsheet. Most songs in Scots and English tell a story, and it was thought right for imaginary or elaborate stories to be told as songs. Even such *märchen* as we have in English prose from chapbooks or other older sources often tend to break into verse at key points in the story.

But this cannot be the whole answer. Nineteenth-century writers such as Robert Chambers often refer to their own or their informant's nurse in terms which imply clearly that at the end of the eighteenth century there were still old wives who could tell plenty of old wives' tales. *Thrummy Cap* was written by a Kincardineshire cousin of Robert Burns about 1796, presumably on the basis of a story which he had heard in prose, and *The Turkey Factor* no doubt had a similar origin, though perhaps farther south. Moreover only the most doctrinaire nativists would deny that some of the rich stock of international folktale in Gaelic must at some time have passed from a medieval

origin on the Continent of Europe through the English-speaking East of Scotland or Ireland, again presumably in prose since no ballad traces have been left to us: Christiansen's *Studies in Irish and Scandinavian Folktales* show how negligible the Norse connections are, and though some tales may have come direct to Ireland from Spain or France, more must surely have followed the busier trade routes from England. It would seem, then, that in Britain the social upheavals of the Industrial Revolution, and the spread of evangelical sects which condemned such vanities as storytelling, put an end to a tradition which may already have been fatally weakened by the insistence of eighteenth-century rationalism that such tales were only fit for children, and by the growth of literacy and a respect for literacy which ensured that the chapbook giant-killers and printed translations from Perrault and Grimm had driven out purely oral stories before the disciples of Grimm set out to look for them.

Again, however, this is an exaggeration. The longer folktales are rare in English, if you compare English with Irish or Hungarian: head for head of population they are extremely rare. But they can be found all the same. Baughman notes as surprising that '480 variants of 147 types of ordinary folktales' (as against short anecdotes) 'are included in the study. Of these, 258 variants of 79 types are Märchen'. Over half of these are found only in America: but as we shall see presently, Baughman's figures are scarcely fair to the British tradition. Moreover these figures exclude stories collected from English-speakers in Ireland, Wales and Scotland, unless specifically from Lowland Scotland in the narrowest sense, and from Negroes in America. But not all Anglo-Irish tales need have come from Irish; the few in print often have heroes called Jack or English opening-rhymes which must have an origin in English, so possibly the whole tale was always handed down in English. Similarly with the excellent *märchen* which Hamish Henderson has found among the tinkers in East Perthshire and other Scots-speaking areas: certainly many tinkers are bilingual in Scots and Gaelic, but it is surely their camp-fire gatherings, continued long after the ceilidh as a social institution died out in most of mainland Scotland, which make them exceptionally good as traditors of Scots songs—so why not of Scots stories? (*Cf. Scottish Studies* 2:82). Probably something the same applies to American Negroes, though *some* of their tales are specifically African: and did all the European tales which reached the American Indians necessarily come from French or Spanish settlers?

Baughman's study, however, is concerned more with recent folktales in English than with their history, though he does include examples going back even to the twelfth century (AT 1890). It is a national type-index like other national 'Aarne-Thompsons', with each variant and its provenance fully documented, and in some cases an indication of individual variations in plot. The original doctoral dissertation of 1935 has been enlarged by the addition of newly published tales and altered according to the latest revisions of the Aarne-Thompson type-index and the Stith Thompson motif-index. Stories for which no place could be found in the first have been fitted into the second: they are largely jokes and supernatural anecdotes, and account for nearly nine-tenths of the list.

Not surprisingly, the American half of the study is much more complete: only published collections are included, and it is easier to find a publisher for a collection of folklore in the United States than it is in Britain. What there is is largely in periodicals, and apart from *Folk-Lore* and its predecessors these are not well represented: Baughman has not thought to look for Anglo-Irish stories in a periodical with so unpromising a name as *Béaloideas*—or for Anglo-Scots in *Scottish Studies*. Even if he had, he would not consider them statistically significant, as we have seen: the fine version of AT 393 in *Scottish Studies* 2:47 would be dismissed as Highland because it was collected in Aberdeenshire, and worse solecisms than that could be found, such as 'ORKNEY ISLANDS (Gaelic)' under AT 501 ('Peeriefool', really AT 500)—for genuine versions from the Gaelic are noticed if they happen to come into periodicals such as *Folk-Lore*. In all, statistically and otherwise, the Scots tradition has a raw deal: Peter Buchan's *Ancient Scottish Tales* is not included, and only the first and less full version of Chambers' *Popular Rhymes*, which may be why, for instance, Chambers' three versions of 'The Wee Bunnock' (AT 2025) from Ayrshire, Dumfriesshire and Selkirkshire, are cited only in secondary versions: 'SCOTLAND: Jacobs More English 73–77, n.d. BORDER: Petrie Borders 140, 1950', and therefore appear in the statistical lists as 'Scotland unspecified' rather than Lowland. Perhaps a future revision will redress the balance in favour of England and Scotland somewhat by including their volumes in the 'Folktales of the World' series and the tales summarised in Dr Katharine Briggs' forthcoming *Dictionary of Folktales in English*.

Baughman's index, though not as complete as its title and size might suggest, is nevertheless a very valuable guide to the folktales of England and (English-speaking) North America, the areas it sets out to cover. Many more examples could be listed of jokes such as 'If I wanted to go to—I wouldn't start from here' (J 1648) or the story of an ignorant woman serving tea-leaves boiled with butter (J 1732.3), each cited with a single reference and known to thousands of people in Britain and Ireland: but at least the type has been numbered. The statistics are certainly distorted by the fact that far more of these migratory jokes have been published in America than on this side of the Atlantic: perhaps we take our humour less seriously here. For instance five printed American versions are listed of J 1738.6: 'Backwoods preacher upon questioning householders about religious matters finds them hopelessly ignorant. He remarks that they are living in darkness. The woman responds that she has been trying for years to get her husband to cut a window in the house.' Within the past month I have met this story in Caithness (as a dialect poem) and Orkney (oral tradition): it is also well-known in Gaelic. And the conclusion that 'the tall tale, X 900–1899, is an overwhelmingly American form (3,710 American variants, 29 English variants)' will need to be modified on farther investigation: I could double the number of English variants straight away by adding those I have heard in Orkney recently. But it is useful to have a guide now where to classify them.

The fact is that it is impossible to demand completeness in such an index. We may

take one example from the American jokes, the best covered section: the 'sell' catalogued as Z 13.4*(m). 'Young man stays overnight with hill couple. He cannot eat enough greens at supper. That night when husband goes to see about disturbance among the horses, the woman says: 'Young man, now's your chance.' He gets up, goes to kitchen, eats the rest of the greens.' A single version from Arkansas is listed. This is (by now) well known in Britain: but apart from that, a version in Vance Randolph's *Who Blowed Up the Church House* is catalogued under AT 1775 ('*The Hungry Parson*. In the night, the parson hunts the porridge to satisfy his hunger'), evidently on the strength of Professor Herbert Halpert's note to this version that 'This story seems to have some relation to Type 1775'. Randolph's own note seems to mention three other printed versions, besides the Arkansas one, but Baughman does not include any of them in either place: nor has he a cross-reference between the motif and the type. It is hardly fair to criticise him for this: these short joke-stories are so easily remembered that they can travel anywhere in a very short time, and the attempt to list all their versions should be classified under H 1030, 'impossible tasks'.

A few statistics from the index may perhaps be put together to give significant results. In the motif section the total of American variants greatly outnumbers that for 'England and Low Scotland' by 7465 to 3966. However, if one deducts section X, 'Humor', and the related sections J, 'The Wise and the Foolish', K, 'Deceptions', and W, 'Traits of Character', which mostly consist of comic anecdotes, the proportions are almost reversed: 2871 to 3731. The remaining sections deal principally with the supernatural in one form or the other: historical legends are not very much in evidence—in America, as in Scotland, many of them may still be found in school textbooks—and section T, 'Sex', would no doubt be fuller if the index were not confined to printed sources. The main supernatural sections are E, 'The Dead' (*i.e.* mainly ghosts), where the proportions are fairly even (1068 to 1085), and D, 'Magic', F, 'Marvels' (largely fairies) and G, 'Ogres' (largely witches), where British tradition leads by 568 to 303, 641 to 105, and 1025 to 600 respectively. This proves more about belief than story-telling, for these sections of the motif-index are full of mere instances of belief which can hardly be called stories ('Fairies dance under oak tree', or 'Frog as witch's familiar'), but it is evident that witches survived the Atlantic crossing much better than fairies, while the belief in ghosts remains almost universal. Baughman's suggestion: 'It may be that people in the British Isles have thought of the fairies as beings who have been definitely located in certain spots since time immemorial' seems plausible, though *for the purpose of a story* Gaelic tradition is quite ready to let them be encountered in America or carry someone across the Atlantic for an overnight visit.

Baughman finds that only 25 per cent of the tale-types and 26 per cent of the motifs are common to Britain and America, but the percentage in the types can be raised to 50 by including tales collected in America 'from regions of predominantly English' (including 'Scotch-Irish') 'settlement'. It may be added that only six of the eighty-two exclusively American types of *märchen* (AT 300–1199) cannot be found in some form in

The Types of the Irish Folktale; and in nineteen of these eighty-two the only Anglo-American source is a single recent publication which is not even listed in the Bibliography. There is little reason to doubt that the longer folktales mostly reached America from the British Isles. In the case of the shorter tales, whether listed as types or motifs, the over-production of the American tall tale industry and the British export deficit in fairies must make a difference: by excluding these sections Baughman manages to raise the percentage of motifs in common to thirty-five. I suspect that this could be doubled if British collectors and publishers set to work on jokes and anecdotes with the assiduity of their American counterparts: but even so it would give little indication on which side of the Atlantic a joke originated. In the sections concerned with ghosts and witches over 50 per cent of the motifs are common to both sides of the Atlantic, and in those dealing with magic and (strange) animals over 40 per cent, and it is probable that these have mostly travelled from East to West.

Like all tale-indexes dealing with living languages, Baughman's index is necessarily in the nature of a preliminary study: in many ways it could have been more complete, but at least it will provide a useful guide to lines for future research, which is more than the student of folktales in English has ever had before. It is invaluable for the scholar on this side of the water to know that certain tale-types can be found among English speakers in America, and to be able to assign accepted motif-numbers at least—if he can locate them—to some of that infuriating unclassified heap of comic anecdotes. And anyone in a hurry to find a joke for an after-dinner speech could find it very useful to dip into the summaries on pages 28–63, 299–363 or 394–600—perhaps the biggest repository of funny stories ever printed!

ALAN BRUFORD

St Englmar—Eine volkskundliche Ortsmonographie by Günther Kapfhammer. Institut für Volkskunde, München 1968. Pp. 172+illus.

In an age when even limited subjects tend to split up, when literary studies and linguistic pursuits separate, when the investigation of written and oral traditions is, more likely than not, carried out in two different com- and de-partments, when the analysis of material culture and non-material concepts is no longer the legitimate prerogative of one man, when even in the non-material world of stories, songs, proverbs, riddles, names, dances each category demands its own specialist scholar, it is encouraging to find at least a few publications which still, or rather again, reflect a more comprehensive and also more complex approach. In 1965, Rudolf Schenda and his wife published their study of a Sicilian street (*Eine sizilianische Strasse* by Rudolf and Susanne Schenda. Tübingen 1965), and now Günther Kapfhammer presents us his monograph of a single rural community. In both books the term 'volkskundlich' appears in the subtitle, and the introductions to both volumes make it clear that what is meant and

intended here is the observation and description in systematic form of the various facets of the traditional life and culture of a single group of people, one accidentally, presently and historically bounded by the houses of a single street, the other by the boundaries of a village (and parish). The scope of the two accounts does not tally completely, and in neither study is the full potential of 'volkskunde' realised in all its dimensions. It is therefore tempting, and it might also be useful, to compare the books step by step, section by section but for the purposes of this review we must confine ourselves to Kapfhammer's volume.

St Englmar is a parish in Lower Bavaria (Niederbayern) with a total population of 1280 (in 1964) spread over 28 smaller units of settlement. It lies between 2,000 and almost 3,500 feet above sea-level and because of its cold climate and long hard winters, as well as its geographical situation, has tended to be by-passed by important traffic routes although today good roads connect it with neighbouring villages and the major road-system. Consequently, it can be expected to have been a relic area for many centuries and to have preserved much which in more accessible communities is bound to have disappeared in, or at least been overlaid by, less traditional and less localised elements. St Englmar is therefore at the same time ideal and dangerous for the kind of investigation described above (much more so, for example, than the Schendas' Sicilian street)—ideal because of the concentrated richness of traditional material and notions, dangerous because these riches might be those of a museum (even of the 'open air' type) rather than of a freely developing community of people in the second half of the twentieth century.

Kapfhammer is obviously aware of the risks involved for he has guarded himself against them by, on the one hand, an extensive chapter setting out geographical and particularly historical matters (especially those concerning the religious background, the worship of saints, pilgrimages, ecclesiastical organisation, etc.) and, on the other, careful quantitative annotation in the major descriptive sections as to whether a custom, a game, a legend is still well known, slightly known, or perhaps only dimly remembered by a single informant. Central to his descriptive chapters is the history of customs in their relationship to place and time, particularly the latter because he feels with the Swiss folklorist Weiss that the customs of the working day as well as the holiday and festival time are the creative nucleus of traditional life uniting the material with the non-material culture both in essence and in analysis; or put slightly differently: It does matter which song is sung to which tune by whom on what day in which surroundings while which clothes are worn, which banners carried, which meals eaten before and after, which precautions taken to ward off evil or incite good, etc. It would indeed be foolish to put the criss-cross of divisions through this organic whole if it were to obscure the essential unity of the traditional event.

The author attempts to realise his objectives and provide the results of his field-work (conducted in a surprisingly short period made possible by intensive preparatory work on written records and the help of the tape-recorder) in three main chapters, a large

one on 'House and farm as the basis of life and work', a less extensive one on 'Life in the village', and a rather short one on 'Oral tradition'. This imbalance is mainly due to the fact that, for the purposes of publication, the section on stories had to be drastically curtailed. In the first of these chapters, the main subheadings are: vernacular (and not so vernacular) architecture both with regard to the farming community and the non-farming population, including not only the important buildings but also the 'little houses'; kinship, family and neighbourhood; clothes and national costume; food and meals; folk medicine; the daily life; the course of a year, especially calendar customs with special highlights on the so-called 'Englmari Festival' on Whitmonday; customs connected with birth, childhood, youth, marriage, death, funeral. The second chapter concentrates on school and education, work and trade, leisure and entertainment, and ranges from a history of the school, via conditions of work, type of workers, music, song and dance to the role of reading matter, wireless, television and the cinema. In the chapter devoted to oral tradition, we find a short account of the dialect, and samples of proverbs, humorous stories, historical legends, local anecdotes, etc., all transcribed from tape-recordings.

This may not be everything one may want to investigate but it is certainly more than is normally found in parish monographs or in strictly categorised, compartmentalised, analytic studies. Naturally, the architect may also claim the section on vernacular architecture as his domain, the musicologist (particularly of the ethno-variety) may regard song and music as his own field of research, the sociologist may hold that kinship and ergological considerations fall within his bailiwick, the linguist may think of the pages on local pronunciation and vocabulary as his speciality, and so on; but these overlaps—and they are no more than that—do not in any way invalidate the folklore-cum-ethnology approach of the Schendas and of Kapfhammer from a new centre of gravity, so to speak, and one can only hope that their example will not go unnoticed elsewhere. Is it too much to hope that, in addition to specialised genre studies, one day we may have a 'volkskundliche Ortsmonographie' of, let us say, Kingussie, or Barr, or of a Glasgow street, accompanied by a full photographic and sound record?

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

Folktales of the Irish Countryside by Kevin Danaher. The Mercier Press, Cork 1967. Pp. 139. 7s. 6d.

Irish Sagas, edited by Myles Dillon. The Mercier Press, Cork 1968. Pp. 175. 10s.

Among all the wealth of folktales collected and published in Ireland in the present century there is relatively little from the English-speaking areas. True, as in most of the English-speaking world the longer *märchen* and hero-tales are hard to get, but the richness of the language in published examples, especially from districts where Irish was spoken a

century ago, makes one wish for more: it is the idiom which inspired Synge unaltered. Kevin Danaher's collection of forty tales from Co. Limerick is therefore very welcome. Admittedly they are the author's re-tellings of tales he heard in his youth, but the sources are all scrupulously named, and the words could well be the words he heard them use: if not, they are plain rather than fancy. There are neither damsels nor colleens, but simply girls. More than a quarter of the stories are fairly long *märchen* (though several may be traceable to a printed source), and the rest are largely concerned with fools and tricksters, ghosts (rather than fairies), or moral *exempla* of the sort so popular in Ireland. It is interesting to compare Nos. 1 and 18 in this book with the versions from the Irish which are Nos. 31 and 52 in Seán O Súilleabháin's *Folktales of Ireland:* in these cases the versions in English are the better ones. Another comparison, between the last four stories as re-told from memory and as taken down on the Ediphone from the same teller by the author in *Béaloideas* XVII, suggests that the treatment has in fact been very free. But how much worse a free treatment could it have been!

Irish Sagas is perhaps a more scholarly book, but less of a bargain: for one thing it is an unacknowledged re-issue of a volume printed by the Irish Stationery Office in 1959 for a quarter of the price under a better-looking cover. For the extra 7s. 6d. one is offered a fulsome blurb, and an introduction by Professor Dillon, which does its best to provide a background in 2000 words to the twelve lectures on different stories that follow, but inevitably repeats part of his own introductory lecture. Worse, the lecturers have written lectures, when with stories from so obscure a language what was needed was as much as possible of the original story in translation or summary left to speak for itself as in Dillon's own *Early Irish Literature*. Gordon Quin mentions every version of the Deirdre story from the Book of Leinster to James Stephens, and James Carney uses *Cath Maige Muccrime* as text or pretext for a sermon on later Irish hopes for a Messiah to drive out the English. Perhaps the lectures which give most of the story are the first and last: Dillon himself on *Tochmarc Étaíne* and David Greene on *Fingal Rónáin*. Perhaps they just had the sense to choose the best stories.

ALAN BRUFORD

Record Review

Rí na bPíobairí, The King of the Pipers. Leo Rowsome, uileann pipes. Claddagh Records Ltd, Dublin, CC1, 12in. 33⅓ r.p.m.

Piper's Choice. Leo Rowsome, uileann pipes. Claddagh Records Ltd, Dublin, CCE1. 7in. 45 r.p.m.

Dolly. Dolly MacMahon with Denis Murphy, fiddle, Paddy Moloney, pipes and tin whistle, Michael Tubridy, flute and concertina. Claddagh Records Ltd, Dublin, CC3. 12in. 33⅓ r.p.m.

These records stand on the popular fringe of folk music: traditional performers trying to attract a large audience. Leo Rowsome's skill as a piper is undisputed: but on the longer record he chooses to show it off in exhibition pieces such as *Carolan's Concerto* and *The Fox Chase* which are more impressive than interesting. Moreover the sweet tone of the Irish pipes is not enhanced by the constant yelping accompaniment of the regulators, the curious devices which supplement the drones with chords like a short-winded concertina, and are not used by many country players. Anyone interested in the mere technique of the uileann pipes should have the longer disc; but for good traditional music well played the E.P. gives a far more representative selection.

Dolly MacMahon, too, is a traditional singer who has grown too used to city audiences. Her voice sounds rather saccharine, though the diminuendos criticised by Douglas Sealy in an excellent review in *Ceol* (Vol. III, p. 61) may be due less to conscious underlining of the words than to plain bad breathing. The accompaniments of some of her songs by traditional players are on the whole the best accompaniments I have heard to music which should have no accompaniment. To hear music bad enough for the record's extraordinary title listen to the first half of the second side, with *The Skillet Pot* and *Dan O'Hara;* but the second half, with the bilingual 'dandling song' in slip jig rhythm and an eccentric but beautiful version of *Lord Gregory* (Child 76), is almost as good as the remarkable cover photograph, and these and other bands make this disc an attractive if not wholly authentic addition to the stock of Irish records.

ALAN BRUFORD

Books Received

Some of these books may be reviewed later in *Scottish Studies*

A Readers Guide to Scotland (Bibliography). National Book League, London 1968. Pp. 128.

Pìobaireachd: Classical Music of the Highland Bagpipe by Seumas MacNeill. British Broadcasting Corporation, Edinburgh 1968. Pp. 88. 12s. 6d.

Dòmhnall Ruadh Chorùna edited by Derick S. Thomson. *Gairm*. Glasgow 1969. Pp. 101. 15s.

A View of the Irish Language edited by Brian Ó Cuív. Stationery Office, Dublin 1969. Pp. 156+pp. 8 illustrations. 15s. (Paperback 8s. 6d.)

Folk Tales and Society: Story-Telling in a Hungarian Peasant Community by Linda Dégh, translated by Emily M. Schossberger. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and London. Pp. 293. 119s.

Gaelic Folktales and Mediaeval Romances by Alan Bruford. *Béaloideas* XXXIV. Educational Company of Ireland, Dublin 1966 (1969). Pp. 286. 20s.

Highland Settler. A Portrait of the Scottish Gael in Nova Scotia by Charles W. Dunn. Toronto University Press, Oxford University Press, London 1969. Pp. 180. 24s.

A History of the Scottish People. 1560–1830 by T. C. Smout. Collins, London 1969. Pp. 576. 63s.

Irish Folk Drama by Alan Gailey. Mercier Press, Cork. Pp. 104. 8s 6d.

Teaching Local History by Ian S. Ferguson and Eric J. Simpson. Moray House publications. Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh 1969. Pp. 86. 3s. 6d.