

*A Recently-Discovered Manuscript:  
'ane taill of Sir colling ye kny'*

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Bishop Percy's celebrated account of his discovery, in a friend's house in Shropshire, of the Percy Folio Manuscript: 'I saw it lying dirty on the floor under a Bureau in ye Parlour: being used by the Maids to light the fire' (Hales and Furnival 1867-8: lxiv) underlines the fact that much early poetry owes its survival to mere chance. There is always the hope therefore that items hitherto overlooked may yet come to light. Such an item is the poem entitled 'ane taill of sir colling ye kny' which I recently found within Register House, Edinburgh, amongst a collection of miscellaneous fragments of which there is now no known or recorded provenance. The 246-line poem is complete and consists of ten pages in a small, neatly written quarto manuscript of which only twenty-eight pages now remain. The bulk of the manuscript appears to have been lost and that for some considerable time as can be seen by matching the numerous stains and holes on the remaining pages. The paper is badly marked and damaged by damp and portions of some pages have become stuck together and are consequently very fragile. Those leaves which are least badly stained reveal a French watermark of 1582, a crowned jug with a band round its middle bearing the initials TC. (Briquet 1907: 639, no. 12814).

The only clues as to the origin of the manuscript are provided by names scribbled in the margins and by portions of legal documents contained within it. Following 'Sir Colling' are two precepts of warning in the name of Marion Cockburn 'relict of umquhyll Hew Douglas of Borg', one of which is noted as 'done at Langnidrie, xviii March, 1582'. Marion Cockburn's name recurs amongst the marginalia on a later page of the manuscript along with the name 'John Sinclair of Hirdmanstoun'. There is also part of another precept of warning, this time by 'Sir William Sinklar of Hermistoun, knight'. A link between the families of Sinclair and Cockburn can be seen in the recording in the Privy Seal Register of a charter to Sibilla Cockburne, spouse of Sir William Sinclare of Hirdmestoun in April 1569 (p. 120, No. 592), and of a gift to Samuel Cokburne by Sir William Sinclare of Hirdmanstoun following upon a reversion by his deceased father John Sinclare of Hirdmanstoun in November 1572 (p. 338, No. 1779). In view of this and of the fact that the other pages of the manuscript are entirely taken up with literary or pious material rather than with the orderly sequence of legal items one would expect to find in a protocol book, it seems that some member of

either of these families may have employed someone to compile a book of literary and pious pieces, perhaps on the lines of the Maitland Folio Manuscript which was being collected at this time. The copyist may have been the Thomas White whose name occurs most frequently throughout the pages, at one place accompanied by the words 'with my hand'. The date of his work was probably 1583 since that date is scribbled several times at the end of this poem.

'Ane taill of sir colling ye knyht' is clearly an earlier version of Child's 'Sir Cawline' (Child 1898: 58-60) which he obtained from the 'unique' copy in the Percy Folio Manuscript of 1650, which copy, he says 'shows very great carelessness on the part of the transcriber or some predecessor' (*op. cit.*: 56). Bishop Percy also speaks critically of this source in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (p. 157):

This old romantic tale was preserved in the Editor's folio manuscript, but in so very defective and mutilated a condition (not from any chasm in the manuscript, but from great omission in the transcript, probably copied from the faulty recitation of some illiterate minstrel), and the whole appeared so far short of the perfection it seemed to deserve, that the Editor was tempted to add several stanzas in the manner which appeared to him most interesting and affecting.

It is consequently of considerable interest that this sixteenth-century version of the poem should have come to light, for not only is it complete (other than a few words and phrases lost through marks or holes in the manuscript) but it contains elements of high quality and interest that are missing from the later version.

The transcript that follows is published with the approval of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland. The Scottish Record Office reference number is RH13/35.

Heir beginnis ane taill off Sir colling ye knyht

Jesus Chryst and tryniti  
 Yat deitt wes on ye ruid  
 to send him grace in all digne  
 yat luiffis ye Scottis bluid  
 yis be ane knyht corporall 5  
 hardie vas and guid  
 Sir Coling vas ye knyhts name  
 ane kingis sone vas hie  
 vht Edvaird ye bruce he fuir to fecht  
 In Irland biyond ye sie 10  
 Intill argyll I hard men say  
 ane lord roinit in yat land  
 ane vorthie variour and ane fell  
 sa lang as his dayis myht ring  
 he had ane dochtar fair of face 15

anc lustie luifsum thing  
 Off flesche and bluid was nain sa fair  
 Yair was nain my<sup>t</sup> be hir peir  
 Sir Colling luifit hir best of ane  
 Scho lay his hairt sa neir 20  
 he luifit hir ane 3eir and mair  
 bot he durst newer his erand say  
 quhill it fell anis vpone anc day  
 Sir colling in cairbed lay  
 and he caist wp his armis braid 25  
 it fell wpone ye mununday  
 ye king sat at his dyne  
 he luikit amang his kny<sup>t</sup>tis all  
 he missitt sir colling  
 he sayis q<sup>r</sup> is sir colling my kny<sup>t</sup> 30  
 I see him nocht w<sup>t</sup> my ei  
 Yan bispak ane eldrane kny<sup>t</sup>  
 yat was off sir collings kin  
 ye kny<sup>t</sup> lysis seik will newer mend  
 gif he get guid leiching 35  
 he sayis get wp my dochtar deir  
 yow art ane leiche full fyne  
 tak baikin breid and vyne sa reid  
 and beir to sir colyne  
 w<sup>t</sup> yat ye ladie was no<sup>t</sup> sveir 40  
 hir madinis schon it syne  
 quhill scho com to sir collingis chalmar  
 that sir colline was in . . .  
 scho sayis win wp sir gud kny<sup>t</sup>  
 ly newer sa couar[dly] 45  
 he sayis yis is for [3our] luif ladie  
 all [ye] dollair yat ye . . .  
 wald ye me confort w<sup>t</sup> ane kiss  
 I ly na langir heir  
 yan war I [brot] fra baill to blis 50  
 gif na better may be  
 gif yat I be sa sempill ane kny<sup>t</sup>  
 I may not be thy peir  
 sum deidis of armis 3e wald me wiss  
 to be 3owr bachleir 55  
 scho sayis [vpone] 3one allreche [hill]

[Yair]on standis ane thorn  
 and 3e wald valk ane vinter nicht  
 and baldie blaw 3our horn  
 ane alreche kny<sup>t</sup> is mikill of my<sup>t</sup> 60  
 will compeir 3ow biforme  
 yair com never ane away w<sup>t</sup> lyf  
 sen ye first tyme yat I vas borne  
 yair my hand said sir collyne  
 I sall valk at y<sup>t</sup> thorne 65  
 outhar ane vad to bring away  
 or ellis my lyf to be forlorne  
 yair my hand said sir collyne  
 I sall valk at yat plain  
 ouyair ane vad to bring away 70  
 or ellis newer to cum agane  
 scho loutit down oue[r] [his hed stok?]  
 and raucht him kises thrie  
 and richtlie [yair him went]  
 [ane auell kny<sup>t</sup> . . .] was hie 75  
 he lap wpone his mckill steid  
 and fuir furth fra ye toun  
 ye thunder and ye fyr flanchis  
 can ouer ye bentis broun  
 at midnyt quan ye mone did ryss 80  
 it schew him littill lyt  
 he saw betwein him and ye sey  
 full fast cumand ane kny<sup>t</sup>  
 ane grit steid in his cumpany  
 bot and ane lady bryghtt 85  
 ye gold yat ye ladie voir on hir guidlie vys  
 it schew sir colling lyt  
 loud on sir colling can he cry  
 said freik I vid ye flie  
 or I sall brikin ye full ryt 90  
 In dispyt off yi kin and ye  
 yow speikis sa littill of godis my<sup>t</sup>  
 ye weill var I trow ye  
 sir collyne gat ane speir [in hand]  
 and neir him culd he ryd 95  
 this alreche kny<sup>t</sup> [was] stif and stuir  
 and stiflic culd he ryd

ye tric bitwix yam tua thai bair  
 In schudderis doun [it] fell  
 and yai haue drawin yair nobill brandis 100  
 and neir wyair ar yai gain  
 yis alreche knyt vas stif and stur  
 and stiflie culd he stand  
 sir collyne w<sup>t</sup> ane straik sa hie  
 fra him he straik ye hand 105  
 and heich it flew abond his heid  
 and ly<sup>t</sup>it on ye hie land  
 wt yat ye ladic gaif ane schout  
 yat fast scho was cumand  
 away away yow kirsin kny<sup>t</sup> 110  
 thow sinett my lord na mair  
 he sall newer cum in y . . .  
 nowther be laitt nor air  
 [If] for to fecht w<sup>t</sup> ane kirstin kny<sup>t</sup>  
 yat leiris of godis lair 115  
 last quhan I had him in my armis  
 I thocht him sveir as svair  
 and now he lysis wpone . . .  
 lyk for to leif na mair  
 bot for ye luif yat yow luifis best 120  
 his vondit bodie gif me  
 Bot for ye luif yat I luif best  
 his vondit bodie I gif ye  
 bot his ry<sup>t</sup> hand and nobill brand  
 be god sall ga w<sup>t</sup> me 125  
 syne furthe to ye mikill hand he fuir  
 quhair it lay on ye lie  
 and till ane fingar in yat hand  
 yairin was ringis thrie  
 and ilkane of yai gold ringis 130  
 yairin was on stain  
 yai war worthe ane erldome of land  
 In his contrie at hame  
 wp he tuik ye alreche svord  
 was hard as ony flint 135  
 say ye not bot he buir ane bla[d]  
 yat all thir touellis tint  
 he lap apon his steid agane

and he fuir to ye toun  
 full reddy wes ane gay porter 140  
 Sir colling in to lett  
 And als reddy wes ane fair lady  
 In airmis him to plett  
 yair was na [mair] as I haird say  
 bot vesche and go [to] meit 145  
 full reddie . . . vas ye ladie gay  
 set w<sup>t</sup> him at ye meit  
 quhan yai had eittin and drukin veill  
 and greit mirth yai had maid  
 four and tventie greit schipis 150  
 vas strukin in ye raid  
 and fra yam com ane fellon freik  
 he was bay<sup>t</sup> lang and braid  
 thrie heidis on his hals he buir  
 he was ouer meikill maid 155  
 tuik wp ye cup befoir ye king  
 drank out ye vyn yat was yairin  
 And pat ye cup in his sleif  
 he sayis Sir king w<sup>t</sup>outin lat  
 yis was my crand heir 160  
 other to bruik your landis braid  
 Or haue yi dochtar deir  
 Other to find me ane freik to fecht  
 [Upon] yi bentis broun  
 [Or els] yow aucht to be na king 165  
 Nor yett to weir ye croun  
 ye king cryis vpon his [men]  
 his hairt wes vunder sair  
 quha will feche me my coupe again  
 foir it I dar weill say 170  
 and yai sall haue my dochtar deir  
 and all efter my day  
 sir collyne drew neir ha . . . by  
 his awin erand to say  
 hald wp 3our hand sir king he said 175  
 I sall do and I may  
 And yan bespak ye may  
 sat be hir fayairis syd  
 scho sayis gif it bityd my fayair deir

yat sir colling be slane 180  
 3e burne me heich vpone 3one hill  
 or 3on foull theif cum agane  
 \*3e burne me heith wpone 3on hill  
 and ding me in pouldar small  
 or 3on foull theif cum agane 185  
 to burne me quyt away  
 he sayis fetche me my alreche svord  
 als haird as ony flint  
 bitwix him and ye foull theif  
 3e sall sie monie ane dint 190  
 ye steid yat sir collyne raid on  
 he wes bery broun  
 and all yat saw sir colling  
 geff him yair bennisoun  
 the steid yat ye foule theiffe red on 195  
 and he was rewin blak  
 and all yat saw ye foule theif  
 bad sorrow mit him tak  
 yai met into ye feild  
 into ye feild of veir 200  
 and doun he dang ye foule theif  
 bayt wt scheild and speir  
 thrie heidis on his hals he buir  
 and of he culd yam scheir  
 and hame yan brot him sir collyne 205  
 wt greit sollemnitie  
 at ye kirk duir of lyme and stain  
 wadit him and ye gay ladie  
 yair was ane stewart in yat hall  
 was [cum] of [hallie] kin 210  
 he [l]ed ane lyone in ane [leiche]  
 Intill ane dungin lay  
 And all to sla him sir collyne  
 ye mair yat was his sin  
 sir collyne had ye ladie win 215  
 . . . baill wald newer . . .  
 Quhill anis itt fell vpone ane day  
 . . . ane dawing off ane day

\* Line 183 is scored through in the text.

sir colling 3eid furth in his oratour  
 his matteinis for to say 220  
 he tuik nathing him about  
 bot ane mantill of gray  
 he opinit wp ye dungen deip  
 ye lyon saw ye ly<sup>t</sup>  
 he kenit weill his maisteris call 225  
 and s[cop] wpone ye kny<sup>t</sup>  
 sir collyne saw yat it was sa  
 he trowit his deid vas dicht  
 he vapit his mantill about his arme  
 and fuir till him sua ry<sup>t</sup> 230  
 and he hes borne him bacvard mair  
 till ane pillar of trie  
 And sickane vreist he gaif him yair  
 his hart vas brak in thrie  
 ye vachman cryit wpone ye vallis 235  
 sayis sir collyne is slane  
 ye ladie rampis and raif hir hair  
 My<sup>t</sup> not be stanchit yan  
 ye king fuir to his dochtaris bour  
 to confor his dochtar deir 240  
 and ry<sup>t</sup> sua did sir collyne  
 to conffortt his lady deir  
 sixtein bairnis ye lady buir  
 And all in saxtein 3eir  
 And deid—[th ?] is cummitt in ye land 245  
 ye ladie is borne in beir.

This is ye end of ye maist pairt of Sir Collyne ye kny<sup>t</sup>.

Interesting differences immediately become apparent between this version and the English 'Sir Cawline'. With regard to rhyme, 'Sir Colling' shows a conscious artistry that is missing from the conventional ballad rhyme schemes of 'Sir Cawline'. 'Sir Cawline' is written mainly in 4-line stanzas rhyming ABCB, with an occasional 6-line stanza ABCBDB. In 'Sir Colling' however, the pattern of rhymes is much subtler and very varied. The manuscript shows no division into stanzas at all and, from the multiplicity of rhyme patterns within it, it would appear that the copyist's original manuscript was not split up into regular stanzas either. There are in the poem many 4-line groupings rhyming either ABCB or ABAB, and a number of 6-line gatherings rhyming ABCBDB, but often the rhyme is carried on beyond this unit and forms quite intricate

patterns of words. Such is the case in lines 80–93, rhyming ABCBCBABDDBEBE—the rhyme being on the words *lyt, knyt, bryghtt, lyt, ryt, and myt*. A rather simpler rhyme scheme is seen in lines 56–67 which rhyme ABCBDBEBFBGB, the B rhyme being here *thorn, horn, biforne, borne, thorne, and forlorne*. Another pattern is seen in lines 148–56, rhyming ABCBDBEB—*maid, raid, braid, maid*; and another in lines 21–6, rhyming AABBBBCB, the rhyming words being *say, day, lay, and mununday*; and yet another is provided by lines 170–77 which rhyme ABACADAA—*say, day, say, may and may*.

The loss in subtlety and sophistication in the rhyming from ‘Sir Colling’ to ‘Sir Cawline’ is best seen in a comparison of two similar passages. ‘Sir Colling’'s sustained rhyme on ‘-orn’ in lines 56–67

scho sayis vpone zone allreche hill  
 yairon standis ane thorn  
 and 3e wald valk ane vinter nict  
 and baldlie blaw 3our horn  
 ane alreche kny<sup>t</sup> is mikill of my<sup>t</sup>  
 will compeir 3ow biforne  
 yair com never ane away w<sup>t</sup> lyf  
 sen ye first tyme yat I vas borne  
 yair my hand said sir collyne  
 I sall valk at y<sup>t</sup> thorne  
 outh<sup>r</sup> ane vad to bring away  
 or ellis my lyf to be forlorne

has been split up into three stanzas in ‘Sir Cawline’ to become

Vpon Eldrige Hill there growes a thorne  
 Vpon the mores brodinge,  
 And wold you, Sir Knight, wake ther all night  
 To-day of the other morninge?

Ffor the eldrige king that is mickle of might  
 Will examine you beforne;  
 And there was never man that bare his liffe away  
 Since the day that I was borne.

But I will ffor your sake, ffair ladye,  
 Walke on the bents soe browne,  
 And Ile either bring you a readye token  
 Or Ile never come to you againe.

stanzas 14–16

The skill of the ‘Sir Colling’ poet becomes apparent here in comparison to the very ordinariness of the ‘Sir Cawline’ version where not only is no attempt made to retain

the continuity of rhyme on '-orn'—the 'thorn' at the end of the first of these stanzas is not utilised as a rhyme—but also the internal rhyme in

ane alreche knyht is mikill of myht l. 60

is lost in the otherwise same line in 'Sir Cawline'

Ffor the eldrige king that is mickle of might stanza 15.

A similar decline in craftsmanship is to be seen when one compares the carefully and logically planned 'Sir Colling' with its more haphazard English version.

The first two stanzas of the Percy Folio 'Sir Cawline':

Jesus, Lord mickle of might,  
That dyed ffor us on the roode,  
To maintaine vs in all our right  
That loves true English blood.

Ffor by a knight I say my song,  
Was bold an fful hardye;  
Sir Robert Bruise wold fforth to ffight,  
In-to Ireland over the sea.

are omitted by Child in his ballad number 61 'as belonging to another ballad'.

In this earlier Scottish version however the first eight lines are integral and relevant to the rest of the poem establishing its events within a time and place. The patriotic note of the first verse is appropriate to introduce a hero who has fought with Edward Bruce in his Irish campaigns and this authentic local note is continued in the choice of a daughter of the lord of Argyll as his lady.

Child claims that there are only two adventures in 'Sir Cawline', the fight with an elritch knight and that with a five-headed giant, though he thinks there may be traces of a third in the unintelligible twenty-ninth stanza which, if it was meant to bridge the gap between the first and second adventures, fails lamentably. The continuity of action from the first to the second adventure in the Scottish 'Sir Colling' is clearly provided in the feast held in celebration of the hero's victorious return from his first fight when his second opponent makes his appearance:

quhan yai had eittin and drukin veill  
and greit mirth yai had maid  
four and tventie greit schipis  
vas strukin in ye raid  
and fra yam com ane fellon freik ll. 149-53

and offers his insulting challenge:

tuik wp ye cup befoir ye king  
drank out ye vyn yat was yairin  
and pat ye cup in his sleif . . . ll. 157-9.

Another structural difference between the Scottish and English poems lies in the fact that the third adventure in the poem, the fight with the lion, which Child seems to have overlooked although it is in his version in stanzas 41 to 44, is given much greater structural prominence in 'Sir Colling'. In 'Sir Cawline' this whole episode is tagged on after what would seem the natural end of the poem, as a postscript bearing no relation to what has gone before. In 'Sir Colling', however, the ground is laid for the approaching adventure by the mention, immediately after the wedding of Sir Colling and the lady, that

yair was anc stewart in yat hall l. 208

who was keeping a lion in a dungeon

and all to sla him sir colling l. 212.

The poem then returns to the unsuspecting happiness of the hero and his bride thus adding to the dramatic tension of the sudden encounter with the lion when it does come. The fight itself is described with much greater detail than the rather tame affair in 'Sir Cawline' and is sufficiently exciting to measure up to the two previous adventures and so strengthen the structural balance of the poem.

Leaving aside variations in the spelling of common words, there is scarcely a line that is the same in the Scottish and English versions of the poem although both tell a very similar story. There are very many differences in detail between the two versions. In 'Sir Cawline' the lovesick knight claims that without the lady's love

ere noone I shalbe dead stanza 5;

the king, her father, sits at his meal

when our parish masse that itt was done stanza 6

and he misses Sir Cawline

that was wont to serve me with ale and wine stanza 6;

he sends his daughter to the sick knight with 'doe' as well as 'baken bread' and 'wine soe red'—all of which details are lacking in 'Sir Colling'. On the other hand, when she sends him off to his vigil on the haunted hill, Sir Colling's lady dismisses him with 'kises thrie' (l. 73) while Sir Cawline's lady simply returns to her chamber with her maidens (stanza 17). When Sir Colling waits on the hill

ye thunder and ye fyr flanchis  
can ouer ye bentis broun ll. 79-80

and his first warning of his assailant's approach is visual:

at midnyt quhan ye mone did ryss  
it schew him littill lyt  
he saw betwein him and ye sey  
full fast cumand anc knyht ll. 81-84

whereas Sir Cawline's wait, in no such vivid, eerie landscape, is ended when

a lightsome bugle then heard he blow

Over the bents soe browne

stanza 18

and his enemy approaches not at the furious pace of the Scottish hero's foe, for

A ladye bright his brydle led

That seemlye itt was to see

stanza 19

The balanced division of the ensuing battle, on horseback with spears and on foot with swords, is obscured in the English version, for the phrases repeated with minor but essential differences to mark the two phases of the fight in 'Sir Colling':

this alreche kny<sup>t</sup> was stif and stuir

and stiflie culd he ryd

ll. 96-7

and

yis alreche kny<sup>t</sup> vas stif and stur

and stiflie culd he stand,

ll. 102-3

while retained at the start of the second stage of the fight in the English poem, have been weakened at the start of the fight to

The king was bold and abode

stanza 22.

As in 'Sir Colling', Sir Cawline takes away the elritch sword and 'ringes Fiue', though the poem does not say where he had found these five rings, nor does it include the shrewd comment in 'Sir Colling' about the three rings won by the hero of that poem

and ilkane of yai gold ringis

yairin was on stain

yai war worthe ane erldome of land

In his contrie at hame

ll. 130-4.

Nor is there any mention in 'Sir Cawline' of the impressive quantities of blood flowing from the hand severed by Sir Colling.

The structural differences between the Scottish and English poems at the start of the second adventure have already been discussed. The challenge is broadly similar in both, though in the English version the king appeals for aid to his knights of the Round Table, which assembly has not been transported to the Argyll of the Scottish poem. The English challenger has also acquired two more heads than his Scottish counterpart and, to add to his villainy, is a 'hend soldan' (stanzas 36, 37). The entire passage describing Sir Colling riding forth after the three-headed thief, one of the finest parts of the Scottish poem, is omitted in 'Sir Cawline', as is the dramatic plea of the king's daughter that, should Sir Colling be slain, rather than sacrifice her to the villain

ye burne me heith vpone zone hill

and ding me in poulder small

ll. 183-4

The next three stanzas are devoted in 'Sir Cawline' to discussion of the reward promised the hero by the king, while Sir Colling's good fortune is tersely described:

at ye kirk duir of lyme and stain  
wadit him and ye gay ladie.

ll. 207-9

The structural differences in the treatment of the third adventure in the Scottish and English poems have been considered above but there are still three minor differences of detail. In 'Sir Colling', the distraught lady is first comforted by her father and then by her husband and the reiteration of the phrases describing this accentuates her shock of surprise on seeing the latter alive when she and her father had thought him dead. In 'Sir Cawline' we have instead the excessive repetition of the hero's soothing words:

'O peace, my lady!' sayes Sir Cawline,  
I have bought thy love ffull deere;  
O peace, my lady!' sayes Sir Cawline,  
'Peace, lady, ffor I am heere!'

stanza 45,

used to pad out a stanza to the required length without adding anything to the poem. It is at this juncture in the English version that Sir Cawline finally weds his lady and she bears him fifteen sons, thus providing a neat ending to the poem. In the Scottish version, however, Sir Colling and his lady have been married since before the third adventure, and so this version of the poem ends rather abruptly with the death of the lady after having borne one child more than her English counterpart. That this is indeed the end of the Scottish poem is not certain for this copy of the poem is followed by the tantalising note by the copyist 'This is ye end of ye maist pairt of sir collyne ye knyht'.

Broadly, the Scottish version of the poem is more tightly and logically structured, its detail is more telling and more consistent, and it makes less use of direct speech than the English version. 'Sir Colling' reserves direct speech for moments of considerable dramatic intensity, as in the plea of the allreche knight's lady to her love's assailant and in the three-headed knight's challenge to the king and court, to say nothing of Sir Colling's complaint to the lady from his sickbed. More important than these differences, however, is the absence from the English poem of all the consciously artistic effects which make the Scottish poem a fine piece of literature. Most of these lost passages rely for their effect on the reiteration of balanced phrases, a simple technique but used with great skill and sensitivity. Such a procedure is to be seen in Sir Colling's determined acceptance of the task set him by the king's daughter:

yair my hand said sir collyne  
I sall valk at y<sup>t</sup> thorne  
outher ane vad to bring away  
or ellis my lyf to be forlorn

Yair my hand said sir collyne  
 I sall valk at yat plain  
 ouyair anc vad to bring away  
 or ellis newer to cum againe.

ll. 64-71

It is seen also in the two phases of Sir Colling's fight with the first knight; and in the dialogue between this knight's lady and Sir Colling:

bot for ye luif yat yow luifis best  
 his vondit bodie gif me  
 Bot for ye luif yat I luif best  
 his vondit bodie I gif ye  
 bot his ryt hand and nobill brand  
 be god sall ga w<sup>t</sup> me.

ll. 120-25

It is seen again in the despairing cry of the king's daughter when Sir Colling accepts the challenge of the three-headed giant; and in the lines describing the two opponents riding out to battle:

ye steid yat sir collyne raid on  
 he wes bery broun  
 and all yat saw sir colling  
 geff him yair bennisoun  
 ye steid yat ye fowle theiffe red on  
 and he was rewin blak  
 and all yat saw ye foule theif  
 bad sorrow mi<sup>t</sup> him tak.

ll. 190-98

And it is also seen in the twofold comforting of Sir Colling's lady after his apparent death in his third adventure. All these passages show a feeling for structure and balance, and an ability to evoke an atmosphere and exploit its dramatic potential—which indicate the work of a true artist in the creation of the poem.

It remains to make a brief mention of the relationship of 'Sir Colling' to the two other versions of the ballad noted by Child but discounted for serious study by him as 'simple rifacimenti of the ballad in Percy's *Reliques*' (Child 1898: 56). These are the 'Harris version' which was passed on by a Mrs Harris in Perthshire (who learnt it in about 1790) to her daughter who wrote it down from her memory in 1859, and the version printed by Buchan in his *Ballads of the North of Scotland*. Both versions have departed radically from the seventeenth-century 'Sir Cawline' and the sixteenth-century 'Sir Colling', but both share certain features—either of phrase or of incident with the Scottish poem which are not to be found in the poem in the Percy Folio Manuscript. Thus the lines in 'Sir Colling':

ye king sat at his dyne  
 he luikit amang his kny<sup>t</sup>is all  
 he missitt sir colling

he sayis q<sup>r</sup> is sir colling my kny<sup>t</sup>  
 I see him nocht w<sup>t</sup> my ei  
 yan bispak anc eldrane kny<sup>t</sup> . . . ll. 27-32

are followed quite closely in the opening stanzas of the Harris version:

The king luikit owre his castle wa,  
 To his nobles ane an a';  
 Says, Whare it is him Sir Colin,  
 I dinna see him amang you a'?  
 Up it spak an eldern knight . . . stanzas 1-2

and allowing for the distortion of 'leech' to the nonsensical 'match' and the intrusion of the name Janet, the Harris stanzas 3 and 4:

Win up, win up, my dochter, Janet,  
 I wat ye are a match most fine  
 Tak the baken bread and wine sae reid  
 And to Sir Colin ye maun gieng  
 Up she rase, that fair Janet  
 An I wat weel she was na sweer stanzas 3-4

is far closer to 'Sir Colling's

he sayis get wp my dochtar deir  
 yow art anc leiche full fyne  
 tak baikin breid and vyne sa reid  
 and beir to sir colyne  
 w<sup>t</sup> yat ye ladie was no<sup>t</sup> sveir ll. 36-40

than is the version found in 'Sir Cawline':

Ffeitch yee downe my daughter deere,  
 Shee is a leeche ffull ffine;  
 I, and take you doe and the baken bread,  
 And drinke he on the wine soe red,  
 And looke no daynti is ffor him to deare,  
 For ffull loth I wold him tine.  
 This ladye is gone to his chamber . . . stanzas 8-9

After these opening stanzas the Harris version diverges progressively more from 'Sir Colling', but it is precisely the opening lines that one would expect to be most faithfully remembered in a poem passed on by word of mouth. It seems likely then that this nineteenth-century Perthshire poem is a true descendant of the same stock as the sixteenth-century 'Sir Colling' rather than, as Child thinks, a badly distorted version of the Percy Folio Manuscript poem.

As for Buchan's 'King Malcolm and Sir Colvin' though the words have become so stereotyped that one can trace no echoes of 'Sir Colling' there, there are some common features which are absent from 'Sir Cawline'. In 'Sir Colling', the 'eldrane

kny" who answers the king's question about the absence of Sir Colling 'was off sir collings kin', while in 'Sir Cawline' he is simply 'a Curteous knight'. Stanza 3 of Buchan's poem says, however,

But out it speaks another knight,  
Ane o Sir Colvin's kin.

The task set Sir Colling by the king's daughter in 'Sir Colling' is to go to the haunted hill:

Yairon standis ane thorn  
and ye wald valk ane vinter nicht  
and baldlie blaw your horn . . . ll. 57-9

No mention is made in 'Sir Cawline' of the blowing of a horn by the hero, but in Buchan's ballad the lady says

O ye'll gang there and walk a' night,  
And boldly blaw your horn stanza 9.

In Buchan's poem, as in 'Sir Colling', the hero waits in a thunderstorm and his adversary is first seen, not heard as is the case in 'Sir Cawline':

At midnight mark the meen upstarts  
The knight walkd up and down,  
While loudest cracks o thunder roard  
Out ower the bent sae brown.  
Then by the twinkling of an ee  
He spied an armed knight stanzas 11-12.

Buchan's poem also shares with 'Sir Colling' the plea of the wounded knight's lady for her love's body, and although it is differently worded, the element of dialogue between the lady and the hero is retained:

'An asking,' said the lady gay,  
'An asking ye'll grant me;'  
'Ask on, ask on,' said Sir Colvin,  
What may your asking be?  
"Ye'll gie me hame my wounded knight stanzas 20-21.

Buchan's poem consists only of this single adventure, but it ends with a flourish on the marriage of Sir Colvin and the king's daughter after the hero has triumphantly brought home the 'bluidy hand' with its precious rings whose value is stressed, as in 'Sir Colling':

The rings that were on these fingers  
Were worth five hundred pound stanza 26.

It seems probable therefore, that the version of the poem collected by Buchan, though obviously influenced stylistically and linguistically by broadsheet ballads,

owes its ultimate inspiration to the same source as 'Sir Colling'. In conclusion, not only is 'ane taill of sir colling ye knyht' an earlier and much finer poem than 'Sir Cawline'—which shows marked deterioration in every point on which it has diverged from the earlier poem—but it is from 'Sir Colling' and not from 'Sir Cawline' that the popular ballad versions in Scotland have descended.

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