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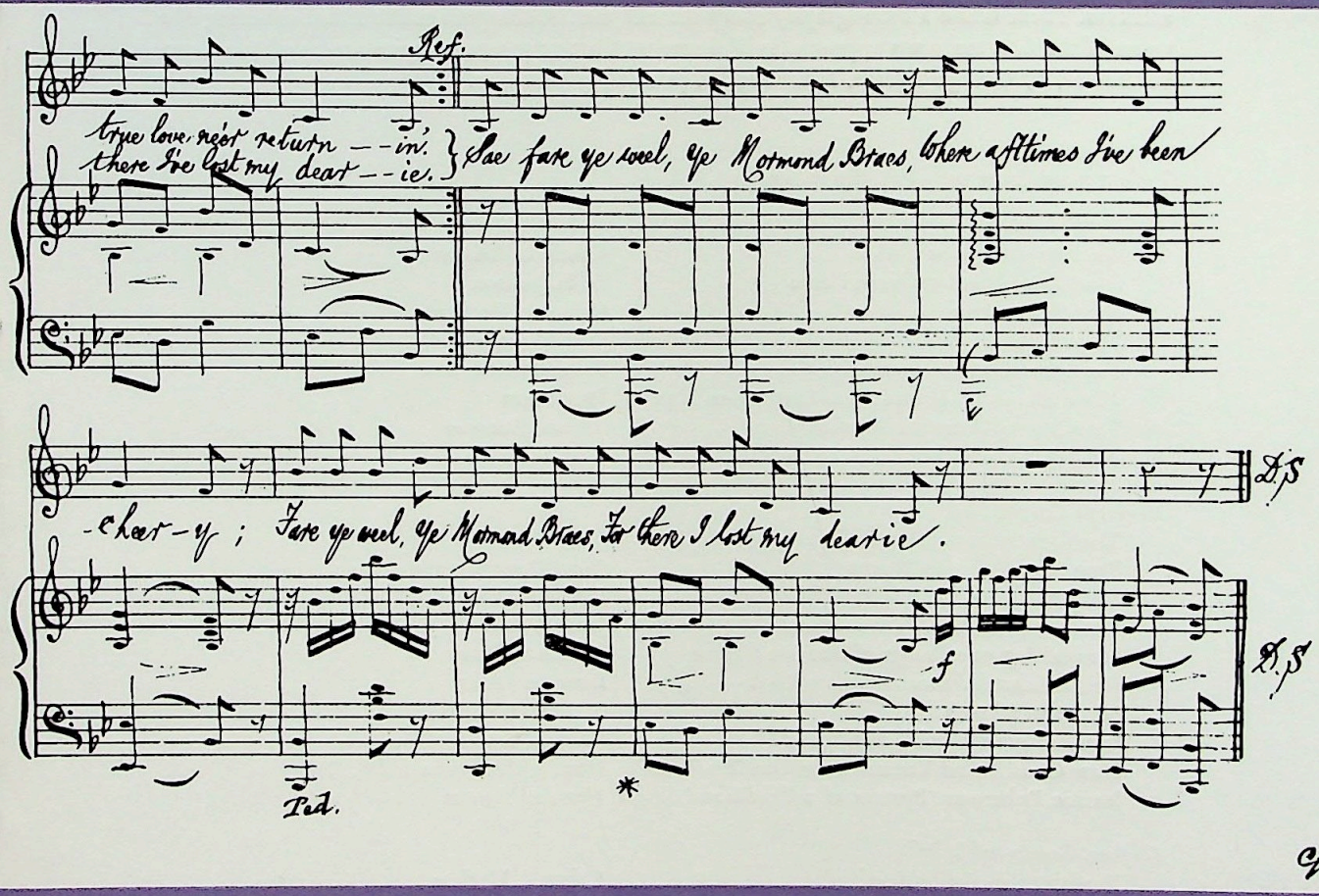

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Folk-Song in the North-East

J. B. Duncan's Lecture to the Aberdeen Wagner Society, 1908

Edited by P. N. SHULDHAM-SHAW and E. B. LYLE

Although a number of studies by Gavin Greig on the subject of folk-song have been published, no major statement by his colleague, the Reverend James Bruce Duncan,[1] has been made generally available. However, three sets of shorthand notes on folk-song have been found among Duncan's papers: part of a lecture on 'Folk Song in the North East' given in 1906 (*Folk-Song Lecture* 1906),[2] a lecture on the same topic prepared for the Aberdeen Wagner Society (*Folk-Song Lecture* 1908) and a survey of the characteristics of old airs with lists of examples (*Characteristics*). By far the longest of these treatments of folk-song is the second, which is printed here. In speaking to the Wagner Society, Duncan was able to explore the musical aspects of folk-song more extensively than he could when addressing his remarks to a more general audience, and so it is in this lecture that the fullest expression of his ideas on the music of folk-song is to be found.

In a way this lecture of Duncan's, which was delivered on 22 February 1908, can be considered a companion piece to Greig's lecture on 'The Traditional Minstrelsy of the North-East of Scotland' which was given in Aberdeen just a fortnight later to the Scottish Branch of the English Association (Greig 1908). It was Greig who had originally been invited to address the Wagner Society in the 1904–5 season and again in the following years but, although he accepted the invitations, ill-health prevented his fulfilling his engagements (Greig *Letters to Duncan* 10 Nov. 1906, 20 June 1907), and the Wagner Society eventually approached Duncan. The two friends exchanged correspondence on the matter,[3] and when Duncan was quite certain that Greig, embarrassed by his repeated failures in the past, was relieved 'to have the thing "off",' he accepted the invitation to lecture, but it was agreed that the collaboration between them should be particularly close on this occasion. Greig suggested the lines they could work on in a letter of 24 June 1907:

> If, however, you think we might treat ourselves as a kind of combination, with yourself representing the combination on the occasion in question, I should be very pleased to fall in with the idea. In this view of the situation, while the lecture was of course your own, you c[oul]d easily associate me with yourself to the extent at least of representing the main positions as having been *jointly* arrived at and concurred in. Then as to musical illustrations I could lend such hand as was needed in arranging and preparing a suitable programme.

Shortly before the lecture was to be given, Duncan wrote to Greig (25 Jan. 1908): 'I still regret that you could not have done it yourself, and shall have occasion to say so.' The following report of the Wagner Society meeting which appeared in the Aberdeen *Evening Express* of Monday 24 February mentions Greig's contribution to the meeting itself and to the work on which both men were engaged:

THE ABERDEEN WAGNER SOCIETY

In the Girls' High School, Albyn Place, on Saturday evening, Rev. J. B. Duncan, Lynturk, delivered a lecture on 'Folk-Song in the North-East of Scotland,' to a large audience, consisting of the members of the Aberdeen Wagner Society and their friends. In the absence of Rev. H. W. Wright, the president, Mr Morrison occupied the chair, and appropriately introduced the lecturer.

During the evening excellent vocal and instrumental illustrations were given. Miss Janet Burt sang 'The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow,' 'The Laird o' Drum,' and 'Under the moon one thing I crave'; Miss Greig, New Deer, gave 'Mormond Braes,' 'The Gadie Rins,' the audience joining in the chorus, and 'The Beggar Laddie'; Mr Balneaves, the secretary of the society, sang 'The Baron of Brackley'; and Misses Scott and Sutherland played as a piano duet an excellent arrangement of all the airs sung, splendidly and effectively harmonised by Mr Gavin Greig, M.A., Whitehills Schoolhouse, who, as is pretty well known, is associated with Mr Duncan in the unearthing of the folk-song of the north-east of Scotland.

Besides arranging the piano duet, which Duncan spoke of using as a finale (*Letters to Greig*, 21 Feb. 1908), Greig also supplied piano accompaniments for the songs, one of which, *Mormond Braes*, is reproduced here (Plate II). His duet incorporates *The Emigrant's Farewell* in addition to items listed in the newspaper report[4] and so this tune, which is specified as an example in Duncan's notes, has been included among the illustrations. The songs may possibly have been sung in groups but they are given here at the relevant points in the lecture, with the exception of *Mormond Braes*. This may have been introduced as an additional instance of the use of the pentatonic scale but it was evidently included in the programme because it was a favourite of Greig's daughter Mary, who sang it.[5]

Duncan made very brief reference to his lecture in a letter to Greig written on 6 March:

> Your duett seemed to be greatly enjoyed, and I hope to make farther use of it. Miss Greig would tell you the incidents of the Wagner meeting. Her services were very acceptable. I enjoyed the meeting, in spite of one or two hitches, and so apparently did some others.

In his reply of 19 March, Greig commented warmly on the success of the meeting and on Duncan's abilities:

> Mary came home from Aberdeen with great accounts of the 'Wagner' demonstration & the capital 'appearance' you made. Two of her old Normal lecturers who were present, were, she said, specially delighted. It strikes me that, failing the Bench, your sphere sh[oul]d

PLATE I The Reverend James Bruce Duncan, 1848-1917.
(*Photograph reproduced by kind permission of Mr Paul Duncan*)

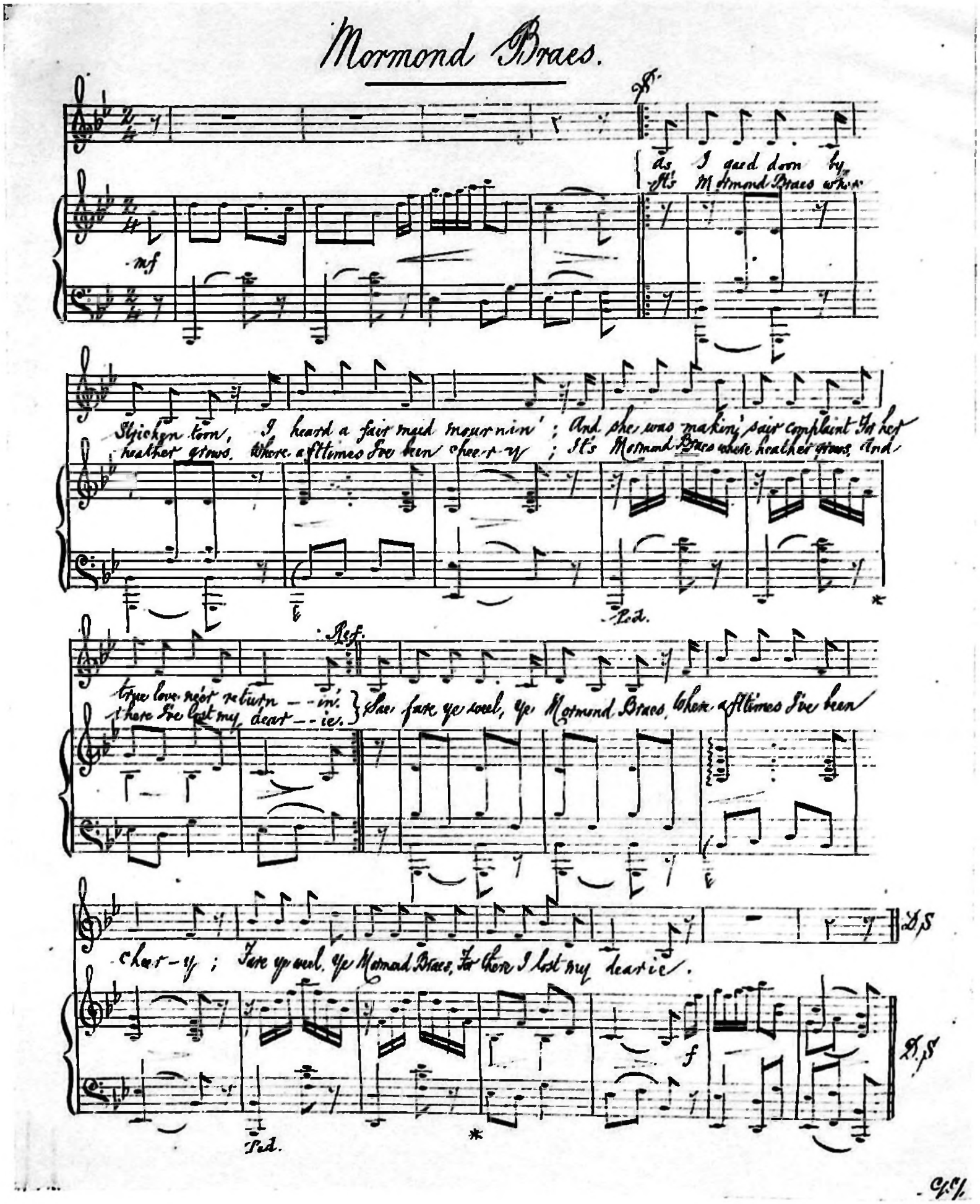


PLATE II *Mormond Braes* with Gavin Greig's piano accompaniment.

have been that of expository lecturing. I haven't just heard you at this on a platform, but on the floor of a room hundreds of times, & have formed my judgment—which is that your power of analysis & statement is greater than that of any other man I have ever met at close quarters. The illustrations had gone off well; & I am pleased that the p[iano]f[orte] duet went all right. Of course you had capital players, & this c[oul]dn't be counted on just every time. —Let me say that I might have written you after the affair was over; but honestly I was expecting to hear from *you*. But such is your judicial detachment that you didn't think it necessary to say anything about the event until a casual chance came— & then, ever so little!

Duncan made a slightly fuller comment in his next letter (27 March) than in his earlier one:

I am glad to hear that the Wagner lecture was found of interest. It was the evening of the Male Voice Choir Concert, and the musical reporters were all at it; hence the absence of report in [the] F[ree] P[ress] and the short one in the Journal.[6] Probably I should have acted as my own reporter; but I had no time to write even an abstract in longhand. As to my exposition, I will say only one thing—that I did feel that I was put upon my mettle *twice* this winter, both times from want of constant illustrations—the Castle lecture and this. And in both cases it was pleasant to have the *clearness* specially noticed, as it was.

That last remark of Duncan's brings out his concern that the examples should be appropriately sung. In a duplicated sheet of *Suggestions to Singers* he lays down the desirability of clearness of enunciation at the beginning of his instructions:

Folk Songs, though in their own nature quite simple, are often at first a little puzzling to singers. The following hints may therefore be of some use:

(1) As regards the words, very clear enunciation is the first of all requirements. However beautiful the tune, the folk singer always aims first at making his words intelligible.

(2) As the syllables of successive verses often vary, the singer should carefully study their adaptation to the accents of the music, which is divided only for first verse. To aid in this, the mark for slur or bind is usually written in MS below a syllable requiring to be sung to *two* notes in music; thus making a slur, if they are of different pitch, or a single note, if they are the same. A horizontal line (waved) connecting *two* syllables means that they are sung to *one* note of music. [*E.g.* in the case of *The Braes o' Invernessie* quoted in the commentary the opening line of verse 3 is written, 'Oh, high in the Highlands where ye feed your sheep'.]

(3) The full effect of folk-songs is not realised unless the singer is pretty independent of his MS, or, still better, can dispense with it entirely.

(4) As regards the airs, since they are used for illustrative purposes, it is specially desired that the written notes be adhered to; but when words in verses after the first *naturally suggest* slightly different length of notes (such as a dotted note or its absence) this adaptation should be made.

(5) As to expression, the usual simple devices of p, f, &c., and a little variation of speed, are appropriate and effective; but any elaborate or subtle forms of expression would be out of keeping with the simple and broad effects of such songs.

(6) For the same reason the accompaniments are in a simple and direct style; and as they had no place in the original nature of folk-song, they should always be played unobtrusively.

All of the songs that illustrate the lecture, except *Mormond Braes* which was supplied by Greig, were recorded from members of J. B. Duncan's immediate family—his mother, his sister Margaret and his brother George[7]—and Duncan had a warmth of feeling for the songs he discusses bred of his long familiarity with them in the family circle. He gives unrestrained expression to this emotion in his notes for the 1906 lecture where he appeals for the work of collecting, saying: 'There is a power in song that thrills a heart across the longest intervals of life. Those of us that can look back to memories of a father or mother singing these airs can hardly be unmoved at the thought of them perishing from the memory.' To the affection with which Duncan responds to the songs is added the authoritative knowledge derived from his field-collecting. In speaking of the proposed Wagner Society lecture, Greig had commented, 'I shall feel much relieved if the Society got a prelection on F[olk] S[ong] and as there are only two men this side of the Border who know the subject, if one doesn't go, the other must.' In the absence of others carrying out the investigation in depth of traditional Scots folk-song, it was English folk-song scholars who were best able to assess the full value of the work being done by Greig and Duncan. Lucy Broadwood, Honorary Secretary and later President of the Folk-Song Society, wrote of them in an obituary notice on the latter:

> The friends were ideal collectors; combining natural gifts, precise knowledge and scientific methods on the musical and literary sides with a personal distinction and lovableness of character which won for them friends and helpers wherever they were known (*JFSS* 6 [1918–21], 41).

At this time she was in correspondence with them both and Greig in a letter to Duncan of 24 June 1907 comments on the encouragement he has received from her and remarks:

> [Miss Broadwood] is much interested in our work I can see, and treats us with distinct respect! We are not 'in it' with our English friends in the field of research pure & simple. We are hopelessly behind in the matter of equipment—not personal of course but relative. But I do not think we are so far behind in our ability to *think* or to *generalise*. In fact it seems to me that with our Anglican brethren 'the rage of search' tends in some measure to keep in abeyance the generalising impulse.

Duncan certainly had, in addition to his sense of the value of folk-song and his wide knowledge of the folk-songs of his locality, a considerable interest in the theoretical aspects of the work, and his lecture is one of the fullest statements of the Scottish response to the trends of thought apparent in the authors principally drawn upon in the lecture, Parry with his international sweep and Sharp with his analysis of folk-song in England.

We are indebted to Mr Paul Duncan and Aberdeen University Library for permission to print the lecture notes and illustrations. Although the notes are carefully paragraphed and are generally expressed in complete sentences, Duncan would obviously have revised them to some extent before making them available for publication. They are given here without any radical alteration but in the course of editing some additions and emendations have been made which are either shown by the use of square brackets enclosing minor additions or else are identified in the footnotes.[8]

DUNCAN'S LECTURE: 'FOLK SONG IN THE NORTH EAST'

It is necessary to begin in ratified fashion with a definition. In the first place what do I mean by folk-song? The word is comparatively recent[9] and on the face of it bears marks of its German origin: so recent that Grove's *Dictionary* contains no article on it in the first edition (nor, I think, in the second).[10] It is not desirable to adopt a definition that begs any question. In the first place, however, it is a song belonging to the common people, and handed down mainly by tradition. I do not raise the question how such songs arose, whether they were begun as finished compositions by one individual, or started from slight germs and grew as they were handed on. The problem is one of old date and applies to both words and airs, but it is not necessary for us to answer it: only folk-song as we know it is the work of the people; the picturesque minstrel must be eliminated. This has been the tendency of recent enquiry as to words, and it applies to the music too. Only it is needful to say that they *belong* to the people, and that the mode of their transmission was purely traditional. To some slight extent tradition was aided by the broadsheet and the chapbook for the words; but, as a matter of fact, these were but secondary aids, and the chief dependence of the folk-singer was on his own memory and the memory of his neighbours; and in no case were the tunes ever learnt from writing. It is important to notice this, because, as we shall see, the whole character both of words and airs is fundamentally affected by this fact.

Now I need not stop to speak of folk-song in general. It is of course the primitive music and poetry of all nations; but it also goes on long after both music and poetry have taken on the forms of culture that widely separate them from it. In recent years there has been a remarkable revived interest in this subject over all the three kingdoms. Scottish, Welsh and Irish songs have long enjoyed a high reputation; but till quite lately little interest was taken in the true folk-songs of England. Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time* was a precursor of that interest, but, though a few traditional tunes were included in that work, its staple was gathered from documents. But in recent years the English Folk-Song Society, consisting of a band of musicians of the first class in England, have entered into the matter with great enthusiasm, and have set to the work of gathering directly from the people, and they have been surprised to find how much traditional music still remains, how much greater it is, and how different it is in many respects from what has usually been presented as popular music.

Our Scottish folk-song occupies a peculiar position. It is a long time now since attention was first directed to the merits of Scottish songs. More than two hundred years ago they became known in England, and divided the interest of the concert-room in London with Italian music. The result was not only English publication of so-called Scottish songs, but also a literary and musical interest in the subject in Scotland itself, which ran down through the eighteenth century, and has continued more or less to the present time. But it led not only to the re-publishing of old songs but also to the writing of new ones, and to the composition of new airs. The aim was to produce songs and airs 'in the Scottish manner' as it was called, but, with few exceptions, both songs and airs were materially different from the traditional productions. The words were consistently artistic productions, in contrast to the simplicity and unconsciousness of the folk-songs; and the airs were cast in the musical moulds of the eighteenth century, not antique forms that remained among the people themselves. It is only in quite recent times that this fact has been perceived, if indeed it is recognised fully even yet. Scottish folk-song is something materially different from the Scottish songs that mostly fill the books (1). These of course have merits of the highest class; but they really belong to the genus art-song not folk-song; and their type is very different from that of the folk-song. It is very difficult to tell how much actual recording of folk-songs took place in the eighteenth century, and the small number known to be such is suspicious.[11]

As to folk-song in the *North-East*, I do not mean that there is anything specifically different here, but only that this is the field with which I have made most direct acquaintance; and my statements, when not otherwise guarded, must be taken as referring to it. In the collecting of folk-songs, the North-East of Scotland has had a rather remarkable prominence. In recording words of the songs and ballads, David Herd in the eighteenth century preserved more of these old songs and with greater faithfulness than any other; he belonged to St Cyrus. In the nineteenth century, a similar service was done by Peter Buchan especially for the ballads; and he was of Peterhead. Kinloch too belonged to the North-East, and preserved a good many ballads. And even as to the tunes, the greatest of the collections of airs gathered directly from tradition, notwithstanding its serious defects, is Dean Christie's published about thirty years ago, and Christie not only was a native of Aberdeenshire, but gathered his airs in Aberdeen and Banff. And now the modern interest in the subject has laid hold of our Aberdeen Antiquarian Association, the New Spalding Club, and it is intended to collect as far as possible what still remains in the North-East of the traditional songs. Our first interest is in the airs, but [it] is not confined to this.

Perhaps I should first answer the question, 'How are these traditional airs to be found?' And the answer is, by receiving them directly from the singers themselves. And as a rule these singers must be *discovered*; they are not of the kind that obtrude themselves on notice. Indeed, when the project of collecting the folk-songs of the district was first mooted, it seemed very doubtful whether enough of them still survived to justify the project, and indeed a man might have lived a long life in a country district

without ever hearing[12] a single specimen of them. As a matter of fact, there are only a few that now sing the old traditional songs, and in many cases those that have them can hardly be said to sing them, though they can recall them when required. Indeed, this has changed very much within my own memory: thirty or forty years ago, these songs were often sung, though the young people were already beginning to take up with more modern productions; but now they are mostly known only to old people, or to a few in middle life who have been [able] to learn them in favourable circumstances from the former generation.

On the other hand, when the proper persons are discovered, the extent of their stores is sometimes a surprise. Usually the first impression of the singer is that he can recall but a few songs; but when the work is begun, one brings up another until the result usually surprises the singer. Even the very aged person will sometimes remember both tune and words surprisingly: one man of eighty-five gave me about a dozen, with words mostly in full. From several [singers] I have received forty airs. From one, a man of seventy, I have had fifty-five airs, and the majority of the songs with pretty complete words.[13] One remembers what is said about the memory of the rhapsodes or reciters of the Homeric poems or the Finnish epic, and wonders what the memory of these persons would have been in days when they were often singing their songs at the fireside. Miss Broadwood, secretary of the Folk-Song Society, speaks of one traditional singer in England who could sing four hundred songs, of which he kept a list which Miss Broadwood saw; he once by request sang all his songs to a gentleman, and it took a month to do so.[14] I have not met with any case quite so remarkable; but in one case in which I have had exceptional opportunities of drawing out the memory of the singer, I have written three hundred and thirty airs from one singer, and have obtained from the same singer the words, reasonably complete, of about two hundred and thirty.[15]

Such are the sources of our folk-song; but now what is the nature of the product to be thus obtained? Now of course folk-song is made up of two elements [words and music] which must be looked at separately. Unfortunately in the past they have been to a large extent separated, and both songs and ballads have been gathered and published apart from their music. As I am addressing a musical association, I shall assume that your greatest interest is in the musical; and I shall dispose of the words, however interesting, in a few sentences.

Now the words have usually been grouped under the two classes of ballads, of the epic class, telling a story, and songs of the lyric class, considering a thought or sentiment. As regards the ballads, they have received an enormous amount of attention, and the great final work for them was done by the late Professor Child of America, but it is very strange how utterly they have been divorced from their music (2). The manner in which they have been written about even by distinguished literary men even makes one wonder whether such men ever heard a ballad sung, or knew that it was intended to be sung. It is curious how constantly they speak about the 'reciters' of ballads, as if such people had been a recognised institution. It is true there were in the old days metrical

romances which were recited, but they were quite different from the ballads in character and structure; and anyone reciting a ballad was looked at simply as doing a second best. Yet Andrew Lang writes a long article in the recent edition of Chambers's *Cyclopædia*[16] *of English Literature*, and constantly seems to assume that the ballads were merely prose stories put into rhyme, though they were occasionally 'chanted', whatever that may mean. The simple fact is that the great majority of those who collected the ballads knew nothing about music, took no interest in the airs, and therefore no doubt had the ballads 'recited' to them. I have heard many a ballad sung, but I never heard one recited without an apology for the absence of the singing.

Now, however, the actual singing of the ballads has pretty well disappeared. They are too long for the patience of either singers or hearers. And hence, though their tunes are often extremely beautiful and valuable, there is more danger of their being lost than there is with the songs. Yet we have noted a considerable number of them, and hope even yet to add to our stores.

As regards the words of the songs, the case is somewhat different. Although their composition has come down to quite recent, even present, times the songs have not attracted so much attention from collectors, and on the whole their words, while they have their own interest as an exposition of particular phases of life, do not have the merit and interest of the ballads.[17] They have moreover suffered from the contact of the literary song proceeding from Allan Ramsay, Burns, Baroness Nairne, Hogg, Tannahill, and the great horde of other imitators. In fact, it is this literary song that is now chiefly thought of when Scottish song is spoken of. Let no-one despise [it], rather let us all be deeply [grateful] for it; but there is this to be said, that it has never taken hold of the same class of people that sang so heartily the old folk-songs. Its very artistic finish, its appeal to subtler feelings, its self-consciousness, all tend to keep it at a distance from these people. One would not wish to restore the folk-song *en masse*, but there are specimens that might very well be restored, along with their melodies, for some of them may even yet find appreciation where the more simple and direct thought of the past generation can be truly valued. It may be added that there are some surprises in the relationship between the two types as the absence among the old folk-songs of drinking and patriotic songs, and the occurrences of folk-songs that have given origin to literary songs, such as Lady Ann Lindsay's *Auld Robin Gray* (based on *Auld Widow Greylocks*) and Lady Nairne's *The Land o' the Leal* (based on *Be Kind to Your Nainsel', John*).[18]

Turning to the airs of these songs, let us enquire what are their musical characteristics. If any musical person will carefully listen for a while to the traditional singing of folk-song, he will soon get an impression of something about it different from modern music. The same feeling [is] to some extent produced by the oldest Scottish airs in the books, but the effect there is only partial, and for this reason, that when they were gathered in the eighteenth century they were rarely published exactly as heard, but were filed down into conformity with forms of modern music. He might not be able to say wherein the peculiar musical effect consists; but he will feel it, and may try to express it by such

words as wild, simple, direct; or he may try to express his sense of the fact that the airs are not in agreement with what he considers regular musical form by speaking of the singer as lilting, crooning, or chanting. This effect was realised long ago, and various attempts were made by writers on Scottish music to analyse it into its elements. Tytler, Ritson, and Dauney wrote about the peculiarities of Scottish music; and among the most recent, Muir Wood on Scottish music in Grove. The analysis is imperfect in all of them, even [the] last mentioned, though [it is] an advance on the rest. There has been no recent attempt to deal with the subject; but the lines on which it must be pursued are becoming clear enough. The peculiarities of Scottish folk-music have become more intelligible from two sources that have now been opened up: the one, a comparison with the folk-song of other nations, and the other, a revived study of the ancient musical forms on which they rested.

Now I think it will be best for me to group the musical features of folk-song around the chief causes that have produced them. These are mainly two, the one their mode of transmission by tradition, and the other their independence of harmony, but each of these has widespread effects. They have operated in the folk-songs of all nations, but their effects have varied to some extent according to the characters of the peoples.

I

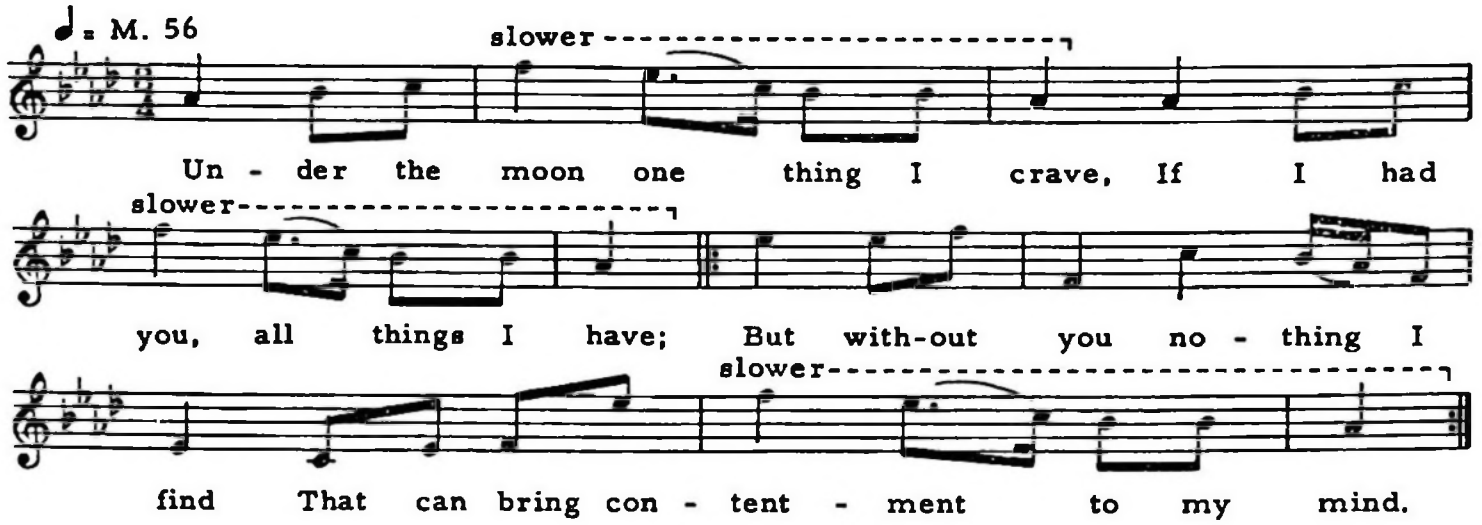
First I will discuss some of the characteristics that are connected most directly with the mode of transmission. What we have here to remember is that they were never written down, and that the true folk-singer is never a reader of music. He has learnt the tunes by ear, and his only aim is to sing them as he learnt them. It is quite common to receive [from the folk-singer] the apologetic statement that he does not know music, and he needs the assurance that that is just the greater reason why his singing of the tunes[19] will be uncorrupted. But this mode of transmission has distinct results in the form and character of the airs.

But we must first observe that the transmission was not merely musical, but was made in conjunction with words. Though the memory for melodies is often very retentive, it must usually be taken along with the words. Not infrequently the singer [20] is put out when asked to whistle the tune, or even to sing it line by line; if he is to recall it with confidence, he must sing it right through. The meaning of which is, that he is thinking chiefly of the words: the tune has been so acquired that it comes to him without thinking, and though one note and phrase of course suggests another, he cannot in any way name one note from another. This is true of singers whose ears are really very correct, and who will quickly correct any slip you may make in singing after them. Now the result of these facts is not without importance, for the structure of the melodies must be such as fit them for such transmission; and if they are not so [21] [to] begin with, they will inevitably become so, or die.

And first, the airs must be comparatively simple; that is, they must not be florid or

in any way elaborate (3). An old air, so to speak, is never conscious of its own beauty.[22] If it were so, it would need too much attention to itself; whereas the folk-singer thinks of the words, and lets the air look out for itself. That is the universal character of all folk-songs; yet one may easily find Scottish airs in the books that betray their modern origin by their very elaboration. We need only compare the old air of *Auld Robin Gray* with the later one with its modulations to the minor of the same tonic to feel how impossible it is to conceive of such an air as traditional.[23]

Then again, the rhythms must be comparatively simple, and so they are. They may be either common or triple, but the subdivisions have never any elaborations, else they could not be retained. The triple may have three beats to the bar, but there is also a very favoured mode of dividing the bar, dividing one of the beats while [each of] the other two has full length. The result is to give the effect of a common time to the air (4), though each successive pair of notes is double the length of the preceding, as, for example, in *Under the Moon*:[24]



In England some folk-song collectors have recorded many examples of changes from 3 to 4 and even work rhythms such as 5/4 and 7/4; the changing rhythms are very common in German folk-music. We have found nothing of the kind here; but it must be said that in writing these rhythms there is often great care needed to write them so as to suggest the correct accent. A judicious use of the rest at the end of lines is required, not to indicate an actual pause so much as a start at a new part of the bar; and one is often reminded that after all our time forms are but very approximate indications of the actual accentual effects (5).[25]

Then there are some interesting effects connected with the stanza arrangement of the melodies that have something to do with traditional transmission. In general it should be said that these airs usually turn to account to the fullest their melodic material. It is quite a common thing for a four-line stanza to have only two different lines of melody, which may be combined in various ways (6).[26] They may be arranged alternately,[27] that is ABAB, with possibly a slight variation on the last; also AAAB, AABA.[28] Or they may take the form ABBA (like the lines [in] *In Memoriam*). This form is said to be

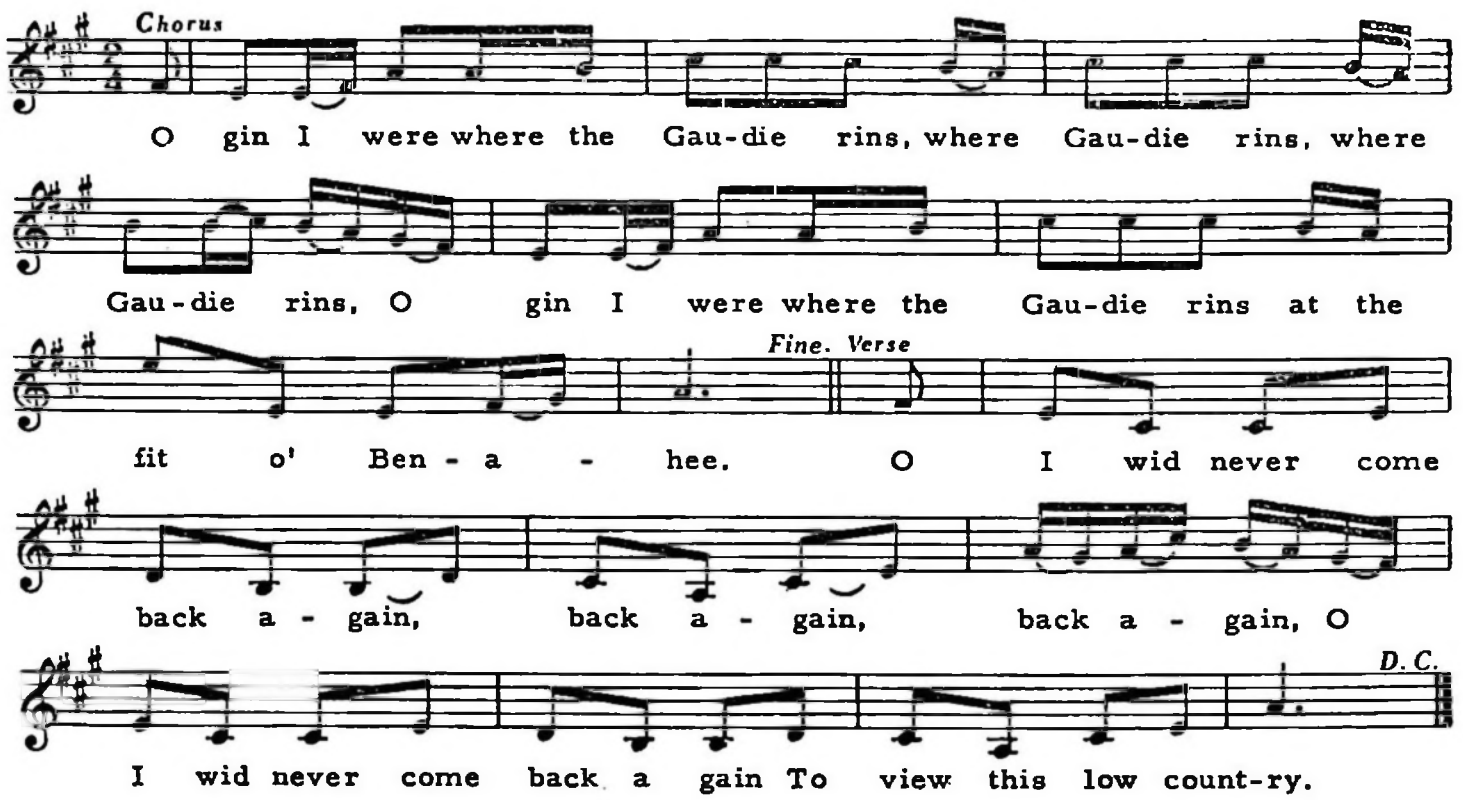
specially Celtic,[29] but in any case it would be an excellent aid to the memory, and at the same time give variety, seeing that not only are the second and third[30] a repetition, but the fourth and first are again the same. A commonly found form with three different melodic phrases is ABCB[31] and we have also the full ABCD often enough.

It has to be added here that our oldest melodies are uniformly in one strain. That was noticed by the best students of Scottish airs long ago, though strangely enough Christie's book is full of airs with two strains,[32] though his own statement[s] indicate that many of them [are] mere arrangements of his own. Our own experience entirely confirms the old inferences: the second strains, when they grow, are nearly always instrumental airs, and are expansions of the old melody (7).

There is one other effect that has been mentioned in this connection; it is the extensive use of the refrain or chorus. It has an interesting history: according to Chappell [1.222–3], it [began as a] burden, which originally meant, not a chorus, but a slow droning accompaniment taken part in by the company while the singer sang the verse. But it afterwards became a chorus joined in by the company, which was of great service, especially with long ballads, in giving a rest to the singer, as there was no accompaniment to furnish an interlude. And finally they were often sung by the singer himself. It seems to be the original burden use of these choruses that led to the employment of meaningless words, which are found in such extensive use, although it was also natural to keep them up because they were easily remembered by the company. Sometimes also a line or two of suitable words was employed, and there was a chorus device also used, namely, to repeat the last line or two after the singer. Later, this was often sung by the singer himself, though there was no particular meaning in this, beyond giving a certain rest to his memory to enable him to recall his next stanza.

There is just one other effect [of] oral transmission which needs to be mentioned, which is that airs of folk-songs as well as their words are usually found in varying versions (8). In most cases the changes would be quite unconscious, and airs will be found rendered by different people with wonderful nearness to each other. But if the melody is old the varying versions are inevitable, and their relations to each other are very curious and interesting to the student of the subject. Of course each singer is confident that his own is the right one, but the collector soon learns that there is no right, and they have all to be written. And then he becomes possessed of a family whose relationship it is hard or even impossible to trace. He will have twin sisters hardly distinguishable from each other, and parents and offspring plainly enough declared; but oftener he will have a crowd of relations whose connection shades off into all degrees, while he will also discover[33] intermarriages among airs of the most extraordinary kind. No doubt it all takes place as naturally as the relationships of human beings; but the collector in his perplexity comes to understand the 'fluidity' of folk-song.

There are no such variations, however, in the case of *The Gadie Rins* and this song, with its absence of versions and its second strain, may be taken as an illustration of modern tendencies; it is also an example of the use of a chorus.[34]

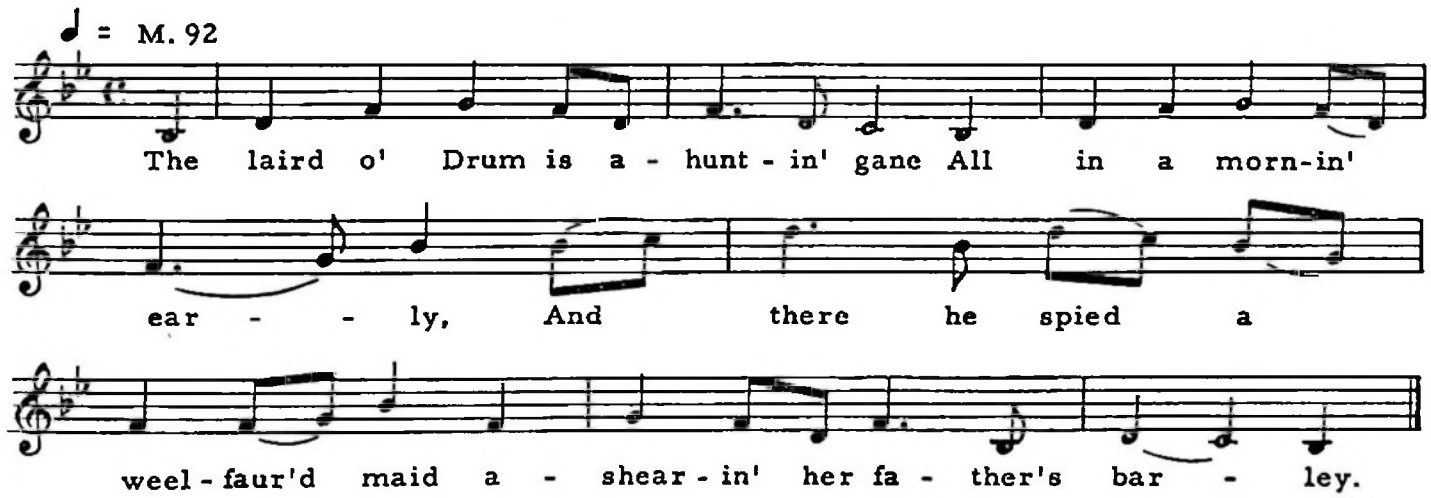


II

Let us now turn to the great source from which sprang the peculiarities of these airs: namely, their independence of harmony. It is a common observation that the modern composer thinks in harmony, not in melody (9). He may produce effective melodies, but they are not constructed without a view to harmony. Mr Cecil Sharp [1907: 56] points out that to the modern musician 'there is no such thing as an intelligible melody that has no relation to harmony; that it is impossible to think a melody without thinking a harmony to it'.[35] Yet, as Mr Sharp also points out, scales existed long before harmony, and the folk-singer sings his melodies without any relation whatever to harmony. The result of the great change in music made by harmony has been manifold; it is needless to say that it has practically opened up a new world of music. Yet the musician sometimes overlooks the fact that to the mass of men music is still melody, and that harmony with all its marvellous effects, is to them little more than merely an accompaniment to melody. Now our folk-songs take us back to a time when this was the feeling of all; and a great part of their peculiarities are easily explained when we trace the change that harmony has introduced into the forms of melody.

Of all these differences, the most remarkable is the effect upon the scales employed, and of this I shall first speak. In the first place, there are a certain number of our folk-tunes that employ a scale of different intervals from the modern scale (10). It is a scale without what we call the 4th and 7th of our ordinary major mode, the F and B of the white scale on the piano, the fah and te of the tonic sol-fa. But its use, though most common in major tunes, is not confined to them. Such a scale is of course without

semitones, having[36] indeed a minor third where they would have been. The origin of this scale has been matter of much controversy, and it has indeed a curious interest in the history of music. Sir Hubert Parry [pp. 21–40] points out that nearly all the early scales of civilised nations fall into two groups, those that adopt the five-note scale and those that adopt the seven notes; and it is curious that the pentatonic scales were most common in the Far East—in China, Japan, and the East Indies—though the five notes sung were not always the same. Our own pentatonic scale [37] is said to exist among all the Celtic races (11); and it illustrates how narrow was the outlook of writers on these subjects in former days that it was at one time customary to think of it as [a] special scale, and to call it the Caledonian scale. But whatever its origin, it has a very characteristic effect; the large intervals and the concentration of the effect on the strong notes of the scale giving a certain air [of] breadth and completeness to the tunes;[38] and it was this effect no doubt that led to its preservation long after the full scale was in use. It does not appear to be often found in England; but it is quite common, though not exactly abundant, in the surviving folk-tunes of our district. It should be added however that there are a certain number of airs, originally pentatonic, which show the modern influence by introducing the 4th or the 7th or both as passing notes. In such cases one can often trace the process of change by finding the pure tune on the lips of one singer and the intrusive notes introduced by another, generally in unaccented situation, and[39] of course these changes would also be assisted by harmonic influences, as the 4th and 7th are the distinctive notes of the scale and needed to fix tonality. For example, the tune *Gala Water* in its oldest recorded form, is pure pentatonic; but as now generally sung the 7th has been introduced.[40] This version of *The Laird o' Drum* is an example of the use of the pentatonic scale:[41]



But there is another matter connected with the scales of our folk-tunes that has yet wider influence on our folk-song music: it is the employment of the ancient modes in the use of the ordinary diatonic scale of seven notes.[42] And to understand this subject, we must begin by putting aside our current ideas of the ordinary major and minor

modes as including all music. In point of fact a number of other modes were in regular use up to the beginning of the seventeenth century; and it is this state of matters that is perpetuated in folk-music.

We have first to think of a diatonic scale, as represented on the white keys of a piano. That is to say, we must conceive of a series of notes so arranged that they rise by gradations of intervals in which two tones and a semitone always alternate with three tones and a semitone. Then we must put aside the idea that one note of this scale is any more entitled to predominate than the rest; in fact, the great idea of the ancient modes was just that any note of the scale might be taken as the ruling or fundamental note. There was just one exception, namely, that what we call the 7th or te was not allowed to hold this position. Thus the same diatonic scale was used in all the modes, only the fundamental or governing note was different in each. And so six modes originated, which were named after the ancient Greek modes, though it is believed that the names were not quite correctly transferred. The movable tonic sol-fa represents this with least danger of being misunderstood; but if we employ the names of the white keys on the piano, we must remember that the scale we are thinking of is not a fixed one, but may be at any pitch, provided only that the intervals are preserved the same.

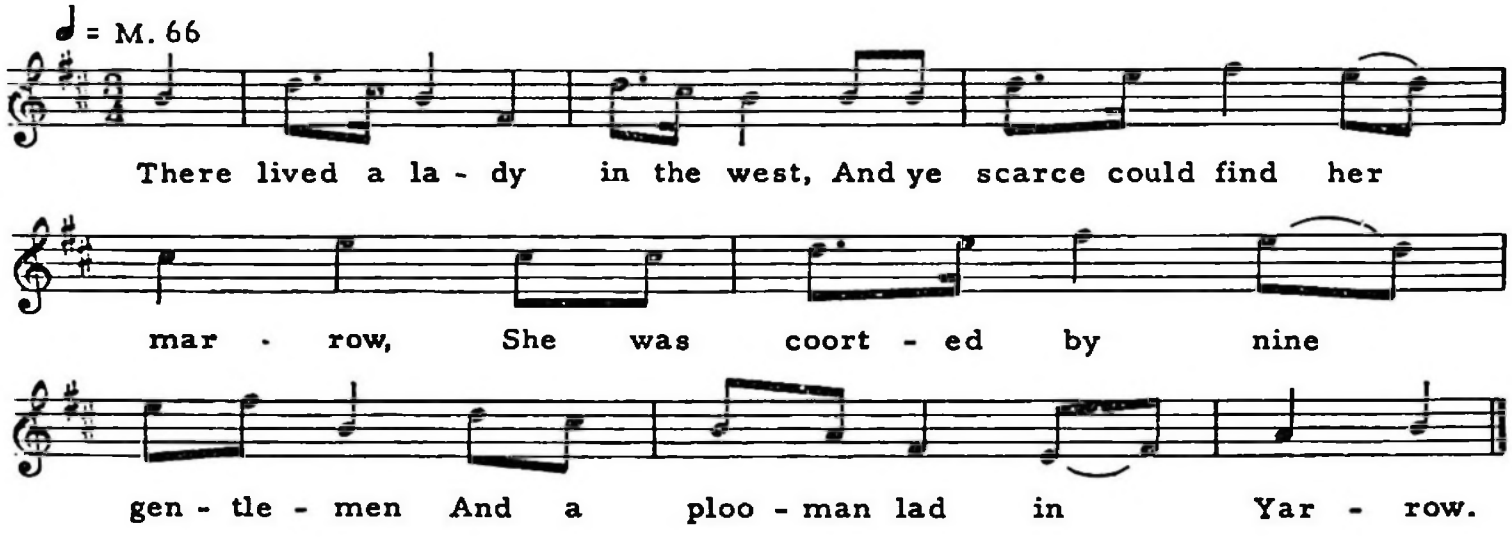
It was in connection with the music of the mediæval church that these modes were most fully studied, and it was usual to name them in this way from provinces of Greece with which they were understood to have connection: the first mode, or Dorian, began on D, or ray; the second, or Phrygian, on E, or me; the third, or Lydian, on F, or fah; the fourth, or Mixolydian, on G, or soh; the fifth, or Æolian, on A, or lah (our descending minor); the sixth, or Locrian, on B, or te (considered illegitimate); the seventh, or Ionian, on C, or doh (our present major).

The ecclesiastics themselves had laid down very elaborate rules for these modes. These rules specified what notes in each mode were permissible as opening and closing notes, what notes were allowed in the cadences, to what compass the melody might extend, and a great many other details. But it is important to observe that, though the ecclesiastics had most fully elaborated these rules, the use of the modes was in no sense confined to ecclesiastical music, and it is really not historically correct to speak of the ecclesiastical modes. It is only recently that this has been properly perceived; and hence a good deal of unnecessary wonder has been expressed at finding music constructed in ecclesiastical forms. The wonder ceases when we recognise that these modes were in use for all music down to the first half of the seventeenth century, including such secular music as existed, and also the sacred music of Protestant churches as well as the Romanic. What actually led to the disuse of the modes was the advance of harmony; had melody been the only consideration, the probability is that they would have continued to the present day. Sir Hubert Parry [p. 43] goes so far as to say that some of the other modes were for melodic purposes 'infinitely preferable to the Ionic', that is to say, our present major, while the experiments in harmony slowly but surely demonstrated that for harmony it was of all the modes the one supremely fit. And it was under

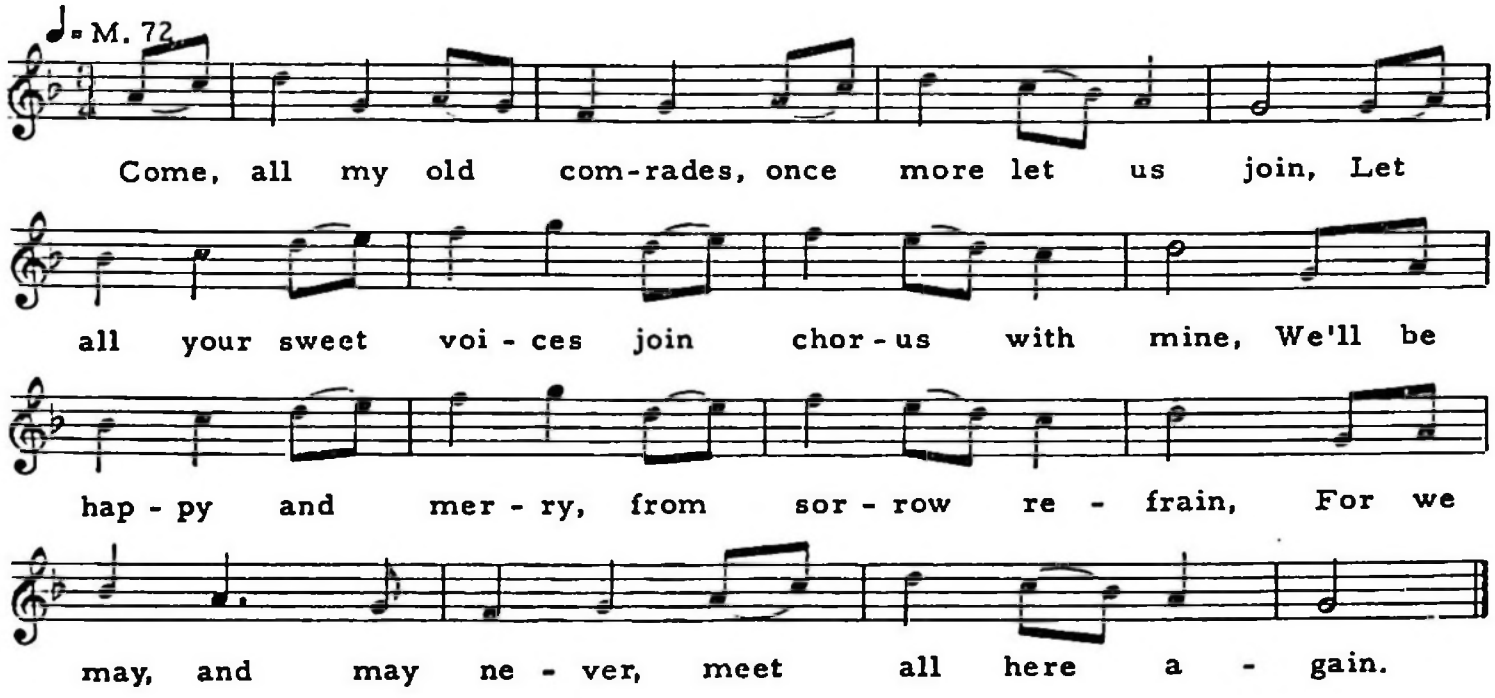
the same harmonic influences that the modern minor scale was developed; so that its 7th was sharpened to furnish a leading note like the major scale, where the leading note had been found so valuable, especially in cadences; and later on even the 6th was sharpened to accompany it.

This then is one of the great outstanding facts of folk-song, that many of its melodies are constructed in the old melodic modes. [But this] does not mean that folk-songs[43] do not include ordinary major tunes. It has to be remembered that our major scale was itself one of these modes, the Ionian; and there is good evidence that, though it was not loved by the ecclesiastical musicians, it was in frequent use for secular music, and was designated *modus lascivius* [*sic*]. And besides, a good deal of our folk[-music] originated after the modes had been given up, and already the influence of harmony [was being felt], though only in a rudimentary form. And what it does imply is that a considerable proportion of our airs fall into one or other of these modes. We cannot look for obedience to the ecclesiastical rules in them; but the singers show no hesitation about their scales, and there are two rules that are nearly uniformly obeyed (12), one that the melody ends on the fundamental note of the mode, and the other that the final *descends* upon that note, and generally by one degree: this latter being against the harmonic tendency. But besides, though in all modal music the tonality of the air is more uncertain, especially in the first part, than it would be in the harmonic melody, yet in the best airs the fundamental note so predominates throughout that it establishes itself in the ear and colours the melody. Of course this is all the more needed in unaccompanied melodies, as these were.

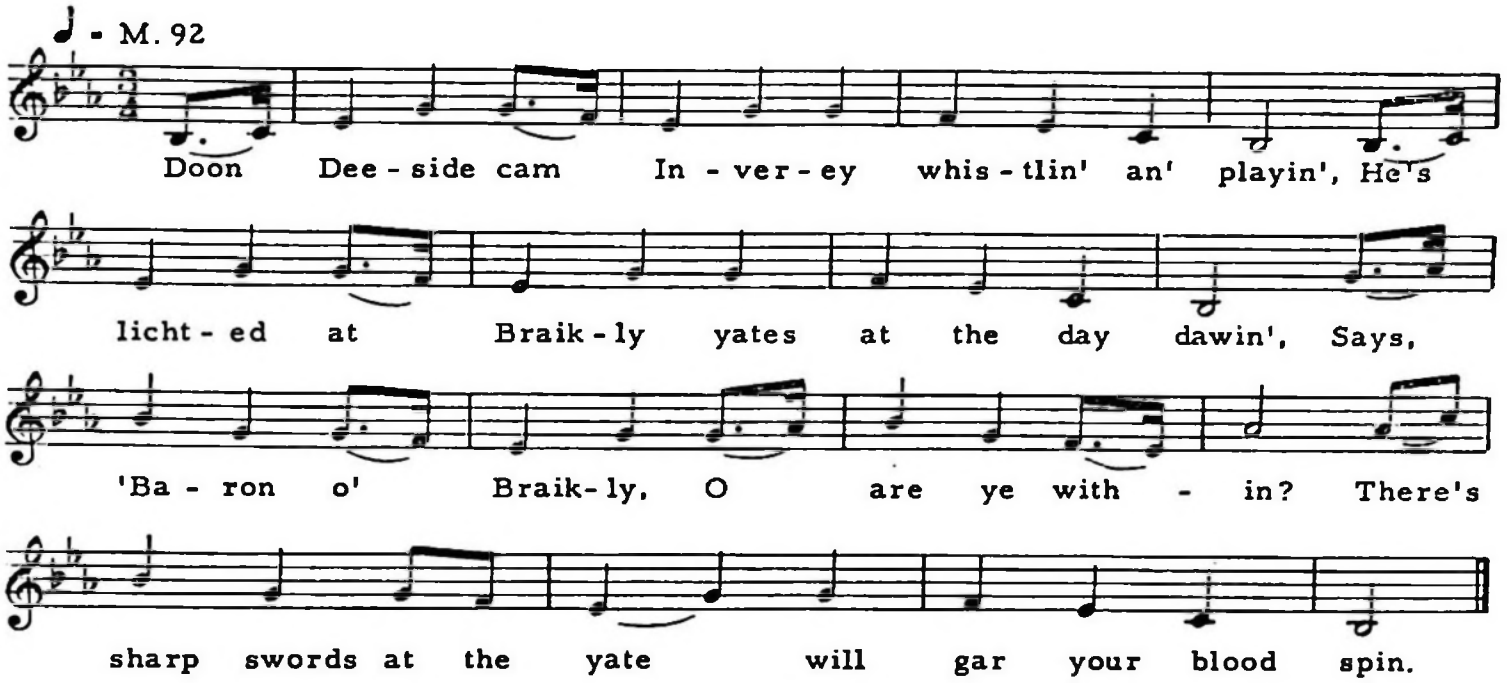
The modes that now remain with us, in addition to the major, are chiefly three. First, there is the Æolian founded on A or lah (13). It is identical with the modern descending minor, but differs from the modern minor very markedly in that the latter has introduced a sharp 7th in ascending as a leading note to its tonic. Now it is important to notice that this modern minor scale is never found in any true traditional singing; it is even difficult to get ear singers to produce this sharp 7th in the minor. The experience of collectors in this matter is pretty much the same in the case of all folk-singers.[44] I have noted about a thousand airs, and I have never once had the sharp 7th in the minor sung to me by a traditional singer; and Mr Greig's experience has been just the same and the English folk-song collectors give the same report. The difference in the melody made by this change is very characteristic: the strength and vigour of the old, the delicacy and refinement of the new; and it shows how our old airs have been aided, when we find that the books of Scottish songs are full of this modern minor touch. The characteristics of the old modes were treated simply as inaccurate singing, while they were really the best proof of accuracy; and their old features were quietly changed into modern forms. The most extraordinary case of this kind is Christie, who gathered from actual singing, but entirely changed without scruple in order to arrange the airs according to his fancy. This version of *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow* is an example of the Æolian mode:[45]



Next to this Æolian mode in frequency would come the Dorian founded upon D or ray (14). On first hearing[46] it sounds very much like the Æolian; but the old musicians attributed to it a different effect; and it is generally recognised that it is not nearly so plaintive as the old minor but rather grief without sadness. It was for that reason a great favourite with the old ecclesiastical musicians, and [there are] a considerable number of such melodies in the folk-song of most countries as well as our own. This version of *The Emigrant's Farewell* (15) illustrates the use of the Dorian mode:[47]



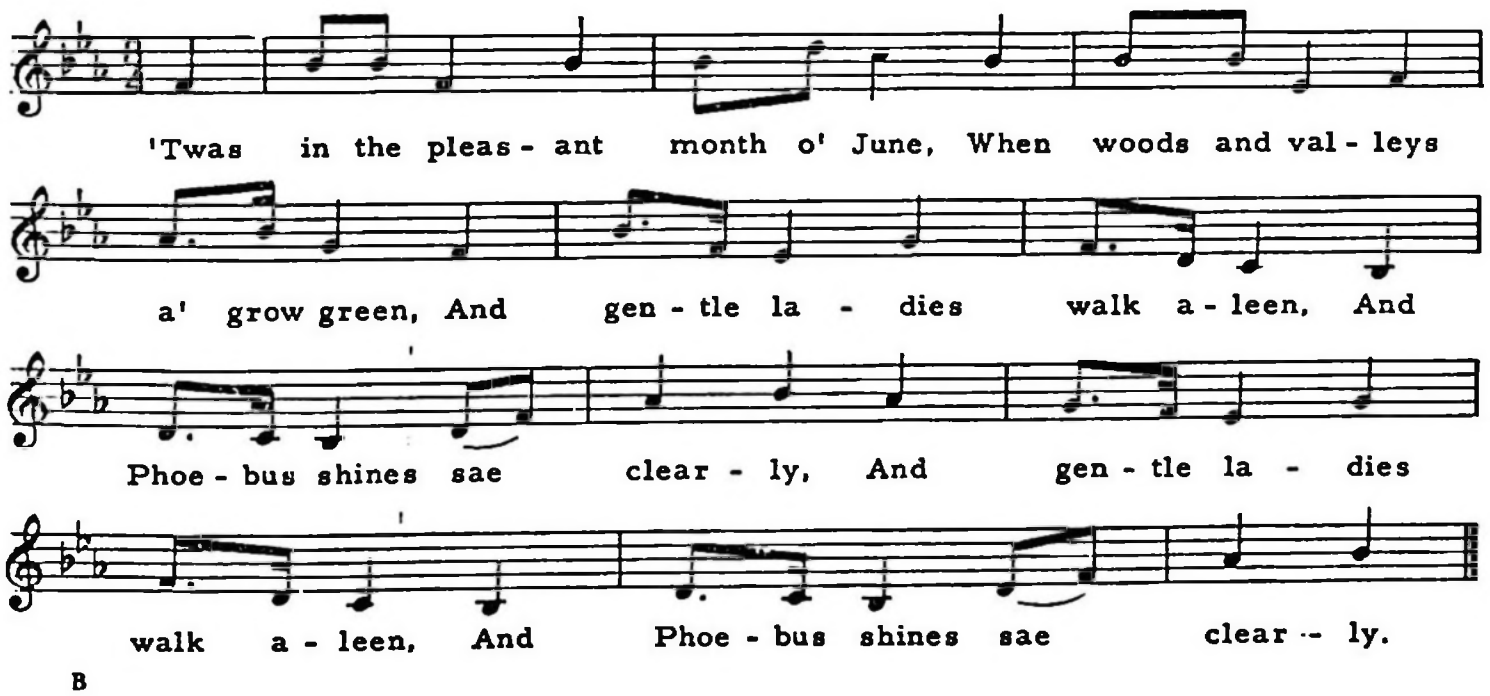
The remaining mode still in full use among us is the Mixolydian,[48] founded on G or soh (16). This is scarcely so abundant as the others, but is still quite common. There [is] often a fine dignity about these airs; we have an example in *Scots Wha Hae*. Of course its major third allies it more with the major than with the minor. The use of the Mixolydian mode may be illustrated by this version of *The Baron o' Brackley* (17):[49]



With regard to the other two modes, Lydian (on fah), and Phrygian (on me), traces may be found of both (18)[50] but I have not met with any decisive examples: they are found, however, in other countries. Probably they have begun [to be] modified into one or other of the other modes; and their position is just the same in England.

I may just add, before leaving the modes, that they are often written so as to disguise their nature. The Dorian is then printed as a minor with the 6th sharpened, and the Mixolydian as a major with the 7th flattened. No doubt the actual intervals are given in this way; but it is simply a remnant of the time when the modal nature of such melodies was not understood, and it has the disadvantage of suggesting that these are chromatic notes systematically introduced by the singers; whereas, when properly written according to the old way (19), they are seen to be purely diatonic.[51]

The only other point connected with the scales of folk-music is the matter of modulations and chromatics. In regard to chromatics, the most distinct case is the occasional use of the flat 7th in a major tune (20) in cases where it does not only read as a Mixolydian, as in this version of *The Beggar Laddie*:[52]



Various explanations of this have been suggested, such as the old dislike to a leading note, or the very flat 7th on the bagpipe. Mr Cecil Sharp [1907: 72] has called attention to the fact that the singing of this note is often distinctly different from the 7th of the tempered scale; and I myself had examples where a good singer sang to me the note on one occasion so that I wrote it sharp, and on another flat (21). It is at any rate an occasional chromatic note; and the only other example, by no means so common, is the use of the sharp 4th for a similar chromatic purpose. As to modulations, they are pretty nearly limited to passage from one mode to another, which is not infrequent, and in more modern airs an occasional use of the sharp 4th in a medial cadence, and also the flat 7th for the same. But this latter was opposed to the instincts of the old folk-singer, and he found his cadences otherwise.

Turning now from this fundamental matter of scales, I shall treat the remaining manifestations of independence of harmony more briefly, though they are by no means unimportant. And the first of these is the melodic progressions, which are in the oldest airs distinctly unharmonic. It is not easy to group these, though their effect is felt clearly enough; but the general truth appears in the fact that old folk-airs are very difficult to harmonise satisfactorily: they were not made for it, and often fit it but ill. There is also but a vague sense of tonality, especially in the first part of the tune, a circumstance that often puzzles the inexperienced recorder of them, as he [is] puzzled to find his way in the melody. But a few more definite characteristics may be specified.

One feature is a comparative absence of passing notes (22).[53] A smooth flowing melody always suggests a modern origin; in the older airs most of the notes had independent and substantive value, and the melodic leaps were therefore greater.

Then again the folk-melody often surprises by the use it makes of individual notes. The emphasis is often put where we should not expect it. This is specially applicable to the 7th of the scale, which in modern music is so regularly treated as a mere leading note for the tonic, while in old airs it has quite often a substantive value of its own. And in lesser measure the same thing may be said of the 2nd, which has a prominence beyond what it receives in present-day airs. But the peculiarity of the melodic 6ths is especially marked in the cadences (23). I have already mentioned the tendency to descend upon the final; and we have to add the absence of the leading note (which indeed was much disliked by the ancient musicians: indeed it had the distinction of once[54] being forbidden by the pope in a bull, though the church singers in what some may think a characteristically ecclesiastical way, merely dropped it from their copies and went on singing it all the same). But not only is a true leading note wanting but we may even have in its place, in Æolian and Dorian, a note preceding the final which is a tone below and may even be accented, as in *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow* already quoted.[55]

It must be added in this connection that we have a considerable number of folk-songs, especially in the major mode, that [have] what may be called rudimentary harmonic suggestions. One of these is a tendency to harp on the notes of a common

chord, especially on the tonic. The same tendency may be detected in [the] presence of modern cadences, such as obtrusive introduction of the leading note. Or again, a very marked imitation of one phrase by another points in the same direction; and of course any distinct tendency to modulation. Such indications may not carry very far, but they imply the influence of harmony, very likely unconscious, in the composer of the air.[56]

And now, in conclusion, if the question is raised as to the general character and comparative merit of our folk-song airs, a word or two must be said. Sir Hubert Parry [pp. 62–80] has divided the folk-music of the world particularly into two classes; one, those that are most characterised by melodic patterns whose treatment gives both unity and variety to the melody; and these belong to the strongly intellectual races, such as the Germans and the English. Then there is the class of the emotional folk-music, where the tune tends to rise to a climax on the high note, or in the most emotional to several, and also inclines to energetic rhythm, as in Spain and Russia. Now in regard to both these he pronounces the Scottish folk-tunes to reach the highest level. I may venture to add that this judgement, necessarily formed from the songs imperfectly recorded in the books, would be entirely confirmed by the records from actual singing. Their close-knit unity is a remarkable feature of them; and it is often a curious study to watch how this has been unconsciously preserved through all the versions that a tune has passed through. And at the same time their emotional character is very prominent, though it seems generally, at least in the best specimens, to preserve a certain gravity and dignity. It is this that has often been mistaken by strangers for mere sadness, especially as they misunderstand our old minor and Dorian melodies. If we might venture to compare our gatherings with those recorded by the English collectors, we should be inclined to say that in both these features they are more impressive than the average of what is found in England. And the same impression is produced by the absence of those irregularities that are so common in England; our melodies look more like the work of those whose ears were unconsciously trained to appreciate the highest melodic effects (24).

It is, after all, the airs to these old songs that are most valuable (25), though they have received least attention.[57] Many of them are thoroughly worth preserving. Some of these have not seen the printed page at all; others have been published in mutilated forms. But they ought to appear in their genuine old forms, without which they lose their real flavour. No doubt there are difficulties: the manner of accompaniment is one of them. We can hardly expect them to be sung without accompaniment in these days, but the accompaniment should be in agreement with the mode and character of the melody itself (26). That is often difficult to obtain; but has been achieved, and can still be done. The greatest mischief is done by the so-called 'arranging' of these airs. No doubt the arranger would maintain, as the emendators of the ballads did, that as the editions of the airs are so many, he is quite entitled to make his own changes, but even if the traditional singer makes his unconscious alterations, he is likely to do it in

line with the actual style of the air, while the arranger is pretty certain to do it in terms of modern musical ideas.

As to wider and higher uses of the folk-song music, I can only speak as an interested observer. It has lately been maintained by Mr Cecil Sharp [1907: 127–34] that an English school of music should be founded upon the English folk-songs, by composers realising their meaning and taking them as the themes of their compositions. There have of course been examples of such uses made of folk-songs in other countries, but how far it may be practicable here it is not for me to say. Such questions will settle themselves in time no doubt, but meanwhile it is enough for me that there is still a large amount of beautiful melody in danger of being lost, and we are called on [to] garner it while yet there is time (27).[58] The old people hardly sing these songs now, except for special purposes; and the younger generation has turned away from them, oftener than not to inferior material. It is well to look after them while there is time.

I may quit with the words of Sir Hubert Parry in his very interesting chapter on folk-music in his *Art of Music* [p. 80]: 'As art-music grows and pervades the world, pure folk-music tends to go out of use among the people. . . . Civilisation reduces everything to a[59] common level, and "the people" cease to make their own tunes, and accept vulgarised and weakened portions of the music of the leisured classes, and of those who wish to be like them. The rapid extinction of the tunes which successively catch the people's ears as compared with the long life of those that went to their hearts in old days, is an excellent vindication of the fact that what is to be permanent in music needs a genuine impulse in feeling as well as the design which makes it intelligible. True folk-music is an outcome of the whole man, as is the case with all that is really valuable as art. The features which give it its chief artistic and historical importance (apart from its genuine delightfulness) are those which manifest the working of the perfectly unconscious instinct for design, and those in which the emotional and intellectual basis of the art is illustrated by the qualities of the tunes which correspond with the known characters of the nations and peoples who invent them.' We have seen how these effects are illustrated in our Scottish folk-song, and it seems a worthy undertaking to seek the preservation of it in more authentic form than it has generally received, and before repositories of it, which are fast disappearing, have altogether died away.

Commentary

The revival of interest in folk-song at the beginning of this century was a musical rather than a literary phenomenon. Most collectors of that time were more interested in tunes than texts—in contrast to the earlier period when, as Duncan rightly points out (2), the music was largely ignored. As a result these collectors have met with some criticism from more recent scholars (such as James Reeves, who, in the introduction to his anthology, *The Idiom of the People*, gives a very clear picture of the folk-song scene

before the first World War). Duncan and Greig, like the best of their colleagues, although believing the music to be of greater importance (25), faithfully recorded such texts as they found. Their interest in the words is clearly shown in Greig's weekly articles in the *Buchan Observer* (Greig 1963) and Duncan's meticulous annotations such as those to *Auld Widow Greylocks* and *Be Kind to Your Nainsel', John* referred to in note 18. When it comes to the basic differences between 'the Scottish songs that mostly fill the books' and the true folk-song (1), Duncan's opinion probably shocked a good many of his audience. There are still many Scots today, particularly in exile, who ignore true folk-song, seeming to think that what Scottish country singers really sang were the 'book songs'.

In saying that traditional airs 'must not be florid or in any way elaborate' (3) Duncan may have been thinking of the distinction between folk-song and art song or of the editorial elaborations of such as Dean Christie, but the remark throws an interesting sidelight on the type of folk-singing with which he was most familiar. Dr Alexander Keith, the final editor of *Last Leaves*, maintains that the style of singing of the people from whom Greig and Duncan mostly collected, was down-to-earth, straightforward and with little ornamentation.[60] Greig and Duncan do not appear to have collected to any appreciable degree from the travelling people (*cf.* Henderson and Collinson 1965:2), and had they done so would probably have taken account of their more ornate singing style.[61]

The impression of common time in a triple-time air perceived by Duncan in such tunes as *Under the Moon* (4) is surely subjective and might not meet with general acceptance. What he seems to have in mind is that songs of this type, found frequently enough in most parts of Britain, have a basis of four syllables to one triple-time bar. To achieve this, one of the three beats must necessarily be sub-divided to take two syllables; but does this really give the effect of common time? It is perhaps worth noticing (though it is not particularly apparent in *Under the Moon*) that airs of this kind usually have a mazurka lilt rather than that of a waltz.[62] The remark following this song (5) about time forms being only approximate indications of actual accentual effects is very apt. Not all Duncan's contemporaries were so perceptive.

In dealing with melodic form (6), perhaps he does not make it completely clear that, on repetition, a given phrase may be, and frequently is, varied. When this is so, it is now customary to put a tick after the letter used in the formula and a double tick for a still further variation: thus the formula for the air of *The Emigrant's Farewell* (15) with its 'specially Celtic' shape would now be written ABBA^{1}, the third line being an exact repetition of the second, and the last a variant of the first.[63] On the question of tunes with a second strain, Duncan's remarks (7) are on the whole sound, though he seems to forget that in the case of airs which originated as dance tunes, acquiring words at a later date—and there are some such to be found in his collection *e.g. Sodger's Joy* (*Miscellanea:* 56)—the second strain may well be as much part of the original as the first. This is not true, however, of *The Gadie Rins*, as here the second strain shows far

more modern characteristics than the almost pentatonic first: it is interesting to note that today most traditional singers when singing this song use the first strain only. The account of the perplexities of variant forms with which Duncan completes this section of his lecture (8) is an especially vivid and succinct expression of ideas on a subject that has continued to exercise its fascination from his day to our own.

Duncan's notes give particularly full consideration to the topic of folk-music's independence of harmony. His remarks on the harmonic thinking of the trained musician (9) were much more applicable then than now and the change in today's musical outlook in this direction has partly come about through musicians learning to appreciate the beauties of unaccompanied melody in folk-song.

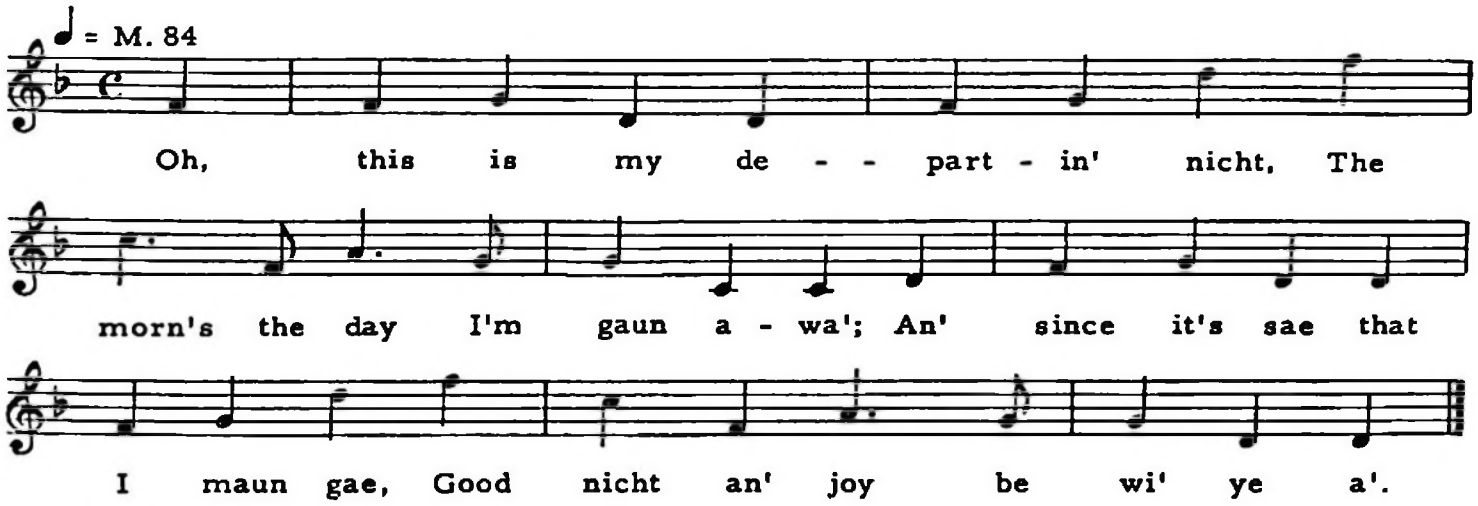
The subject of the pentatonic or five-note scale (10) and its various modes has been and will long continue to be of profound interest to musicologists. Since Sir Hubert Parry wrote about it, pentatonic music has been discovered in a number of other parts of the world, for example the Andes (Harcourt 1922), various parts of the Soviet Union, particularly among the Uralian and Turkic-speaking peoples (Eshpai 1933 and 1938; Zatayevich 1933) and many areas of Africa south of the Sahara (Nettl 1965: 41; Mbabi-Katana 1965). Pentatonic tunes may possibly exist in the music of all the Celtic races (11) but recent examination has shown that there is little pentatonic influence in Wales (Crossley-Holland 1968: 62), and a preliminary survey of Breton folk-song collections does not show it to be particularly strong there either.[64] In England, however, though there are few purely pentatonic tunes,[65] pentatonic origin is strongly felt in many.[66] This may be accounted for by the direct importation of many airs from Scotland and Ireland, or it may be that English folk melody was originally pentatonic but has moved further away from pentatonism than the music of the more remote areas of Scotland and Ireland. The fact that eight years or so after this lecture was given Cecil Sharp unearthed a great vein of pentatonic melody of British origin in the Appalachian Mountains of America may well support the latter view (Sharp 1932: I. xxxiv).

The Laird o' Drum, chosen by Duncan as his pentatonic example, is in the commonest of the five pentatonic modes (see note 37), as are also *Mormond Braes* and *Under the Moon* among the other illustrations. That he originally intended to give an example of the next commonest pentatonic mode, is shown in a letter he wrote to Greig a month before the lecture (25 Jan. 1908) in which he says:

> You kindly offered to do what you could to make the Wagner lecture a success, and I send herewith two songs for accompaniments. 'The Baron o' Brackley' is intended as a typical Mixo-Lydian, and 'Good Nicht' in this form as a minor pentatonic. I mention this, so that you may keep it in view, though I fear it is a troublesome task to harmonise *mixolydically*, and to do the thing *pentatonically* would still farther clip one's wings. I see you have not scrupled to use the 4th and 7th in 'The Laird o' Drum', though not obtruding them; and I suppose that is inevitable.

The same applies to *Mormond Braes* here shown with Greig's accompaniment (Plate II).

The reason why *Good Nicht an' Joy be wi' ye a'* (*Songs B* No 9), among other illustrations, was omitted on the night is not known, but as it was obviously intended, it is given here.[67]



It would not be generally agreed today that the two 'rules' mentioned by Duncan (12) are always observed. As regards the first, 'that the melody ends on the fundamental note of the mode', some scholars still hold that the final note of any folk tune must be regarded as the key-note or tonic; but more and more it is being realised that this is not necessarily so. Some tunes, including a number of Duncan's collecting, can be considered circular: the end sounds distinctly unfinal, seeming to lead back into the beginning again.[68] *The Baron o' Brackley*, given later in the lecture (17), is an example of this.

The second rule, 'that the final descends upon that note [*i.e.* the fundamental note of the mode], and generally by one degree', was one given by J. A. Fuller Maitland in one of the lectures he had sent Duncan to peruse at the latter's request (J. A. Fuller Maitland *Lectures*). Duncan at first was obviously doubtful about this and says in a letter to Fuller Maitland (19 Apr. 1906), 'I am indeed puzzled by one of your remarks that "every melody in a mode must descend upon its final by one degree". I do not think this would apply to many of our tunes that seem to be distinctly Dorian or Mixo-Lydian.' However in a later letter (18 May 1906) he says, 'I have certainly found that the characteristic of distinctly modal tunes forming their cadences by a descent of one degree on the final is considerably more prevalent here than I had thought; yet the number of exceptions is not small.' The number of exceptions is certainly quite considerable even in airs that Duncan, and indeed Fuller Maitland, would surely have considered 'old'. Many tunes have the type of rising cadence found in *Ca' the Yowes*—to quote a well-known example. *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow* and *The Beggar Laddie*, both of which were used to illustrate this lecture, have rising cadences. As for descent upon the final by one degree being 'against the harmonic tendency', it is difficult to understand why he made this remark. Fuller Maitland in the lecture referred to above says, ' . . . we get a law that no tune can be modal which rises to its keynote. Of course

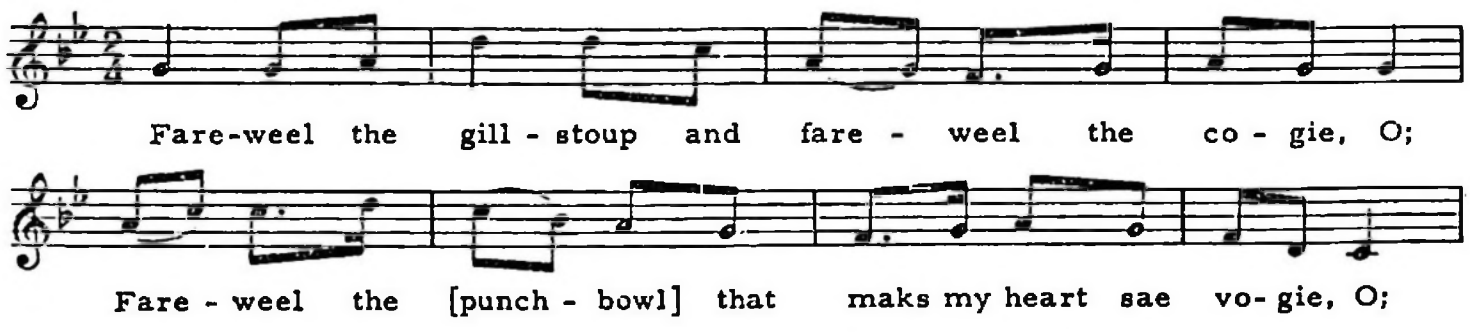
the converse is not true, for many modern tunes, such as "God Save the King", descend upon their keynote by one degree'. Again in a letter to Duncan (24 Apr. 1906) he says:

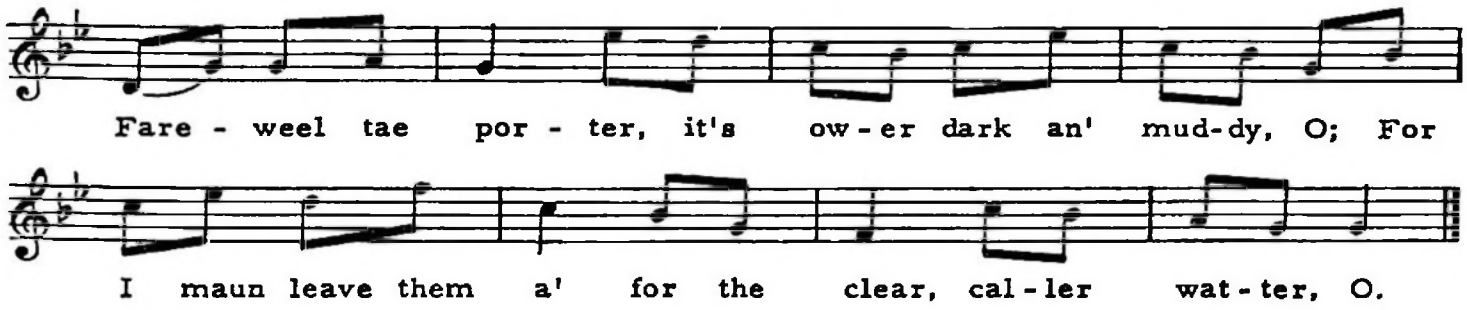
> Of course 'Drink to me only' never professed to be anything but a modern tune, but supposing its origin to be obscure, it might be held to conform to the cadence-rule by its descent at the close: but this phrase in the second strain [here he has written out the first four bars of the second strain] shows at once that it dates from a time when the arpeggio of the tonic harmony seemed an agreeable thing to dwell on.

Many of the early scholars, because of the modality of folk-song, believed sincerely in its plainsong origin and tried, as Duncan appears to be doing here, to enforce the rules of the latter on the former. A moment's reflection on the real nature of traditional folk-song and its manner of transmission will show the folly of trying to impose on it any rules from outside. There are no rules, only tendencies, and these must be discovered inductively, as Duncan in fact realised—to judge by the analytical methods described in *Characteristics*. There he says:

> *How to proceed.* (1) Take airs that are certainly very ancient, as given in the books. (2) Take traditional forms of airs, *unarranged.* (3) Turn the modern arrangements to account, in cases where they are certain, by observing the tendency of their changes, in contrast to the original. Then it is an inductive investigation of the features that distinguish them.

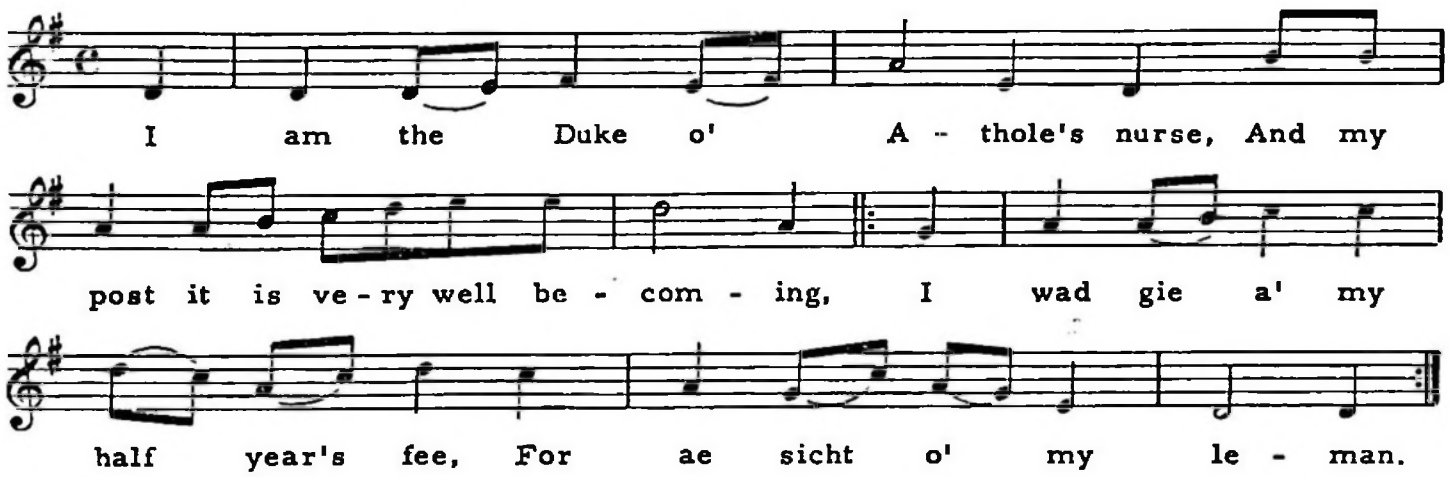
We come now to the detailed study of the heptatonic or seven-note modes. Duncan first deals with the Æolian (13) of which he gives *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow* as an example. In fact, since the sixth note of the scale does not appear in this tune and as it is only this note which distinguishes the Æolian from the Dorian, we cannot truthfully say that it is in either mode; it is in the hexatonic mode that Professor Bronson aptly calls Dorian/Æolian (Bronson 1959–73: 1.xxviii, 2.xi–xiii). It is only comparatively recently, however, that such hexatonic or six-note modes have been regarded as modes in their own right, and Duncan was not alone in labelling airs of this kind as Æolian: the earlier issues of the Folk-Song Society's *Journal* abound in examples.[69] This type of hexatonic tune is remarkably common in the collections of both Greig and Duncan, but real examples of the Æolian mode are comparatively rare and even when one does come across a true Æolian tune it often seems to have been imported from England or Ireland. The following example, however, *The Clear Caller Watter*, noted in September 1905 from his brother George (*Airs:*55), shows no signs of external origin and contains all seven notes of the Æolian mode. It is curious that Duncan should have overlooked it as a possible instance.



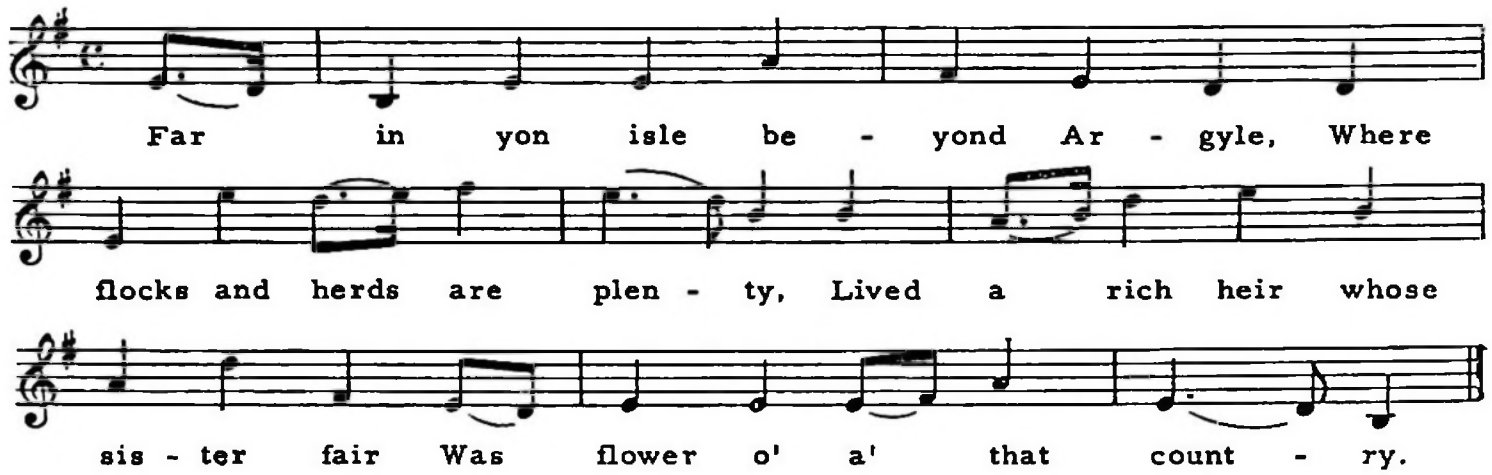


Passing on to the Dorian mode (14) Duncan states that it is less frequent than the Æolian; but in fact it is more so, as was pointed out by Greig in *Folk-Song in Buchan* (Greig 1963:55), and the Dorian/Æolian hexatonic referred to above is far commoner than either. The example given of a Dorian air, *The Emigrant's Farewell* (15), is a good one, as is *The Blaeberries* mentioned in note 63.

As an example of the Mixolydian mode (16) he mentions *Scots Wha Hae*, but this might well be considered a circular tune in the Ionian or major mode ending on the fifth degree of the scale and leading back into the beginning. *The Baron o' Brackley* (17), Duncan's Mixolydian illustration, is again in fact hexatonic and could again be taken as circular: indeed Greig's harmonisation makes it so. Many will feel that the real tonic is E flat rather than B flat; and even if the latter is taken as the tonic, since the note D (the third degree of the mode) does not occur in the tune at all it is what Bronson would call Mixolydian/Dorian. If E flat, however, be accepted as the tonic, then it is Ionian/Mixolydian as it lacks the distinguishing seventh degree. A clearer example of the Mixolydian mode, listed by Duncan in *Characteristics*, is the following air to *The Duke o' Athole's Nurse* (*Airs:* 11):



Duncan mentions briefly that traces of Lydian and Phrygian modes are to be found (18), and in a side-note and again in *Characteristics* he suggests *Sir Niel and McVan* as a possible instance of the latter. The chief characteristic by which the Phrygian mode can be recognised is a minor or flattened second degree of the scale. Let us look rather more closely at the version of this tune that Duncan had in mind (*Airs:* 22):



In fact it only uses five notes and is pentatonic. If, as Duncan always assumed, the final note, B, is the tonic, we find there is no second degree at all, let alone a flattened one; it cannot, therefore, really be said to have Phrygian influence, rather is it an example of what he calls the minor pentatonic. But many would see this as another circular tune with E as the tonic, in which case it is an example of the different and rarer pentatonic mode that lacks the third and sixth degrees of the scale (the one that, keeping to the black notes of the piano, has A flat as the tonic—see note 37). It is possible that Duncan in his enthusiasm for modality was anxious to find examples in all the Gregorian modes. Not finding a tune with a minor second, he contented himself with a tune that lacked the second altogether, perhaps imagining that if it had had one, it could have been minor!

With regard to the actual writing of modal tunes, Duncan rarely goes against his own dictum about setting them down 'according to the old way' (19) (except that he sometimes puts sharps or flats in key signatures for notes that do not occur at all in the tunes). In this he was in advance of most of his contemporaries, as was Greig who writes to him (11 Nov. 1905):

> It is provoking at this time of day to find men who should be experts clinging to conventions that only serve to misinterpet. It shows that they cannot feel the modes. And indeed the ear of the modern musician must be educated to feel them. He will not take these old melodies at their word, but must drag them into a notation that quite travesties their meaning & message. *We* will try to do justice by the old tunes when we come to print them. Mixo-Lydians and Dorians won't masquerade as modern majors & minors with disfiguring accidentals.

He was presumably referring to the custom of the Folk-Song Society in its *Journal* of using the nearest modern key signature and correcting where necessary with accidentals. Duncan expressed his views quite forcibly in the postscript of a letter to Fuller Maitland (19 Apr. 1906):

> I observe that the Folk Song Journal prints the modal tunes in the major or minor scale, with the necessary accidentals to correct it. I do not know the reason of this practice, but have always felt this objection to it, that it seems to misrepresent the great fact that these

melodies are purely diatonic, with different notes of the scale taken as the key-note, but with no real accidentals in use, and no chromatic effect realised.

Fuller Maitland, replying to Duncan's criticism, says (24 Apr. 1906):

> The question of notation is very difficult. Poor 'Martyrs'[70] (to return to that instance) has suffered by being printed in the natural scale, for the absence of a printed natural before the Bs has no doubt led many people to print them as flats! We want above all to get the intervals right, whatever we call them!

The Folk-Song Society seem to have adopted this policy deliberately to avoid the possibility of modal music being misread by musicians unaccustomed to it. Frank Howes, a later editor of the Folk-Song Society's *Journal*, in a letter to P. N. Shuldham-Shaw (25 Jan. 1974) writes:

> Now on modal notation I can offer you some ideas but not certainties. I, like you, wondered when I came on the scene why the signatures could not be more veracious, but I accepted the convention because it was the convention and therefore making life easier for everyone concerned. I would suggest as reasons for the use of key signatures (1) that the growing interest in the modes, as shown by Stanford and Fauré, was embedded more in plainsong than in folk-song and that plainsong had its own notation. It was not until people like Woodward started publishing plainsong tunes in the *Cowley Carol Book* and such that plainchant was studied by other than specialists and ecclesiastics. (2) Indeed only a generation before, the modes were regarded with positive horror by *e.g.* George Macfarren. . . . Something of his attitude can be found in the preface to Chappell's *Pop. Music of Olden Time* and Wooldridge's comments in the preface to his revision. (3) The fact that to get the folk songs into circulation piano accompaniments were provided by all the pioneers would be a strong influence against outlandish key signatures. I think that our pioneers appreciated the modes, *e.g.* Sharp in *Some Conclusions*, but the sort of consideration I have just alleged would deter them from adding to their obstacles.

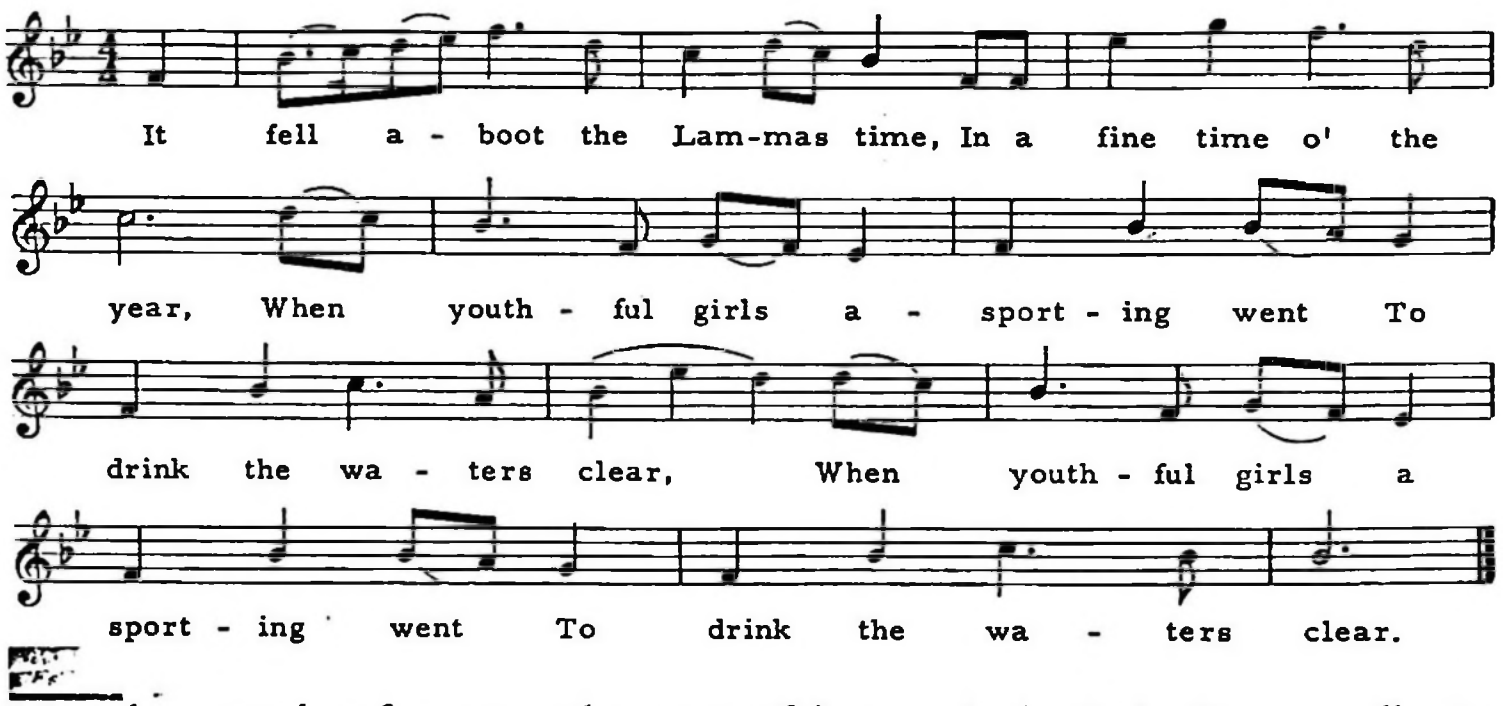
Duncan mentions 'the occasional use of the flat 7th in a major tune' (20) and gives *The Beggar Laddie* as an example. In correspondence with Greig about this song (16 Jan. 1907), he remarks:

> I am glad you like this particular air independently of the flat 7th. I did not, however, think of the melody itself; it was just this very flat 7th, and its remarkable emphasis from its position, that drew me to it. I wanted something to show that the flat 7th had an accepted place in the ears of folk-singers; even if it was not original here, it still shows that they took it naturally and sang it easily. It transgresses the rule of Modal cadence and can hardly be set down as Mixo-Lydian; but just all the more strikingly illustrates my point.

Actually, in *Airs* (p. 2) Duncan puts 'Mixo-Lydian?' against it and today, with less reliance being placed on the 'rule of Modal cadence', most people would regard it as a straightforward Mixolydian tune, since the seventh is consistently flattened: it is not just a chromatic flattening of an otherwise sharp note. Quoting Cecil Sharp (21), he brings up the question of the intonation used by traditional singers particularly with

regard to the seventh degree of the scale. Folk intonation was noted and commented on by a number of the early collectors. Percy Grainger in his brilliant transcriptions from phonograph cylinders frequently marks a note ♮ ♯? or something of a similar nature (*JFSS* 3 [1908] *passim*). Herbert Hughes collecting in Ireland about this time describes the quarter tones deliberately used by Irish singers (Hughes 1909:1.2–3) and an early attempt at accurate notation of pitch both in staff and sol-fa notations is shown by Dr Alfred Daniell's transcription of *Lliw Gwyn Rhosyn yr Haf* (*JWFSS* 1 [1910], No 14, reproduced in *Caneuon* 1961: No 22 p. 29).

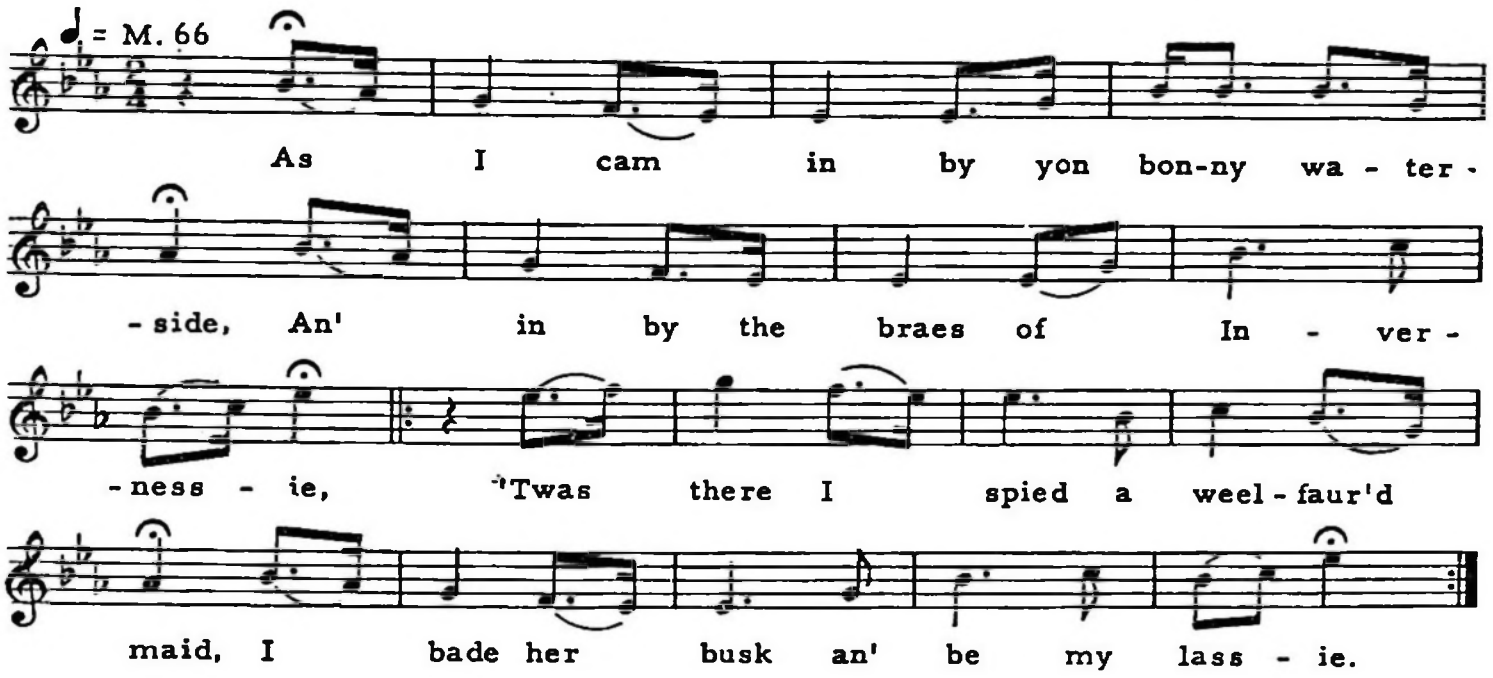
With reference to his discussion of passing notes (22), Duncan states that 'a smooth flowing melody always suggests a modern origin'. *Pitcaithley's Wells* (*Songs B:* No 10), listed in *Characteristics* as an example of an air with modern features, shows this clearly.



It is perhaps worthy of comment that many of the tunes in the Greig–Duncan collection which contain a fair number of passing notes are tunes with wide currency outside Scotland and may well be importations from other areas where the smoother type of melody became established at an earlier date than in Scotland.

Regarding the statement that 'the peculiarity of the melodic sixths is especially marked in the cadences' (23), it should be said that this feature does not seem quite as common as he suggests considering the number of tunes in which the sixth degree is lacking altogether. Possibly what he is referring to is the type of cadence where the final 'doh' is approached from the 'lah' below. This happens mostly in 'major' pentatonic and hexatonic tunes that lack the seventh. An instance of this type of tune is *The Braes o' Invernessie* (*Songs B:* No 5) which is also an example of 'a tendency to harp on the notes of a common chord, especially on the tonic'.

In *Characteristics* this is given as an example of the older type of tune in the Ionian or major mode. It is an interesting tune as it combines certain old features, such as the lack of the seventh, with more modern elements such as a rather harmonic structure.



The modern tendencies referred to are by no means limited to tunes in the major: some of the other modal airs such as *The Emigrant's Farewell*, already quoted in other connections, have a good many passing notes and some have distinct harmonic tendencies. As Duncan says in a letter to Fuller Maitland (18 May 1906), 'I presume we must recognise that popular music—apart from changes in transmission—was less likely to be careful of the strict rules and I suppose modal tunes would still be composed after modern influences were telling on the composers' tendencies so that the tunes would show a combination of both styles.'

In his praise of Scottish song near the conclusion of his lecture (24) Duncan is for once being somewhat chauvinistic. Far from thinking what Duncan calls the 'irregularities' a sign of the inferior nature of English folk-song, many would take the 5/4 and other constantly shifting rhythms as an indication of its superiority to the four-squareness of the North-East airs. With regard to the question of piano accompaniment (26), both Duncan and Greig, knowing the real tradition, seem to regret that it was necessary in order to make the songs acceptable to their audiences. Greig referring in a letter (14 Nov. 1907) to *The Gadie Rins* says, 'in fact I sometimes wish we could do without accompaniments altogether'. How happy they would have been today when unaccompanied folk singing is widely accepted. However, Duncan's remarks on arrangements and arrangers are possibly even more true now than ever before, as side by side with the acceptance of unaccompanied singing go arrangements perpetrated by instrumental performers who think nothing of deliberately altering and cheapening the original melodies to suit their very limited harmonic capabilities. The arrangers of earlier years were certainly more faithful to their originals than many, though not all, today. Greig's own accompaniments show commendable simplicity and taste, although it might be felt that there is rather too much duplication of the melody in the piano part, and there are occasions when they take the songs out of their original mode.[71]

Mormond Braes (Plate II) illustrates one of his more successful accompaniments as well as his beautiful calligraphy of words and music.

In common with virtually all his contemporaries, Duncan believed that folk-song was fast dying out and his wish to 'garner it while yet there is time' (27) was strong and sincere. Fortunately folk-song is a sturdy growth and has a habit, not of dying, but from time to time of disappearing underground. One has only got to dig down a little and there it is, very much alive, as various more recent collectors have proved. Greig and Duncan would surely have been delighted to know that the work they carried out with such fervour and with such success is still continuing today. They might have been surprised but certainly they would have been gratified to learn that so many young people in Scotland are taking a real pride and a lively and serious interest in their own heritage of genuine traditional music and song, and that their own work is at last receiving the appreciation it has long deserved.

NOTES

1 The photograph of the Reverend James Bruce Duncan (1848–1917) which is reproduced in Plate I has kindly been supplied by his grandson, Mr Paul Duncan. For a brief account of his life, see Duncan 1966, and for his work on folk-song, see Shuldham-Shaw 1966 and 1973.

2 The notes are not dated, but the material relates closely to the report in *The Aberdeen Free Press* (Monday, 5 Nov. 1906) of Duncan's lecture on 'Folk Song in the North East' given at Alford on the previous Friday.

3 Greig to Duncan, 20 and 24 June 1907, and Duncan to Greig, 22 and 28 June. The letter of 22 June is available only in Duncan's shorthand draft or copy (998/13/49).

4 The duet does not, as the newspaper report claims, include 'all the airs sung': *The Beggar Laddie* and *The Baron of Brackley* are not represented.

5 Greig wrote to Duncan in a letter of 30 Jan. 1908: 'Harking back to your lecture, I may say that Mary w[oul]d like to sing "Mormond Braes", if you can fit it in. Her version of it is strictly *pentatonic*. I have in a way taken that song in hand & always like to take any opportunity that offers of extending its vogue; & Mary has got identified with it.' Duncan replied (1 Feb. 1908): 'I fully intended to include "Mormond Braes" for Miss Greig . . . '

6 The report in *The Aberdeen Daily Journal* of Monday, 24 Feb., has the heading 'The Aberdeen Wagner Society' and is sub-titled 'Folk-Song in the North-East of Scotland'. The *Evening Express* report quoted in the text is an exact reproduction of the first and last of its three paragraphs but in between the *Journal* carried the following ineptly written account of the lecture itself:

> 'Mr Duncan dwelt [*sic*] with his subject very interestingly and exhaustively. He began by defining the meaning of the word "folk-song", and tracing through the older periods its various forms. The traditional was first heard in England some 200 years ago. The form then in vogue, however, was artistic, more than in the simple style that has obtained throughout the north-east of Scotland. Then the question was propounded as to how the airs were to be found. Folk-song, the lecturer said, was the heritage of the people. The singers of these old world melodies or chants or musical recitations were still to be heard, the difficulty was to get hold of the singers. Miss Broadwood, the secretary of the English Folk-Song Society, tells that she had noted down no fewer than 400 folk-songs from

one person's voice. Mr Duncan himself has an experience of 330 airs which he "took off" one voice. In speaking of the musical side, the lecturer dealt with the two classes—"narrative ballad" and "lyric". The idea contained in some of the songs that Burns, Lady Nairne, and others had "fined down" could all be traced to one or other of the older ballads. Patriotic sentiment was absent from these folk-songs, and very little of the convivial was introduced. The character of the music was quaint and simple; and there was an utter independence of harmony. The various musical scales in which the music was written were then detailed, special note being made of the "pentatonic", with the "fa" and "te" as in our present major scale amissing. There were no modulations, no chromatics, but the flat seventh was made frequently to do duty. In confirmation of the merit and character of Scottish folk-songs, their design and structure, and their emotional powers, Mr Duncan concluded by quoting from Dr Parry, who says that the highest level is reached in the music of the Scottish folk-song.'

7 *Under the Moon* and *The Emigrant's Farewell* were known to Duncan's mother, Mrs William Duncan *née* Elizabeth Birnie, and were noted down by Duncan's brother George Forrest Duncan when he was only a boy in 1875. *The Beggar Laddie* was recorded from George in 1905, and this was also known to Margaret from whom *The Laird o' Drum*, *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow*, and *Bonny Wudny* (the tune of *The Baron o' Brackley*, see note 49) were recorded in the same year. Duncan took down the words of *The Gadie Rins* from Margaret (*Gillespie:* 252) but did not record the tune, evidently because it did not show any variation. As the points Duncan is making in his lecture relate to music, only the first verses of the words, and not the complete texts, are given with the music in the illustrations.

8 Some commas, hyphens and dashes have been added, some commas omitted, and some separate sentences run together without any indication of the change. The notes are written in Pitman's shorthand on seventeen folios of lined paper, all but one of which measure 8 in. × 6 in. Pages of deleted draft which are largely copied out at other points are not included in the numbering which runs: 1/2, 3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 9/deleted draft (*cf.* 10 and 15), 10/11, 12/13, 14/deleted draft (*cf.* 14 and 26; this folio measures 9·1 in. × 7·2 in.), 15/blank, 16/17, 18/19, 20/21, 22/23, 24/25, 25A/deleted draft (*cf.* 10–11), 26/blank, 27/28. Sometimes the draft material supplies improved readings which have been adopted. There are also a number of smaller deletions which are not mentioned individually here unless they have been accepted into the text. Duncan has written the title 'Folk Song in the North East' in long-hand on page 1, and a small piece of paper accompanying the notes has been marked by Duncan 'Notes for Folk Song Lecture (fuller than in lecture itself)'. It should be noted that, as Duncan does not always use standard outlines in his shorthand, there may be a certain ambiguity and it is possible that some have been misinterpeted.

9 This sentence opens: 'The word of comparatively recent origin', in MS. Duncan's definition of folk-song agrees in a general way with that of other researchers in Britain at this period (*cf.* Sharp 1907:2). For a more recent definition, see *JIFMC* 8 (1955):23, quoted Lloyd 1967:15 and Howes 1969:11, but the whole question of definition is still controversial.

10 The heading 'folk-song' does not occur in the second edition (Grove 1904–10). The third and fourth editions (1927–8, 1940) have the cross-reference 'Folk-Song, see English Folk-Song, Irish, Scottish, Welsh Music; Song, etc.' and the fifth and most recent edition has a long section on 'Folk Music' (1954:3. 182–422).

11 *i.e.* the smallness of the number of known records makes one suspect that very little recording was done.

12 'without ever hearing' for MS 'and never hear'.

13 The man of seventy referred to was almost certainly Robert Alexander, Quarrylea, Whiterashes, Udny, who learnt most of his songs in Culsalmond when young.

14 The singer was Henry Burstow; see *JFSS* 1 (1899–1904):139.

15 This singer was Duncan's sister Margaret (Mrs Gillespie).

16 '*Cyclopædia*' for MS '*Encyclopædia*'.

17 For this sentence the MS text has the two sentences: 'They have not attracted so much attention from collectors, and on the whole their words have not the merit and interest of the ballads. On the other hand, their composition has come down to quite recent, even present, times.' and the second of these is a replacement for the deleted sentence: 'Yet they have their own interest as an exposition of various phases of life.' The ideas Duncan had in mind are expressed more fully in the 1906 lecture notes (p. 9): 'Naturally the subjects of these old songs are connected with all the subjects of thought in old country life. Life is of course presented in many forms . . . Then the occupations of the country were celebrated. The farmer's life, the shepherd's, the farm-servant's, and even the herd laddie's, and the beggar's. . . . Notice that the occupations include those of the upper class, and the ballads were sung and probably composed by them as well as others. There are examples of some such songs composed in recent years; the merits are not large, but [they are] often set to striking tunes.'

18 The end of the second last sentence in the paragraph from 'for some of them' occurs as a deletion at the top of MS page 27 which apparently once followed on MS page 8 where the rest of the paragraph appears. Pages 8 and 27 have deleted numbers which cannot be clearly read but are probably 18 and 19. The final sentence of the paragraph is developed from a note written mainly in the margin at the foot of page 8 which reads: 'Some surprises in the relationship between the two as the absence of drinking and patriotic songs, and the occurrences of songs that have given origin to literary songs, such as *Auld Robin Gray* and *The Land o' the Leal*'. There is a more extended treatment of the ideas in the 1906 lecture notes: 'in the old folk-songs there is a curious absence of anything that glorifies drinking; our songs of that class, which are pretty numerous, are all the productions of well-known Scottish poets of a later time' (p. 8); 'And though these songs are often far from high poetic efforts, one often meets with strikingly beautiful expressions among them. It was the habit of Burns to seize hold of such expression[s] and weave them into his own songs. . . . The same thing was done by Lady Nairne. Mention the most notable instance of "the land of the leal", expression so much admired, which comes from an old and half-humorous song' (p. 9). In *Airs*, Duncan has detailed comments on the probable derivation of the two literary songs he mentions from *Auld Widow Graylocks* (pp. 255–6, *cf.* Greig 1963: articles 114, 116 and 119) and *Be Kind to Your Nainsel', John* (pp. 55–6, quoted Montgomerie: 1959:206 and Shuldham-Shaw 1966:74–5).

19 'the tunes' for MS 'them'; *cf.* deleted draft which has 'that is just the greater assurance that his tunes will be uncorrupted'.

20 'the singer' in draft only.

21 'so' in draft only.

22 'of its own beauty' from draft; text has 'of itself'. Both text and draft continue 'or calls prominent attention to itself': this has been omitted in order to secure grammatical agreement.

23 Apart from the four opening words, which are editorial, this sentence follows the draft omitting the opening words there which read, 'And so again, we may compare'. The text has, '(Give an example: say old air for *Auld Robin Gray* and the modern with its modulation)'. The old air and the modern one composed by the Reverend William Leeves are given together in Chambers 1862: 430–2.

24 The words after 'preceding' are editorial. *Under the Moon* is not mentioned in the text but was sung at the meeting. It is listed in *Characteristics* in illustration of '3 pulse rhythm, with note divided'. The quotation is from *Songs B* No 6/1; *cf. Airs:* 54.

25 '[The Gadie Rins]' is written in the margin at the end of this paragraph.

26 'for a four-line stanza to have only two different lines of melody, which may be combined in various ways' for MS 'to have only two lines of melody for a four-line stanza, and it is used in several ways'.

27 'alternately' for MS 'in alternate forms'.

28 In the MS this sentence ends 'AAAB (50), ABCB'. The number 50 refers to *The Water o' Nairn* in *Airs* which has the form indicated. The 'ABCB' that Duncan mentions here has been switched round

with the AABA form he mentions later (see note 31) so that the example of three different lines of melody comes between the opening discussion of two different lines and the final reference to four.

29 Fuller Maitland mentions this as a Celtic characteristic in *Lectures* 1 'The Celtic Element in British Folk Song'.

30 'third' for MS 'fourth'. Opposite this '[Stanza structure and other points]' is written in the margin.

31 For the first part of this sentence, the MS has only 'Other forms are AABA' followed by the memorandum '[Find others among my examples]' (see note 28 above). Below this and coming at the end of the paragraph is the note 'See Sharp, page 73, etc/(Putting this first)'.

32 'full of airs with two strains' for MS 'full of such'.

33 'discover' for MS 'discovers'.

34 This sentence is editorial. An insertion in the margin reads, '[*The Gadie* illustrating the modern tendency, and the chorus] Also the two strains under instrumental influence; also the absence of versions'. The tune is quoted from *Songs B:* No 12 where only the words 'O gin I were' are given; the verse has been completed from *Gillespie:* 252.

35 The quotation is given as in Sharp; the MS has a comma in place of the semi-colon and 'of harmony' in place of 'a harmony'.

36 'having' is from a deletion; the text has 'have'.

37 An easy way to find our usual pentatonic scale is to play the black notes on a piano or similar keyboard instrument. There are only five notes repeated in the same pattern in different octaves up the keyboard and the position of the bigger gaps between the notes is obvious. Any one of these five notes may be used as a home-note—a note on which the melody seems to want to finish, even if in fact it does not—thus giving rise to five different pentatonic modes, each with its own character determined by the position of the larger gaps in the scale relative to the home-note. In folk music of British origin the commonest of these five modes is that which, played on the black notes, has F sharp as its home-note—what Duncan would probably have called the major pentatonic. This is the only one dealt with in the lecture. The next most frequent, which Duncan calls the minor pentatonic, has E flat as its home-note. Then follow those with A flat, C sharp and B flat, the last being particularly rare.

38 The words after 'giving' are from a deletion; the text has 'giving a breadth and completeness that is very effective;'.

39 'and' for MS 'of'.

40 *Gala Water* is quoted in this connection in Grove (1879–90), 3: 444–5.

41 This sentence is editorial. The text has '[As example: "The Laird o' Drum"]' at this point, and also has the marginal note '[The Laird o' Drum]' some sentences before, opposite 'modern influence by introducing the 4th or the 7th or both as passing notes'. The quotation is from *Songs A:* 3; *cf. Airs:* 3.

42 Before this paragraph '[Shorten Modes very much]' is written in longhand.

43 'folk-songs' for MS 'they'.

44 This sentence replaces MS 'The experience of all folk-singers is pretty much the same in this matter.' In the third sentence of the paragraph, the words 'the modern minor' and 'the latter' replace MS 'it' and 'the modern minor'.

45 This sentence is editorial. The text has '[*The Dowie Dens*]' in the margin. The quotation is from *Songs A:* 1; *cf. Airs:* 23.

46 'On first hearing' for MS 'At first sight'.

47 This sentence is editorial; the text has '[*The Emigrant's Farewell:* Strathdon version]'. The quotation is from *Songs A:* 7; *cf. Airs:* 54.

48 'Mixolydian' for MS 'Æolian'.

49 This sentence is editorial. The text has only '[Mixolydian example]' in the margin, but *The Baron o' Brackley* was sung at the meeting and *Characteristics* lists '*Bonny Wudny* (to the last four verses of

The Baron o' Brackley)' as an illustration of the Mixolydian mode. The quotation is from *Songs B:* No 7/1–2; *cf. Airs:* 67 for the tune sung to the words of *Bonny Wudny*. Duncan notes (p. 68) that, 'The air ("arranged") is in Christie, 1.20, as "The Baron o' Brackley" ' and the words in *Songs B* are derived from Christie.

50 There is a marginal note, '[Phrygian: *MacVan*?]' and *Characteristics* has '*Sir Niel and MacVan* Phrygian?'

51 The text has '[Examples:]' at this point.

52 There is no indication in the text that an example should come here, but *The Beggar Laddie* was sung in the course of the meeting and it is listed in *Characteristics* as illustrating 'non-modal flat 7th'. The quotation is from *Songs B:* No 8/2, *cf. Airs* 2.

53 This paragraph has been deleted but restored by the word 'Stet' in longhand at the head. The direction is followed in shorthand by a memorandum, '[Add on passing note from Sharp, pages 84, 85]'.

54 'once' for MS 'one'.

55 The end of the sentence, from 'as', is editorial. The MS has '[The Dowie Dens for several of these points]' in the margin.

56 The text has '[Examples here:' and, in the margin, 'The Gadie Rins]'.

57 In the text, this sentence begins, 'But after all it is the airs to these old songs that are most valuable'. It is the first undeleted sentence on page 27 of the MS and originally followed the discussion of the words on page 8 of the MS (see note 18 above).

58 Duncan indicated by an asterisk that a sentence added at the foot of the page after the close of the lecture should be inserted here, but it has not been brought into the text since it would break the continuity of the paragraph. It runs: 'As to their present-day use it is of great importance that their character should not be destroyed by harmony itself however correct.' There is some doubt about the last word; it has been interpreted as 'correct' but, if it is this, Duncan has omitted to indicate the 't' sound.

59 This 'a' and the omission dots are not in Duncan's text but have been added by reference to the original. A note at the top of this page of the MS (p. 28), before the paragraph opening 'As to wider and higher uses', reads '[See Parry, page 80]'.

60 In conversation with P. N. Shuldham-Shaw.

61 In many parts of Europe gipsies have taken over the songs of the region giving them their own particular stamp by embellishing the melodies profusely with ornamentation (*cf.* Grove 1954:3. 859 *et seq.*). Something of the kind may well have happened among the travelling people in Scotland.

62 Since there are other more typical examples of this kind of tune, *e.g. The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow* given later in the lecture, it seems possible that Duncan particularly wanted to use *Under the Moon* somewhere during the course of the evening as it is somewhat of a rarity and has an attractive tune. One curious feature of it is that it can be barred in a variety of ways: if the bar lines are shifted one beat either to the right or to the left, the tune still makes sense and by and large the words still fit well. One could even bar it satisfactorily in 2/4 or 3/2, but one must assume that the method of barring chosen by Duncan best gives the type of accentuation he actually heard.

63 Another song that Duncan mentions in *Characteristics* as exemplifying both this 'Celtic' form and the Dorian mode is *The Blaeberries* (*Airs:* 19, reproduced in *FMJ* 1 [1966]: 86, 1st version). For this the formula would now be written $ABB^{1}A^{1}$.

64 A fairly detailed examination of over 700 Breton folk-songs shows less than 4½ per cent of them to have possible pentatonic tunes and most of these contain less than five notes, usually three or four and in one instance only two. For this reason they lack many of the true pentatonic characteristics. There is not even much pentatonic influence among the tunes of six or seven notes: it is evident in less than 8½ per cent of these.

65 *Lord Rendal*, 5th version, and *Swarthfell Rocks* (*JFSS* 2 [1905–6]: 31, 267) are two examples.

66 *The Holly and the Ivy* (Sharp 1911: 17) and *Barbara Ellen*, particularly the first of the two versions (*JFSS* 2 [1905–6]: 80), are good examples.

67 It may be significant that of the three songs included in a preliminary *Programme of Illustrations* (998/21/14) but not (to judge by the newspaper account) performed on the night, *The Emigrant's Farewell* and *The Braes o' Invernessie* are marked 'Tenor' on the copies and *Good Nicht an' Joy be wi' ye a'* is obviously in the tenor range. Possibly the tenor singer let Duncan down at the last moment.

68 In deciding whether a tune is circular or not, attention must be paid to the note a fifth above the final. If this is really felt as a dominant, then the final is almost certainly the key-note: if not, and particularly if the fourth above the final is strongly stressed, it is probably circular, as in the case of *Scots Wha Hae* mentioned later.

69 See the two versions of *Geordie*, *The Captain's Apprentice* and *John Reilly* (*JFSS* 2 [1905–6]: 27, 161 and 214).

70 A psalm-tune in the Dorian mode mentioned by Fuller Maitland earlier in the same letter.

71 See the accompaniments to *The Emigrant's Farewell* and *The Blaeberries* (*Songs A*: 7 and 9).

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JIFMC
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JWFSS
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The Reverend Andrew Urquhart and the Social Structure of Portpatrick in 1832

NEIL TRANTER

For England, the task of unravelling the mysteries of historical variations in social structure is now well underway. Already there is available a substantial literature relating to the nature of the sources and methods of social structural analysis (Laslett 1966; Armstrong 1966; Wrigley 1972), and the first pioneering studies based on them have also been completed.[1] For Scotland, however, very little has yet been done, though the future holds an exciting promise.[2] What follows in this paper is intended as a modest contribution to the build-up of a corpus of knowledge on the structure and composition of Scottish society in the nineteenth century. It relates to the small Wigtownshire parish of Portpatrick and is based on the 'Social survey and Register of all households in the village and parish' compiled by the young assistant minister, the Reverend Andrew Urquhart, in 1832.[3] By itself, of course, the social structure of Portpatrick cannot be used as the basis for any sweeping nation-wide generalisations. While the composition of Portpatrick society *may* turn out to be much the same as that of other parishes of similar size and type, it will no doubt prove to contain its own peculiar idiosyncracies. The full story of Scotland's social structure, both its common features and all the local variants upon them, will only emerge when a sufficient cross-section of Scottish parishes has been subjected to a similar analysis.

I

In the early 1830s the local economy of the parish of Portpatrick was particularly active and thriving. Despite the decline of the live cattle and horses trade with Ireland, upon which much of the parish's earlier prosperity had rested, and despite too the short-lived success of the herring fishery in the second decade of the nineteenth century, the community prospered under the stimulus of the mail and passenger trade with Ireland. Between 4 May 1825 and 1 August 1832 a total of 74,559 passengers passed through Portpatrick en route to Ireland by means of one of the two steam packets daily plying the twenty-one mile crossing, and over the same period 69,886 people made the return trip. In addition, by 1838, the Portpatrick mail packets handled between eight and ten thousand letters and newspapers each day. By permitting the direct transfer of cattle and horses from Ireland to the ports of Liverpool and Glasgow the rise of steam navigation certainly killed the intermediary role that Portpatrick had previously played

in the livestock trade. But it more than compensated for this by facilitating the emergence of Portpatrick as a mail and passenger entrepot. So important did the parish become in the chain of communications with Ireland that, under government sponsorship, a start was made in 1821 with the construction of a new harbour to cope with the demand. The employment which this provided gave another timely stimulus to the well-being of Portpatrick's population. Sadly, the harbour was never to be completed. The work was still unfinished when in 1849 the Irish mail, and much of the passenger trade, ceased to pass through the parish. With their departure went much of the community's prosperity. But this was in the future. In 1832 all seemed set fair for continued economic expansion. The population which had risen from an estimated 611 in 1755 to 1,090 in 1801 as a result of the expanding livestock trade with Ireland continued to grow through the early nineteenth century under the impetus of harbour construction and the packet trade, until in 1831 it reached its peak, 2,239. Thereafter it began a long and, except for a minor resurgence during the 1850s, steady decline, to 1,136 in 1901.[4]

II

It was, therefore, to a still prosperous and bustling community that Andrew Urquhart came in October 1831, first as an assistant to the veteran Reverend John MacKenzie and then, on the latter's death in December 1836, as minister in his own right. From the beginning his participation in parish affairs greatly exceeded the normal calls of duty. In his anxiety to secure an improvement in the educational, material and moral standards of his flock, Urquhart became a tireless visitor of all the households in his parish and a keen recorder of the conditions he found in them. Historical demographers have every reason to be grateful for these fact-finding missions. Between April 1832 and December 1852 Urquhart undertook four major house to house visitations, the first starting on the 17 April 1832 and taking two years to complete, the second in 1844, a third in 1846, and a final one during the autumn and winter months of 1852.[5] Of these the first is by far the best. The deterioration in the quality of subsequent listings was to a large extent due to the bitterness caused by the Disruption crisis of 1843, when Urquhart seceded from the Established Church to join the new Free Church of Scotland. It is significant that in both the 1844 and 1846 surveys the fullest personal details are provided for the occupants of those households whose heads belonged to the Free Church. Households headed by adults of other denominations, including those who remained faithful to the Established Church, are much less thoroughly documented. The relative inadequacy of the 1852 listing, however, is probably explained by other factors. By this date the worst rancour of the Disruption troubles had passed. Perhaps, by now, even the apparently indefatigable Urquhart had grown weary of the awesome task of household visitation and registration, preferring to leave it to the decennial visits of the official civil census enumerators.

On the whole the 1832 listing seems to have been compiled carefully and pains-

Date	Residence	Name	Nativity	Age	Marriage	Occupation	Children: Com:	Scholarship	School	Remarks
6 April 18[illegible]		× Andrew Parker		14			b.	r. w. a.		
		× William Parker		12			b.	r. w. a		
		× James Parker		10			b.	r.		
		× Helen Parker		2			b.			
		× John Parker		1			b.			
		M. William M'Cullock	L.	86	X		c.	r. w. a.		
		× Janet M'Cullock	L	53		Spins	c.	r. w. a.		
		M. William Hemiston	L. G.	41	+	Labourer at home	b. c.	r. w. a.		
		W. Isabella Adams	L. G.	41	+	Sells dry goods	b. c.	r		
		× James Hemiston	L. G.	19			b			
		× Jane Hemiston	L. G.	16			b.	r.		
		× George Hemiston	L. G.	13			b	r.		
		× William Hemiston	L. G.	9			b.	r.		
		× Isabella Hemiston	L. G.	7			b.			
		× Samuel Hemiston	L. G.	5			b.			
		M. Agnes (Bailey) Kerr	N	49	X		c.	r. w.		
		× James Kerr	N.	20		Stone cutter	b.	r. w. a		
		× Janet Mackenzie Kerr	N	20		Sewing	b.	r. w.		
		× Elizabeth Kerr	N.	20		Sewing	b.	r. w.		
		M. John Barclay	N.	40	+	Shoemaker	c.	r. w. a		
		W. Janet Henderson	N	30	+		c.	r.		
		× Andrew Barclay	N	15			b.	r. w. a		
		× Margaret Barclay	N	13			b.	r.		
		× Mary Barclay	N	11			b.	r.		
		× Elizabeth Barclay	N	8			b.	r.		
		× John Barclay	N	5			b.			
		× Janet Henderson Barclay	L.	2			b.			
19 April 18[illegible]		M. William Johnstone	L. G.	60	+	Pork-man	b. c.	r. w. a		
		W. Jane Gibson	L.	67	+		c.	r.		
		M. Hugh Neilson	L. G.	50	+	Shoemaker	b. c.	r. w. a		
		W. Sarah Scott	N.	60	+		c.	r. w.		
		× John Neilson	N.	22		Shoemaker	c.	r. w. a.		
		× Janet Neilson	N.	20			c.	r. w. a.		
		× Helen Neilson	N.	16			b.	r. w. a		

PLATE III A page from the 1832 survey of Portpatrick parish. Reproduced by kind permission of Mr Andrew M. Urquhart and the Scottish Record Office. (The column headings after the name read: 'Nativity and Residence here, Age, Marriage, Occupation, Ch: Com:, Scholarship, School.')

takingly. Except for a few occasions when they are made in pencil, the entries are recorded neatly and legibly in ink, and the separate columns relating to the names (christian as well as surnames) of the occupants of each household, their relationship to the household head, length of residence in the parish, age and marital status, occupational, literacy and schooling attainments are invariably clearly distinguishable.[6] The general impression of reliability which the listing exudes is reinforced by comparing some of its findings with those of the independent enquiries carried out by the civil census enumerator in 1831 and by Urquhart himself in 1838.[7] Because of certain deficiencies in the 1832 survey, to which I shall return below, a close, direct comparison between it and the 1831 and 1838 statistics is not possible. But within the limitations of such a comparison the various listings that are available for the 1830s tell a roughly similar story in respect to the total population of the parish, its age and sex composition, and the number of separate households (domestic groups) it contained (Urquhart 1845:143–5). Although we must make some allowance for error in the 1832 return it seems safe enough to assume a reasonable degree of accuracy and completeness.

Carefully compiled though the listing was, it does nevertheless pose several problems. To save himself both time and space Urquhart presented much of the information he collected in symbol form, and the meaning of the various symbols he used is not always immediately clear. Generally, however, such short-hand abbreviations cause no serious difficulty. Close scrutiny of the text is usually sufficient to make them intelligible. Where uncertainties remain these can be clarified by reference to the introductory sections of his 1844 survey in which Urquhart explained in detail the meaning of the various symbols he was then using. They appear to be the same as those applied in 1832.

Crucial to a successful analysis of census listings is the need for all such documents to draw clear distinctions between each of the different dwelling-houses and/or between each of the different household (domestic) groups recorded. Without these distinctions it is quite impossible to carry out a meaningful analysis of the average size and composition of dwelling and household units. In this respect the Urquhart listing begins extremely well. The first seventeen tenement dwellings are distinguished from each other by ruled lines running across the full width of the page, and the various separate household (domestic) groups within these tenements by ruled lines running part way across the page. Sadly, Urquhart did not continue this practice, and the bulk of the listing must be explored without its benefit. There is, therefore, no direct way of estimating the size and structure of the tenement dwellings. Fortunately, for the purposes of social structural analysis, this does not matter too much. Our principal interest lies in the size and structure of the household or co-resident domestic group, defined by Peter Laslett as 'that unit or block of persons which was recognised (by the compiler of the survey) to be distinct from other units of blocks of persons when the inhabitants of a community were listed'.* (Laslett 1969:20–2). Throughout his

*Throughout the remainder of this paper 'household' is taken to mean 'co-resident domestic group' as defined by Peter Laslett.

enumeration, though he early on dispensed with the use of ruled lines, Urquhart always left an unmistakable space between the end of one household group and the start of another so that each separate resident domestic group is clearly recognisable.

As one might expect in an undertaking of such complexity, there are occasional omissions and obscurities in the data that are recorded. In most cases these can be overcome without stretching credence too far. Thus, on those occasions when Urquhart has failed to record the number of years lived by a child in the parish the deficiency can usually be remedied by comparing the age of the child in 1832 with the number of years that one or both of its parents had resided in the parish. Missing ages too can sometimes be estimated, albeit crudely. It is, for example, reasonably safe to assume that William, ranked as the youngest of James and Ann Stewart's four children, was less than 5 years old in 1832 since James, the third surviving child in the family, is recorded as being 5 years of age by the survey.

There are, of course, instances where gaps and uncertainties cannot be filled in with any reasonable degree of confidence, and these must be left out of the analysis. I have also omitted from consideration the five households by the side of which Urquhart himself wrote 'not reckoned' or 'omitted', and a further nine households (containing at least forty-four people) the entries for which were made in pencil and are more obscure and far less detailed than the usual standard of entry. These omissions should in no way bias the results which follow, however. Out of a total population of 2,239 persons and 422 separate household units in 1831, I have been able to include 1,908 persons (approximately 85 per cent of the total population of the parish) and 392 households (93 per cent of all households) in the analysis below.

III

The age, sex and marital composition of the population of the parish of Portpatrick in the period 1832–4 is set out in Table 1 below. Before interpeting it, a preliminary word of caution is necessary. In the main, the information which the survey provides on the sex and marital status of the individuals recorded can be regarded as reasonably accurate. Occasional errors in registering the correct marital status of persons are, of course, to be expected, particularly among newcomers to the parish, but in a community as small as Portpatrick it is unlikely that mistakes of this kind would occur very often. Rather less confidence can be held in the returns of individual age, however. Not infrequently throughout the listing the age of a person is followed by a question mark, suggesting that for one reason or another Urquhart himself had doubts about its precise accuracy. Even in the large majority of cases where age was stated without equivocation, it would be most unwise to assume that it was always absolutely precise. A person's ignorance of his exact age or the deliberate falsification of his age statement may not have been common occurrences (see Tillot 1972:107–8) but they must have occurred from time to time nevertheless. Despite this, within the margins for error

which must be allowed in all such analyses, the age structure suggested by Urquhart's first census is probably accurate enough for our present purposes, if only because in its broad essentials it compares fairly closely with that of the independently conducted enquiries of 1831 and 1838:

Proportion of the population of Portpatrick aged below twenty years

Period	*Percentage*
1831	49·3
1832–1834	50·3
1838	50·4

(The 1831 and 1838 proportions have been calculated from data in Urquhart 1845: 143–4)

The age composition of the parish's population, as revealed in Table 1, contains no surprises and closely mirrors the pattern found in the few studies which are available for other areas. 43·7 per cent of all males, 36·7 per cent of all females and 40 per cent of the total population was below 15 years of age, a high youth dependency ratio by comparison with the age structures of more recent periods and one that reflects the relatively high fertility rates of early nineteenth-century society. At the other extreme, as a result of the higher mortality rates of earlier times, the proportion of the population aged 65 and above (4·6 per cent for males, 5·5 per cent for females, and 5·1 per cent for the total population) was rather lower in the 1830s than it is now. Despite this, the population of Portpatrick had a markedly smaller ratio of people in the most productive age-groups, 15 to 64 years (51·7 per cent of all males, 57·5 per cent of all females, 54·8 per cent of the total population) than is common in the twentieth century.

Of all people recorded in the listing a slight majority, 53·4 per cent, was female. The imbalance between the sexes varied more substantially from one age-group to another however. In the infant, child and juvenile ages (that is, below the age of 20) there were almost as many males (49·3 per cent of the population under 20 years of age) as females (50·7 per cent). Among the population aged 45 years and above the imbalance between the sexes was notably greater (46 per cent male, 54 per cent female). But the excess of females over males was most evident in the young adult population. Of the total resident community aged between 20 and 45 years, the age-group in which most people married and bore children, 57·6 per cent was female and only 42·4 per cent male.

Not surprisingly, the marked imbalance between the sexes at adult ages was reflected in the different marital composition of the male and female populations. 21·5 per cent of all males above 20 years of age were unmarried at the time of the survey. On the other hand, the proportion of unmarried women in the adult female population was noticeably higher (29·7 per cent). The proportion widowed was also significantly greater among women than men. Thus, whereas only 5·8 per cent of all males aged

TABLE I

*Marital status, age and sex structure, Portpatrick 1832–1834**

	MALE										FEMALE										*Total male and female*	
	Single		*Married*		*Widowed*		*Unknown marital status*		*Total*		*Single*		*Married*		*Widowed*		*Unknown marital status*		*Total*			
Age in years	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%
0–4	132	23·6	—	—	—	—	—	—	132	14·9	143	22·4	—	—	—	—	—	—	143	14·1	275	14·5
5–9	130	23·2	—	—	—	—	—	—	130	14·7	116	18·2	—	—	—	—	—	—	116	11·4	246	12·9
10–14	125	22·3	—	—	—	—	—	—	125	14·1	114	17·8	—	—	—	—	—	—	114	11·2	239	12·6
15–19	83	14·8	—	—	—	—	1	16·7	84	9·5	108	16·9	2	0·7	—	—	2	20·0	112	11·0	196	10·3
20–24	46	8·2	5	1·7	—	—	1	16·7	52	5·9	64	10·1	12	4·0	1	1·5	1	10·0	78	7·7	130	6·8
25–29	16	2·9	22	7·4	—	—	—	—	38	4·3	30	4·7	32	10·7	2	2·9	—	—	64	6·3	102	5·4
30–34	14	2·5	38	12·8	—	—	1	16·7	53	6·0	21	3·3	46	15·4	—	—	—	—	67	6·6	120	6·3
35–39	3	0·5	35	11·8	—	—	—	—	38	4·3	8	1·3	41	13·7	2	2·9	1	10·0	52	5·1	90	4·7
40–44	4	0·7	49	16·6	3	12·5	1	16·7	57	6·4	9	1·4	47	15·7	4	5·9	2	20·0	62	6·1	119	6·3
45–49	3	0·5	34	11·5	1	4·2	—	—	38	4·3	4	0·6	20	6·7	5	7·4	—	—	29	2·9	67	3·5
50–54	1	0·2	32	10·8	—	—	2	33·3	35	4·0	5	0·8	35	11·7	11	16·2	1	10·0	52	5·1	87	4·6
55–59	1	0·2	24	8·1	2	8·3	—	—	27	3·0	3	0·5	21	7·0	11	16·2	1	10·0	36	3·5	63	3·3
60–64	1	0·2	29	9·8	5	20·8	—	—	35	4·0	2	0·3	21	7·0	9	13·2	1	10·0	33	3·2	68	3·6
65 and over	—	—	28	9·5	13	54·2	—	—	41	4·6	11	1·7	22	7·4	23	33·8	—	—	56	5·5	97	5·1
Unknown age	1	0·2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	0·1	1	0·2	—	—	—	—	1	10·0	2	0·2	2	0·1
Total	560	100·0	296	100·0	24	100·0	6	100·0	886	100·0	639	100·0	299	100·0	68	100·0	10	100·0	1016	100·0	1902	100·0

*Six persons have been excluded from this table: three children of known age but unknown sex; two servants of unknown age, sex and marital status; one adult of unknown sex and marital status.

above 20 in 1832–4 were widowers, 12·8 per cent of all females in the same age-group were recorded as widows. The implication of these figures is clear: the marked excess of women in the adult population ensured that it was considerably more difficult for a woman to marry and remarry.

TABLE 2

*The average size of household by socio-occupational status of the household head**

Socio-occupational status	*No. of households*	*No. of persons*	*Persons per household*
Farmer	77	485	6·3
Craftsman	42	243	5·7
Tradesman	33	164	5·0
Labourer	194	861	4·4
No recorded occupation	46	155	3·4
Total	392	1908	4·9

*For a list of the occupations included in each socio-occupational category see Appendix I below, p. 58.

The number of residents in each Portpatrick household in the early 1830s averaged slightly below five. But, as Table 2 shows, this average figure obscures considerable variations from one broad socio-occupational group to another. The largest households on average were to be found within the ranks of the most prosperous section of the local community, the farmer class: the smallest (except for those domestic groups headed by persons of no recorded occupation which include a high proportion of unmarried, widowed and elderly household heads) among the labouring population. The average size of households headed by craftsmen and tradesmen lay between these two extremes. In short, household size at Portpatrick seems to have varied positively with the main gradations of income and wealth: the higher the social class the greater the number of people resident in its household units.[8]

Part of the explanation for this rests with the varying number of offspring resident in households of different socio-occupational groups.

As Table 3 shows, the relatively large average size of households headed by craftsmen is almost entirely explained by the abnormally large number of resident offspring these contained. The above-average size of farmer households too owes much to the unusual number of offspring living in them. On the other hand, a good part of the explanation for the small size of households headed by people for whom the listing records no occupation clearly lies with the relatively few resident offspring they contained. The

number of offspring living in domestic groups headed by tradesmen and labourers falls close to the average for the parish as a whole, two and a half—a figure which approximates to that found in other studies.[9]

TABLE 3

*The average number of resident offspring in households by socio-occupational status of the household head**

Socio-occupational status	*No. of households*	*No. of resident offspring*	*Resident offspring per household*
Farmer	72	233	3·2
Craftsman	40	150	3·8
Tradesman	30	82	2·7
Labourer	185	455	2·5
No recorded occupation	42	57	1·4
Total	369	977	2·6

*The term 'offspring' includes all children of whatever age and union, whether married or unmarried, living in the household at the time of the survey. Only those households headed by married or widowed persons are included in the table.

Variations in the mean size of household from one social class to another were also, however, in part due to the imbalanced distribution of the servant population throughout the domestic groups of the community.

TABLE 4

Households with servants

Description of household	*No. of households*	*No. of persons*	*No. of households with servants*	*No. of servants*	*% of households with servants*	*% of persons*
Farmer	77	485	36	75	46·8	15·5
Craftsman	42	243	4	5	9·5	2·1
Tradesman	33	164	9	16	27·3	9·8
Labourer	194	861	3	3	1·5	0·3
No recorded occupation	46	155	3	4	6·5	2·6
Total	392	1908	55	103	14·0	5·4

Although only about 5 per cent of the total population of the parish were registered as servants, one in every seven households had one or more resident servants. Overwhelmingly, however, the servant population was concentrated in households headed by people of relative substance, those of the farmer and tradesman class. Over 88 per cent of all servants lived with and worked for farmers and tradesmen. At least one servant was to be found in over a quarter of all households headed by trades people and in almost a half of those headed by farmers, and the presence of resident domestics helped to swell the mean size of the household unit in both these socio-occupational categories. (The age, sex and marital composition of the resident servant population is given in Appendix II.)

In passing we might note the distribution of the lodger population between the households of the various social classes.

TABLE 5

*Households with lodgers**

Description of household	*No. of households*	*No. of households with lodgers*	*% of all households*	*No. of people*	*No. of lodgers*	*% of all persons*
Farmer	77	22	28·6	485	39	8·0
Craftsman	42	6	14·3	243	7	2·9
Tradesman	33	8	24·2	164	11	6·7
Labourer	194	36	18·6	861	60	7·0
No recorded occupation	46	13	28·3	155	28	18·1
Total	392	85	21·7	1908	145	7·6

*Lodgers are defined as all those persons who were not heads of households (wives of male heads of households are *not* treated as lodgers), their immediate offspring or servants.

Slightly above one-fifth of all households in the parish had a lodger among their residents; but only 7·6 per cent of the total population are defined as lodgers according to the broad definition we have adopted. (The age, sex and marital composition of the lodger population is given in Appendix III.) An indication of the relationship of the lodging population to household heads is given in Table 6 below.

Rather more than two-thirds (68·3 per cent) of the lodger population was related in one way or another to the head of the household in which they lived, the most common single form of blood or marital relationship being that of grandchild.

In Tables 7 and 8 below a more detailed look is taken at the composition of Portpatrick's co-resident domestic groups.

TABLE 6

*The relationship of lodgers to household heads**

	Number	% *of total*
(a) Relation by blood or marriage		
Mother or father	5	3·4
Mother- or father-in-law	5	3·4
Sister or brother	14	9·7
Sister- or brother-in-law	5	3·4
Son- or daughter-in-law	9	6·2
Grandchild	42	29·0
Nephew or niece	11	7·6
Aunt	2	1·4
Other relationship†	3	2·1
Unspecified relative	3	2·1
(b) Not related‡	46	31·7
Total	145	100·0

*For the definition of the term 'lodger' see footnote to Table 5 above, p. 47.
†Comprising a stepdaughter, a brother's stepson, and the mother-in-law (by a former marriage) of the wife of the household head.
‡Includes one foster child.

TABLE 7

The marital status of household heads

	Number	*Percentage of all households*
Households headed by:		
Married couple	283	72·2
Wife	7	1·8
Husband	4	1·0
Widow	54	13·8
Widower	21	5·4
Unmarried person		
(a) Male	9 } 23	2·3 } 5·9
(b) Female	14 }	3·6 }
Total	392	100·0

Almost three-quarters (72·2 per cent) of all households in the parish of Portpatrick during the early 1830s were headed by a man and his wife. Slightly more than one-quarter were headed by single persons, more often than not females. One in two (49·5 per cent) of all single household heads was a widow.

TABLE 8

The composition of households

	Number	*Percentage*
Households composed of married couple and:		
(1) Offspring only	182	64·3
(2) Offspring and relatives	17	6·0
(3) Offspring and other persons	31	11·0
(4) Relatives only	5	1·8
(5) Other persons only	10	3·5
(6) Relatives and other persons	2	0·7
(7) Offspring, relatives and other persons	7	2·5
(8) Married couple only	29	10·2
Total	283	100·0
Households composed of husband or wife and:		
(1) Offspring only	3	27·3
(2) Offspring and relatives	1	9·1
(3) Offspring and other persons	2	18·2
(4) Relatives only	—	—
(5) Other persons only	4	36·4
(6) Relatives and other persons	—	—
(7) Offspring, relatives and other persons	—	—
(8) Husband or wife only	1	9·1
Total	11	100·0
Households composed of widower and:		
(1) Offspring only	6	28·6
(2) Offspring and relatives	4	19·0
(3) Offspring and other persons	3	14·3
(4) Relatives only	1	4·8
(5) Other persons only	2	9·5
(6) Relatives and other persons	—	—
(7) Offspring, relatives and other persons	2	9·5
(8) Widower only	3	14·3
Total	21	100·0

TABLE 8—*continued*

	Number	*Percentage*
Households composed of widow and:		
(1) Offspring only	23	42·6
(2) Offspring and relatives	7	13·0
(3) Offspring and other persons	5	9·3
(4) Relatives only	2	3·7
(5) Other persons only	2	3·7
(6) Relatives and other persons	3	5·6
(7) Offspring, relatives and other persons	—	—
(8) Widow only	12	22·2
Total	54	100·0
Households composed of unmarried person and:		
(1) Offspring only	4	17·4
(2) Offspring and relatives	—	—
(3) Offspring and other persons	—	—
(4) Relatives only	7	30·4
(5) Other persons only	3	13·0
(6) Relatives and other persons	3	13·0
(7) Offspring, relatives and other persons	—	—
(8) Unmarried person only	6	26·1
Total	23	100·0

By far the most common type of household at Portpatrick in the period 1832–4 (55·6 per cent of all households) was that comprising household heads and their immediate offspring only, *i.e.* the nuclear family. A further 13 per cent of all domestic groups was made up of the household head(s) living alone. In only about one in every three households (31·4 per cent) was the structure rather more complex. Of particular interest is the fact that one-fifth (20·2 per cent) of all domestic groups included persons who were unrelated by blood or marriage to the head of the household. But it was extremely rare (in 5·4 per cent of all cases) for household heads to live only with people who were unrelated to them, though the frequency of this was somewhat greater where households were headed by single persons.

IV

Because it includes information on place of birth (in so far as it distinguishes between those who were born in the parish and those who were not) and length of residence

(for persons not born in the parish), the Urquhart survey permits us to say a little about the migratory habits of the Portpatrick community during the early nineteenth century. Given the frailties of human memory, however, the replies of some at least of the non-native born residents to Urquhart's query concerning duration of residence in the parish may not be absolutely precise, and the conclusions drawn from Table 10 should be approached with this caution in mind.

TABLE 9

*Place of birth**

	Native-born			*Non-native-born*			*Total population*	*% of all males native-born*	*% of all females native-born*	*% of total population native-born*
	Male	*Female*	*Both sexes*	*Male*	*Female*	*Both sexes*				
Adults (21 years and above)	109	139	248	277	342	619	867	28·2	28·9	28·6
Children (20 years and below)	320	330	651†	159	183	342	993	66·8	64·3	65·6

*This table excludes 48 persons (22 males, 22 females, 4 unknown sex) whose place of birth was not recorded.

†The total includes one 2-week old child of unknown sex.

That two out of every three of all those defined as children in 1832–4 had been born in the parish is not surprising. What is surprising is that the ratio of children born outside the parish was as high as one third. The explanation obviously lies in the fact that almost three-quarters of the adult population (71·4 per cent) had been born in another parish and, as we shall see in Table 10, a strikingly high percentage of these had arrived within the previous twenty years, bringing their children with them. The Portpatrick evidence gives further statistical support to the view that a substantial degree of geographic mobility is not unique to modern, twentieth-century society.

Marginally over one-quarter of all non-native born adult males and between a fifth and one-quarter of all females had moved into the parish less than five years before the survey was carried out. Altogether, 70·7 per cent of all non-native-born men and 66·4 per cent of women had come to Portpatrick within the twenty year period immediately preceding Urquhart's census. By contrast, only about one in every three adults born outside the parish had been resident in the parish for twenty years or more.

TABLE 10

*Non-native population: length of residence in the parish**

No. of years of residence	ADULTS (*aged 21 years and over*) *Male* No.	%	*Female* No.	%	CHILDREN (*aged 20 years and below*) *Male* No.	%	*Female* No.	%
0–4	72	26·0	76	22·2	85	53·5	89	48·6
5–9	43	15·5	54	15·8	31	19·5	33	18·0
10–14	54	19·5	59	17·3	33	20·8	52	28·4
15–19	27	9·7	38	11·1	10	6·3	8	4·4
20–24	35	12·6	47	13·7				
25–29	4	1·4	14	4·1				
30–34	17	6·1	18	5·3				
35–39	3	1·1	6	1·8				
40–44	5	1·8	9	2·6				
45–49	3	1·1	5	1·5				
50–54	7	2·5	7	2·0				
55–59	1	0·4	1	0·3				
60–64	2	0·7	3	0·9				
65–69	—	—	—	—				
70 and over	1	0·4	—	—				
Unknown	3	1·1	5	1·5	—	—	1	0·5
Total	277	100·0	342	100·0	159	100·0	183	100·0

*This table excludes 48 persons whose place of birth was not recorded.

V

Perhaps Urquhart's chief motivation for carrying out his detailed enumeration of the population of his parish was his passionate desire to improve the educational level of his flock. Accordingly, among the many questions he asked of each householder were two relating to schooling and literacy—which of their children were attending school and which school did they attend; and to what extent were each of the various members of the household capable of reading, writing and performing simple arithmetic?

Documentation of this kind is rare for such an early period and, on the face of it at least, affords an excellent opportunity for measuring the educational habits and attainments of a local community. While we know a good deal about the varying chronological and geographic provision of educational facilities, we know very little about the degree to which these facilities were utilized or the extent to which they produced effective results. Urquhart's efforts appear to throw some light on these questions. But how much?

The difficulty is that we have no adequate means of testing the reliability of the data he presents. Even assuming that Urquhart's register is an accurate reflection of the number of children enrolled in schools of one kind or another (and to assume this we must accept that all children who were not recorded as school attenders did not in fact attend), we have no way of knowing how frequently such children went to school, or whether or not Urquhart was aware of, and made allowance for, the likely difference between enrolment and actual attendance or between those children who attended frequently and those who attended infrequently. Did he simply accept the parental word on the matter of school attendance or did he make strenuous efforts to check this out? With the best and most zealous will in the world, albeit in a parish as small as Portpatrick, it is difficult to believe that he would have had the time to carry out such checks, even assuming that he was aware of the significance of the questions. Consequently, useful though they may be, the data contained in Table 11 unavoidably leave much unanswered. They can, therefore, only be considered as a crude guide to the level of school attendance amongst the children of the parish. Much the same sort of problem confronts us with the material in Tables 12 and 13. Did Urquhart accept without question the statements made by people about their own or their children's reading, writing or arithmetical abilities? Or did he attempt to test the veracity of such statements? We do not know, but in view of the daunting nature of the task we can hardly suppose that he undertook his own test of the educational attainments of every individual in the parish. In any case, even if he did, what standards were being applied? How well did a person have to perform before he was accredited with the magical symbols 'r', 'w', 'a', denoting a talent sufficient to satisfy Urquhart? Here too we do not know. Urquhart did make some effort to distinguish between different levels of ability. Standing alone the letters r, w, a were meant to indicate a reasonable proficiency in reading, writing or arithmetic. Instances when the letter was bracketed, *e.g.* (r) were intended to indicate meagre, below average ability, whilst cases where the letter was underlined, *e.g.* r, were intended to imply a markedly higher than average level of attainment. Unfortunately, although the conventions Urquhart followed help us a little, we have no way of knowing exactly what standards he had in mind when classifying an individual's reading, writing or arithmetical abilities as good, proficient or poor. The conclusions based on the data contained in Table 12 and 13 are subject to these reservations.

Almost exactly half (53·7 per cent of boys, 49·6 per cent of girls) of all children in the age-group (5–14 years) most likely to attend school did in fact receive a formal education in one or other of the various schools in the parish. For both boys and girls the proportion of school attenders was highest in the ages between 10 and 14 years. Although formal schooling was more common among males than females, the difference does not appear to have been as great as is sometimes supposed. Whether the proportions given in Table 11 are better or worse than those found elsewhere in Lowland Scotland is difficult to say given the shortage of reliable statistics for other

regions. They are somewhat below the ratio of school attendance in the Border parish of Norham in 1841 where 69·4 per cent of all children between the ages of 4 and 14 years are reputed to have attended school (Gilly 1973:32–41); but they appear to have been rather better than the average for Scotland as a whole (Smout 1972:423).[10]

TABLE II

*The number and proportion of children attending school**

	MALE			FEMALE		
Age-group	*No. of children in age-group*	*No. attending school*	*% at school*	*No. of children in age-group*	*No. attending school*	*% at school*
0–4	132	6	4·5	143	3	2·1
5–9	130	63	48·5	116	55	47·4
10–14	125	74	59·2	114	59	51·8
15–19	83	14	16·9	108	16	13·9
Total	470	157	33·4	481	132	27·4
Total 5–19	338	151	44·7	338	129	38·2
Total 5–14	255	137	53·7	230	114	49·6

*In 1832 there appears to have been a total of seven schools in the parish, four in the town (Crookshank's, Sample's, Gibson's and Miller's) and three in the surrounding rural area (Auchenric, Pinminnoch and one abbreviated as Hut., which I have not been able to identify). In addition the 1832 survey occasionally records the name of another parish in the column headed schooling, *e.g.* Inch, Stranraer and Leswalt. In these latter cases it seems reasonable to assume that the child concerned was receiving an education outside Portpatrick. Where no entry was made I have assumed that the child was not benefiting from a formal education.

The cumulative effect of this level of educational provision is summed up, as far as the deficiencies of the data allow, in Tables 12 and 13 below which summarize Urquhart's findings in respect of the levels of literacy and numeracy amongst his flock.

Professor Smout has written that 'between them, the parochial schools and the adventure schools of the Lowlands were able to maintain a rural society in which almost everyone seems to have been able to read and write'. (Smout 1972:427). Crude though they may be, the data given in Table 12 afford abundant testimony to this, particularly if as suggested in the footnote to the Table they understate the true levels of rudimentary literacy and numeracy. A mere 5·5 per cent of all males and 6·9 per

TABLE 12

*Literacy and Numeracy by age and sex**

	MALE										FEMALE									
	RWA		*RW*		*R*		*Illiterate*		*Total*		*RWA*		*RW*		*R*		*Illiterate*		*Total*	
Age-group	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%	*No.*	%
5–9	3	2·4	9	7·1	96	75·6	19	15·0	127	100·0	3	2·6	6	5·3	74	64·9	31	27·2	114	100·0
10–14	55	45·5	25	20·7	39	32·2	2	1·7	121	100·0	22	19·5	25	22·3	63	56·3	2	1·8	112	100·0
15–19	51	62·2	21	25·6	8	9·8	2	2·4	82	100·0	43	39·4	31	28·4	32	29·4	3	2·8	109	100·0
20–30	86	76·8	17	15·2	7	6·3	2	1·8	112	100·0	64	38·1	60	35·7	41	24·4	3	1·8	168	100·0
31–40	64	64·0	20	20·0	10	10·0	6	6·0	100	100·0	39	32·5	35	29·2	34	28·3	12	10·0	120	100·0
41–50	50	68·5	7	9·6	11	15·1	5	6·8	73	100·0	28	34·1	20	24·4	30	36·6	4	4·9	82	100·0
51–60	37	62·7	9	15·3	9	15·3	4	6·8	59	100·0	11	14·9	18	24·3	44	59·4	1	1·4	74	100·0
60 and over	36	66·7	13	24·1	5	9·3	—	—	54	100·0	9	13·6	14	21·2	40	60·6	3	4·5	66	100·0
No age given	1	100·0	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	100·0	1	25·0	2	50·0	1	25·0	—	—	4	100·0
Total	383	52·5	121	16·6	185	25·4	40	5·5	729	100·0	220	25·9	211	24·9	359	42·3	59	6·9	849	100·0

*This table refers only to members of those households for which entries concerning literacy and numeracy appear to have been made consistently. I have assumed that all households in which at least one person has been registered as literate or numerate have been consistently recorded. Thus any occupant of such households not noted as being able to read, write or perform simple arithmetic has been assumed illiterate or innumerate. In only a tiny number of households, containing twenty-five males and twenty-four females, were no entries pertaining to literacy or numeracy made. These have been excluded from the analysis on the grounds that, for one reason or another, Urquhart *may* not have tested the educational abilities of their members. It is possible that some of those persons not recorded as being able to read, write or do arithmetic could in fact do so and had simply been overlooked by Urquhart. If this is the case then the level of literacy and numeracy at Portpatrick in the early 1830s may be somewhat understated by these figures.

cent of all females over 5 years of age can be regarded as illiterate, lacking even the basic ability to read. As high a proportion as 69·1 per cent of all males and 50·8 per cent of all females (a noticeably lower ratio than that among males) were able both to read and write. Over half of the male population (52·5 per cent), though only a quarter of the female (25·9 per cent), had at least the rudiments of simple arithmetic as well.

TABLE 13

*Degrees of Literacy and Numeracy by sex**

Degree of attainment	*Male*		*Female*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
r reads well	3	0·4	8	1·0
r reads proficiently	615	89·3	728	92·2
(r) reads poorly	71	10·3	54	6·8
Total	689	100·0	790	100·0
w writes well	3	0·6	—	—
w writes proficiently	441	87·5	357	82·8
(w) writes poorly	60	11·9	74	17·2
Total	504	100·0	431	100·0
a calculates well	—	—	—	—
a calculates proficiently	366	95·6	214	97·3
(a) calculates poorly	17	4·4	6	2·7
Total	383	100·0	220	100·0

*This table refers only to persons aged 5 years and above.

Of course the question arises of the actual standard of literacy and numeracy reached. As noted above Urquhart himself made some attempt to assess the precise levels of literacy and numeracy that were attained. Generally he appears to have done so consistently throughout the survey. It may be significant, however, that the relatively few people who according to him were able to read, write or calculate rather better than average all occur in the first few pages of the listing. Perhaps he soon tired of recording the achievements of the talented, maybe because he found it too difficult to distinguish between those who were above average and those who were merely averagely proficient. It is probable, therefore, that Table 13 understates the number of especially good scholars in the parish.

Of all males and females who could read, write or calculate, the overwhelming majority was able to do so proficiently, in Urquhart's opinion anyway. A surprisingly low proportion of the literate or numerate population read, wrote or calculated poorly. For what it is worth, however, the number of people able to read, write or calculate well appears to have been negligible.

IV

The study of the social structure of Portpatrick in the nineteenth century is still at its preliminary stage. At the moment, so far as one can tell, its main characteristics seem to be very similar to those found in other small parishes analysed: by comparison with modern societies the age composition of the community was heavily weighted in favour of the youngest age-groups; there was a slight excess of females over males in the population, particularly at adult ages; the ratio of unmarried and widowed persons was greater among women than men; household size was small, and households were relatively infrequently shared by more than one family; there was a positive correlation between variations in household size and the social status of the household head (caused by variations in the number of offspring and servants between households of different socio-occupational classes); the extent of geographic mobility among the residents of the parish was surprisingly high. These broad similarites between the social structure of Portpatrick and that of other communities, as well as all the possible differences of detail between them, will be further investigated and, it is hoped, accounted for in future work. It is hoped, too, that work in progress on the nineteenth-century census enumerators' books of the parish will allow us to see how, if at all, the social structure of Portpatrick altered in the face of a steady decline in population from the 1830s onwards. Are we justified in assuming that changes in the size of a community have noticeable effects on the basic features of its social organisations? If so, what are these effects? Or do the fundamental characteristics of social structure remain unaltered during periods of marked demographic change? Finally, subsequent research will need to look closely at the complex issue of what effects different social structures have on the movements of population. How do the patterns of marriage, fertility, mortality and migration—the mechanics of demographic change—respond to the pressure of variations in social organisation? What changes in a community's attitudes and life styles come about as a result of alterations in its social structure? The raw data presented in this paper provide some of the information upon which to proceed. Subsequent research will provide more. When the analysis of Portpatrick has been completed we should have at least the beginnings of an answer to these questions.

Appendix I

The occupational status of household heads

(a) *Farmer*	*Number*
Farmer	65
Farmer and deals in swine	1
Farmer and tanner	1
Farmer and dealer	1
Proprietor at Dunsky	1
Gamekeeper at Dunsky	1
Factor at Dunsky	1
Harbourmaster	1
Packet agent	1
Captain of a sloop	1
Captain of a packet	1
Captain of a vessel	1
Captain of a brig	1
Total	77

(b) *Tradesman*	
Innkeeper	5
Butcher	3
Shopkeeper	3
Schoolteacher	3
Baker	2
Carter	1
Carrier	1
Clerk to harbour	1
Dealer	1
Grocer and spirit dealer	1
Grocer	1
Innkeeper and farmer	1
Meat dealer	1
Miller	1
Packman	1
Postmaster	1
Barber and wright	1
Travelling bookseller	1
Travels with goods	1
Spirit merchant	1
Soft goods seller	1
Teaseller	1
Total	33

(c) *Craftsman*	*Number*
Shoemaker	8
Mason	7
Smith	4
Carpenter	3
Engineman	3
Wright	3
Dressmaker	2
Hammerman	2
Tailor	2
Cobbler	1
Cooper	1
Diver	1
Fisherman and sawyer	1
Nailor	1
Stonecutter	1
Spaviour*	1
Ropemaker	1
Total	42

(d) *Labourer*	
Labourer	70
Spins	11
Labourer at harbour	9
Farm servant	8
Pauper	8
Farms a bit of ground	6
Fisherman	5
Farmer and labourer	4
Seaman in packet	4
Weaver	4
Gardener	3
Pensioner	3
Boatman to packet	3
Boatman and fisherman	3
Keeps a charge house	3
Servant	3
Works in bellboat	2
Steward of bellboat	2
Sews muslin	2
Fireman of packet	2

(d) *Labourer (contd.)*	*Number*
Boatswain of packet	2
Tollkeeper and occasional labourer	1
Labourer and egg gatherer	1
Labourer and sells crockery ware	1
Carter and labourer	1
Weaver and labourer	1
Pensioner and occasional labourer	1
Pension. Keeps lodging house	1
Watchman	1
Packet storekeeper	1
Afflicted with cancer	1
Blind. Has a bit of land	1
Weaver and farmer	1
Weaver and labourer	1
Forester	1
Groom	1
Undergroom	1
Ploughman	1
Midwife	1
Knits and sews	1
Knits and spins	1
Steward of packet	1
Washer and dresser	1
Flax dresser	1
Spins and keeps lodgers	1
Pauper. Washes and dresses clothes	1
Pauper. Washes occasionally	1
Keeps lodgers	1
Spins and a pauper	1
Mate of packet	1
Knits	1
Cockswain to packet	1
Washes and spins	1
Keeps a cow	1
Keeps a few cattle	1
Lame with rheumatism	1
Pauper. Spins	1
Spins and sells needlework	1
Total	194

*The occupation of 'spaviour' (spaver or spava) was a rare one, though several other cases are known for early nineteenth-century Scotland. It refers to a person skilled in the operation of removing the ovaries from animals to make them infertile.

Appendix II

*The marital status, age and sex structure of the servant population**

	MALE						FEMALE					
	Single		*Married*		*Widowed*		*Single*		*Married*		*Widowed*	
Age in years	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
10–14	10	25·6	—	—	—	—	4	7·1	—	—	—	—
15–19	14	35·9	—	—	—	—	21	37·5	—	—	—	—
20–24	10	25·6	1	25·0	—	—	13	23·2	—	—	—	—
25–29	2	5·1	—	—	—	—	11	19·6	—	—	—	—
30–34	2	5·1	—	—	—	—	3	5·4	—	—	—	—
35–39	1	2·6	—	—	—	—	1	1·8	—	—	—	—
40–44	—	—	2	50·0	—	—	2	3·6	1	50·0	—	—
45–64	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 and over	—	—	1	25·0	—	—	1	1·8	1	50·0	—	—
Total	39	100·0	4	100·0	—	—	56	100·0	2	100·0	—	—

*Two servants of unknown age, sex and marital status are excluded from this Table.

Appendix III

*The marital status, age and sex structure of the lodger population**

	MALE						FEMALE					
	Single		*Married*		*Widowed*		*Single*		*Married*		*Widowed*	
Age in years	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
0–4	12	27·3	—	—	—	—	20	29·9	—	—	—	—
5–9	10	22·7	—	—	—	—	8	11·9	—	—	—	—
10–14	8	18·2	—	—	—	—	8	11·9	—	—	—	—
15–19	5	11·4	—	—	—	—	5	7·5	—	—	—	—
20–24	3	6·8	—	—	—	—	1	1·5	—	—	1	7·7
25–29	2	4·5	4	66·7	—	—	3	4·5	4	57·1	—	—
30–34	1	2·3	2	33·3	—	—	4	6·0	2	28·6	—	—
35–39	1	2·3	—	—	—	—	4	6·0	—	—	2	15·4
40–44	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	3·0	—	—	—	—
45–49	1	2·3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
50–54	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	6·0	—	—	2	15·4
55–59	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1·5	—	—	1	7·7
60–64	1	2·3	—	—	1	33·3	2	3·0	—	—	1	7·7
65 and over	—	—	—	—	2	66·7	5	7·5	1	14·3	6	46·2
Total	44	100·0	6	100·0	3	100·0	67	100·0	7	100·0	13	100·0

*For the definition of the term 'lodger' see footnote to Table 5 above, p. 47. This Appendix excludes one two-week old child of unknown sex, one female of unknown age and marital status, and three adult females of unknown marital status.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Professor R. H. Campbell of the University of Stirling for first drawing my attention to the existence of Andrew Urquhart's 'Social Survey and Register of all Households in the Village and Parish of Portpatrick, 1832', upon which this paper is largely based, and also for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I am also indebted to Mr A. M. Urquhart for his permission to reproduce an extract from the 1832 survey.

NOTES

1 Anderson 1971; Armstrong 1968; Laslett 1965, 1969, 1970; Laslett and Harrison 1963; Lawton 1955; Tranter 1967, 1973; Smith 1970; Nixon 1970; Law 1969; Baker 1973.

2 See, for instance, Michael Anderson's S.S.R.C.-sponsored project based on a national sample from the 1851 census enumerators' books of Great Britain.

3 The present paper is part of a larger study being undertaken by the author on the economic, social and demographic structure of Portpatrick in the nineteenth century.

4 For further details on the economy of the parish see Urquhart 1845:129–61; Muir 1965:484–90.

5 In addition, a fifth visitation appears to have been begun in Oct. 1850, but this proved to be abortive and was very quickly given up.

6 In the context of the early nineteenth-century Portpatrick community, we might have wished that Urquhart had extended the range of his enquiries slightly. It is a pity for instance, in view of the notoriously high rates of illegitimacy then prevalent in Wigtownshire, that the survey does not permit a thorough analysis of the extent of bastardy in the parish. Again, in view of the geographic situation of Portpatrick, it would be interesting to have some information on the number of Irishmen and Roman Catholics in the community. Unfortunately, the Urquhart survey does not record the actual birth place of each resident. It distinguishes only between people born in the parish and those born outside. The number of people born in Ireland cannot, therefore, be estimated. Unlike the censuses of the 1840s, the Urquhart listing of 1832 does not record the religious denomination of each individual. Accordingly, it is not possible to estimate the size of the Roman Catholic community.

7 In the absence of any evidence to the contrary I have assumed that the Urquhart visitation of 1832–4 was devised and carried out independently of the later work he did for his entry in the New Statistical Account. Urquhart himself made no reference to any direct connection between the two. And the fact that he continued to conduct his own personal censuses of the parish through the 1840s and early 1850s may likewise suggest that his motives went beyond the preparation of material for the N.S.A. Neither reason is entirely convincing. It is hoped that future research may throw more light on this point.

8 Compare this with a similar finding for the Bedfordshire parish of Cardington in 1851 (Tranter 1973:93–4).

9 At Cardington, Bedfordshire, in 1851 the average number of resident offspring per household was 2·86 (Tranter 1973:94). At Clayworth, Nottinghamshire, in 1676 and 1688 the ratios were 2·45 and 2·61 respectively (Laslett and Harrison 1963:171).

10 According to G. Lewis (*Scotland, a half-educated nation*, 1834, quoted in Smout 1972), whereas one person in every five or six was aged between 6 and 14 years, only one person in every twelve was actually enrolled in a day school. At Portpatrick the ratio of school enrolment was one to nine.

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The Grey Selkie

ALAN BRUFORD

'The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry' [Child 113], being a supernatural ballad, 'should have followed No. 40 had I known of it earlier' (Child 1886:494). Not only the number but the title was unfortunate: other versions speak of the grey, not the great selkie, and 'silkie' with an *i* is a relatively rare form of the word for a seal which is normally 'selkie' or 'selch(ie)' throughout Scotland, including the Northern Isles.[1] But the one text known to Child (hereinafter, 'A') is exceptional in other ways. Though it may well represent the oldest extant form as well as being the first collected version of the ballad, it is also the shortest complete version and the only one to come from outside Orkney. It was collected by Lieut. (later Capt.) F. W. L. Thomas (1852), 'from the dictation of a venerable lady-udaller, who lived at Snarra Voe, a secluded district in [Unst,] Shetland', and 'sung to a tune sufficiently melancholy to express the surprise and sorrow of the deluded mother of the Phocine babe'.[2]

A

1 An eart'ly nourris sits and sings,
And aye she sings "Ba lily wean;
"Little ken I my bairnis father,
Far less the land that he staps in."

2 Then ane arose at her bed fit,
An' a grumly guest I'm sure was he;
"Here am I thy bairnis father,
Although that I be not comelie."

3 "I am a man upo' the lan',
An' I am a Silkie in the sea;
And when I'm far and far frae lan',
My dwelling is in Sule Skerrie."

4 "It was na weel," quo' the maiden fair,
"It was na weel, indeed," quo' she;
"That the Great Silkie of Sule Skerrie,
S'uld hae come and aught a bairn to me."

5 Now he has ta'en a purse of goud,
And he has pat it upo' her knee;
Sayin' "Gie to me, my little young son,
An' tak thee up thy nourris fee."

6 "An' it sall come to pass on a simmer's day,
Quhen the sin shines het on evera stane;
That I will take my little young son,
An' teach him for to swim the faem."

7 "An' thu sall marry a proud gunner,
An' a proud gunner I'm sure he'll be;
An' the very first schot that ere he schoots,
He'll schoot baith my young son and me."

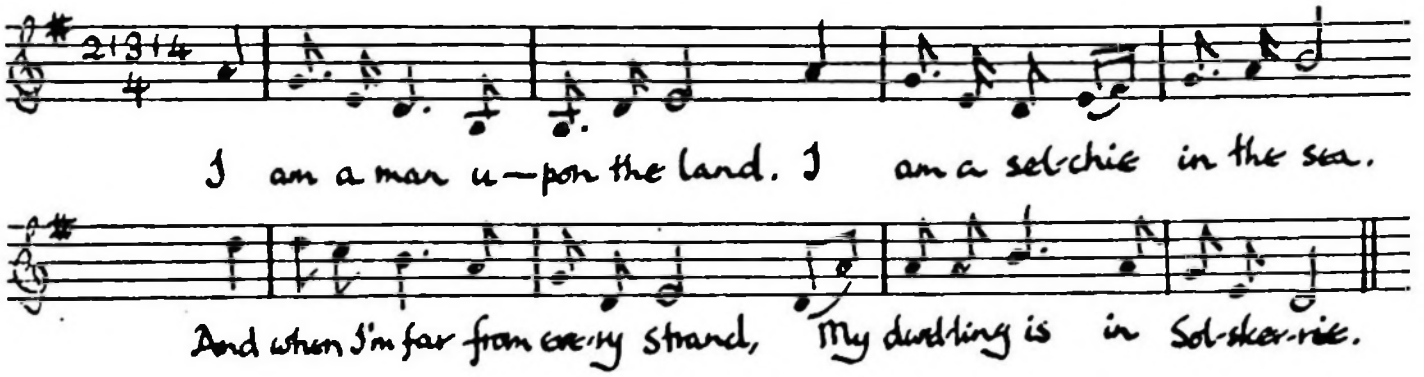
Child himself notes another fragment, also from Shetland and apparently independent, sent in to Karl Blind (1881:404) by his correspondent George Sinclair, jr., a Shetlander living in New Zealand: we may call this 'C', since it is not the next version collected.

C

"I am a man upo' da land;
I am a selkie i' da sea.
An' whin I'm far fa every strand
My dwelling is in Shöol Skerry."

Bronson's monumental supplement to Child (Bronson 1962:564–5) quotes only one more text and a tune, which do not in fact belong together. The tune was collected by the late Professor Otto Andersson of Åbo, Finland, on a trip to Orkney in 1938, from Mr (John?) Sinclair, Flotta, once more to the words corresponding to A3: F below seems to be his text, as given by Andersson (1954:39).

F



"I am a man upon the land.
I am a Selchie in the sea.
And when I'm far from every strand,
My dwelling is in Solskerrie."

A full set of words was added by Andersson on each occasion when he published the ballad. Bronson apparently uses those from the later, English article (Andersson 1954: 39–41), which are based on a transcript from *The Orcadian* of 11 January 1934, though his notes suggest that he is using those from the earlier Swedish article (Andersson 1947). The latter were supplied by Miss Anne G. Gilchrist of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, and the only major difference seems to be that A5 is introduced in place of the ninth verse. I am grateful to my friend Mr Ernest Marwick for pointing out what must be the ultimate source of both these texts in a nineteenth-century travelogue (Fergusson 1883:140–1; 1884:241–4). D below follows the first edition, but the only substantial difference in the later edition is the use of the more conventional spelling for Sule Skerry.

Fergusson seems to have known the South Isles of Orkney best, judging by his travels and the vocabulary of his own dialect lullaby, 'Ba, ba, lammie noo' (Fergusson 1883: 159–60). It was 'a South Isles correspondent' who later sent in the ballad to *The Orcadian*, and it seems likely that it is a South Isles text. Certainly, as the parallel texts below show, it is very like G, a version which I recorded from James Henderson, Burray, a native of Gairth, South Ronaldsay.[3] Mr Henderson learned the ballad from the singing of his mother (born Isabella Dass) before 1918. He tells me that his mother always broke off singing toward the end, and briefly narrated the passage which D also gives in prose before singing the last verses: thus, though he has forgotten a few lines or even verses towards the end, this gap is not the result of his lapse of memory, and may well have been a regular feature of the ballad.

G

1 There lived a maid in the Norway lands:
"Hush ba loo lilly," she did sing;
"I dinna ken where my babe's father is
Or what lands he travels in."

2 Now it happened one night
As this fair maid lay fast asleep
That in there came a grey selkie
And laid himself down at her bed feet,

D

1 In Norway lands there lived a maid.
"Hush, ba, loo lillie," this maid began,
"I know not where my baby's father is,
Whether by land or sea does he travel in."

2 It happened on a certain day,
When this fair lady fell fast asleep,
That in cam' a good grey selchie,
And set him doon at her bed feet,

3 Crying, "Awake, awake, my (?)pretty
maid,
For thy babe's father's sitting at thy
bed feet.

4 "For I'm a man upon the land,
A selkie in the sea,
And I do come from the Wast'ard o
Hoy
Which wise men do call Sule Skerrie.

5 "My name it is good Hyne Malair:
I earn my livin by the sea,
An when I'm far from ev'ry shore
It's then I am in Sule Skerrie."

6 "Oh what a fate, what a weary fate,
What a weary fate's been laid for
me,
That a selkie should come from the
Wast'ard o Hoy
To the Norway lands to have a
babe with me."

7 "Oh I will wed thee with a ring,
With a ring, my dear, I'll wed with
thee."
"Thou may wed thu's weds[4] with
whom thou wilt,
But I'm sure thou'll ne'er wed
none wi me."

8 "Then thou shalt nurse thy little wee
son
For seven long years upon thy
knee:
And at the end of seven years
I'll come an pay thy nurse's fee."

9 It's oh, she's nursed her little wee son
For seven years upon her knee:
And he's come back a gay gentleman
With a coffer[5] of gold and white
monie.

3 Saying, "Awak', awak', my pretty maid,
For oh! how sound as thou dost
sleep!
An' I'll tell thee where thy baby's
father is;
He's sittin' close at thy bed feet."

4 "I pray, come tell to me thy name,
Oh! tell me where does thy dwelling
be?"
"My name it is good Hein Mailer,
An' I earn my livin' oot o' the sea.

5 "I am a man upon the land;
I am a selkie in the sea;
An' whin I'm far frae every strand,
My dwellin' is in Shool Skerrie."

6 "Alas! alas! this woeful fate!
This weary fate that's been laid for
me!
That a man should come frae the Wast
o' Hoy,
To the Norway lands to have a bairn
wi' me."

7 "My dear, I'll wed thee with a ring.
With a ring, my dear, I'll wed wi'
thee."
"Thoo may go wed thee weddens wi'
whom thoo wilt;
For I'm sure thoo'll never wed none
wi' me."

8 "Thoo will nurse my little wee son

For seven long years upo' thy knee,
An' at the end o' seven long years
I'll come back an' pay the norish
(nursing) fee."

9 She's nursed her little wee son
For seven long years upo' her knee,
An' at the end o' seven long years
He cam' back wi' gold and white
monie.

10 She says, "I'll wed thee with a ring,
With a ring, my dear, I'll wed with thee."
"Thou may wed thee's weds[4] with whom thou wilt,
I'm sure thou'll ne'er wed none wi me.

11 "But you will get a gunner good,
And aye a good gunner he'll be,
And he'll gaeng out on a Mey morning
And he'll shoot the son and the Grey Selkie."

(So he took the son away, and . . .)

12 " . . . I'll put a gold chain about his neck,[6]
That if ever he comes to the Norway lands,
It's oh, well knowèd he may be."

13 And oh, she got a gunner good,
And aye a good gunner was he,
And he gaed out one May morning
An he shot the son and the Grey Selkie.

(Then he returned and showed her this wonderful thing that he'd found, the gold chain on the selkie's neck . . .[6])

14 " . . . you've done. . . .
For you have shot good Hyne Malair
And oh, he was right kind to me."

15 She gied a sigh, sobbed aince or twice,
And then her tender hert did brak in three.

10 She says, "My dear, I'll wed thee wi' a ring,
Wi' a ring, my dear, I'll wed wi' thee."
"Thoo may go wed thee weddens wi' whom thoo will;
For I'm sure thoo'll never wed none wi' me.

12 "An' thoo will get a gunner good,
An' a gey good gunner it will be,
An' he'll gae oot on a May mornin'
An' shoot the son an' the grey selchie.

11 "But I'll put a gold chain around his neck,
An' a gey good gold chain it'll be,
That if ever he comes to the Norway lands,
Thoo may hae a gey good guess on hi'."

13 Oh! she has got a gunner good,
An' a gey good gunner it was he,
An' he gaed oot on a May mornin',
An' he shot the son and the grey selchie.

When the gunner returned from his expedition and shewed the Norway woman the gold chain, which he had found round the neck of the young seal, the poor woman, realising that her son had perished, gives expression to her sorrow in the last stanza:

14 "Alas! alas! this woeful fate!
This weary fate that's been laid for me!"
An' ance or twice she sobbed and sighed,
An' her tender heart did brak in three.

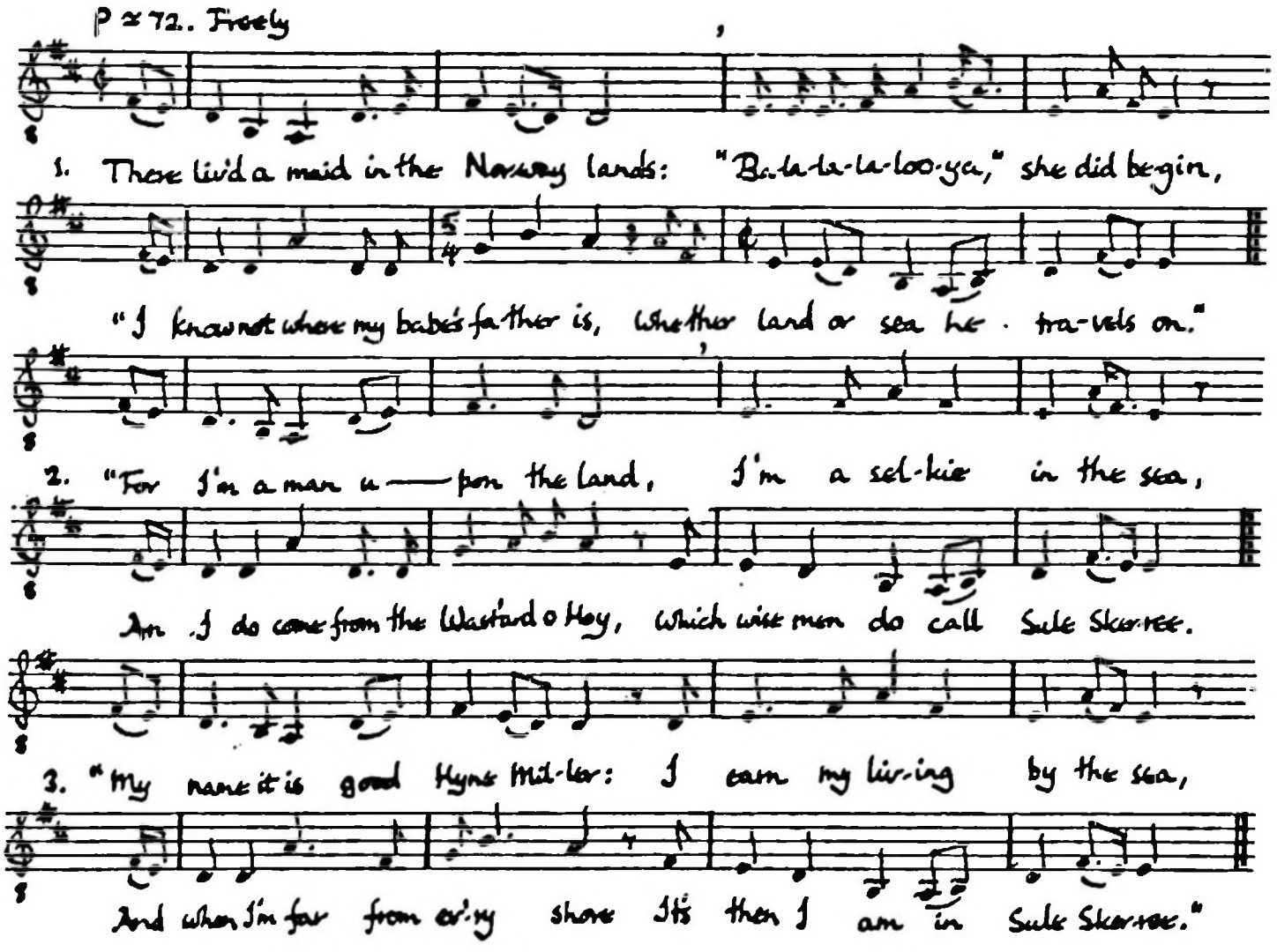
The ballad, 'known only by some of the older folks' (presumably women, as Fergusson speaks of 'fair Orcadians') in 1883, has survived a little longer than this remark might imply. In fact Mr Henderson remembers it better than many of the other Child ballads his mother sang, partly no doubt because of its Orkney associations, but also perhaps because of its very tightly-knit structure, where each verse leads on to the next logically, and none is superfluous. The language is admittedly more influenced than A by the conventional English of the broadsheet ballads, and forms such as 'thou wilt' appear alongside the Scots 'thou will' in D and have ousted it in G. But there is none of the unnecessary verbiage, in broadsheet manner, which so often mars late northern versions of the older ballads. Much of the ballad is in dialogue, which adds to the dramatic effect. Occasionally a line is repeated without adding anything, but every verse serves a purpose in carrying on the story, which may indeed be analysed in fashionable binary terms:

1 Heroine introduced:
[she laments that she does not know where her baby's father is.
2, 3 Her baby's father appears in seal form, announces himself,
4, 5 and reveals his name, home and nature.
6 Heroine reacts, lamenting her fate.]
[7 He offers to marry her;
she refuses.
8 He engages her to nurse his son for seven years.]
[9 After seven years he returns (in human form) to pay her (and claim his son.)
10 She offers to marry him;
he refuses.]
[G11, D12 He foretells the shooting of himself and his son.]
[G12, D11 He (she?[6]) provides a recognition token (gold chain.)
13 The selkie and his son are shot.
G14 Heroine recognises by the token that they are dead,
D14, G15 laments and dies.]

The heroine's refusal to marry her lover and his refusal to marry her when she later changes her mind is a common theme of tradition, well known in broadsheet ballads, but there is no reason to doubt that it is an integral part of this ballad. Though A reduces the plot very effectively to a single scene, preserving the unities of time and place—the nurse's fee is paid down on the spot, and the final tragedy is told only in the prophecy—this dramatic device is probably simply caused by many verses having been forgotten on the journey from Orkney to Shetland: it is just by luck that the ballad has been pared to the bone without the skeleton falling apart entirely. We may recognise that the language is older than in the South Isles redaction, but this perhaps means that we should envisage an early form with the structure of the latter but the language more like A.

Mr Henderson has unfortunately never been able to 'hold a tune', and though he is very willing to help it has not yet been possible to try to reconstruct his mother's tune by trial and error. It certainly began on a rising major triad, and was quite different from the tune below, though similar in rhythm. This tune is from another South Ronaldsay man, John George Halcro, whose family came from Windwick in the South Parish. He learned it from his father James Halcro,[7] who was a first cousin to Mrs Isabella Henderson (brother's son and sister's daughter). Despite the relationship—perhaps because they lived a few miles apart—their versions of the ballad seem to have differed considerably in tune and perhaps in text also. Unfortunately Mr Halcro has so far been unable to lay hands on a text which he wrote down in his father's lifetime, but he has sung me three verses of a text which we will call H: the last verse was prompted by reading Mr Henderson's text.[8]

H



1 There liv'd a maid in the Norway lands:
"Ba-la-la-la-loo-ya," she did begin,
"I know not where my babe's father is,
Whether land or sea he travels on."

2 (=E4) "For I'm a man upon the land,
I'm a selkie in the sea,
An I do come from the West'ard o Hoy
Which wise men do call Sule Skerrie.

3 (=E5) "My name it is good Hyne Miller:
I earn my living by the sea,
And when I'm far from ev'ry shore
It's then I am in Sule Skerrie."

There remain to be considered two further versions of the ballad, both overlooked by Bronson, which can be taken as forming a distinct 'North Isles redaction', though as we shall see some of the redaction may be conscious and the distinction is not so great as it appears. Both of them were collected in the mid-nineteenth century, B in 1860, E printed in 1894 but gathered together, the collector claimed, over the previous forty years. B was taken down by Charles R. Thomson, Howar, then Bailiff or factor of North Ronaldsay, for John Keillor, the minister of the island. Keillor was one of several people enlisted by Lady Caroline Charteris to help her nephew John Francis Campbell of Islay in collecting traditional material, but his Orcadian traditions were of little use for the *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, and lay unnoticed among Campbell's MSS in the National Library of Scotland (MS. 50.1.13 f.316) until they were brought to the attention of David Thomson, who printed the ballad in *The People of the Sea* (Thomson 1954:205–7). E is woven into the extraordinary long poem, 'The Play o' de Lathie Odivere', which Walter Traill Dennison published in *The Scottish Antiquary* (Dennison 1894:53–8), and has been reprinted several times, in *County Folklore* (Black 1903: 235–48), *An Anthology of Orkney Verse* (Marwick 1949:54–64), adapted into Scots (Montgomerie 1951) and most recently woven into George Mackay Brown's *An Orkney Tapestry* (Brown 1969).

It is necessary to dwell a little here on the nature of this 'play' which seems to be accepted as genuine, indeed as sixteenth-century, by Orkney's most considerable living writer, and also by a prominent Scottish ballad scholar (Montgomerie 1951). Dennison's own claim is given in his introduction:

> In the olden times, Orcadians at their convivial meetings amused themselves by rude dramatical representations, in which lower animals often appeared on the scene. In these performances the menye-singers acted the principal part. They were professionals hired to sing, recite or act for the entertainment of the company.
>
> This ballad was at one time represented as a drama by the menye-singers.

No other source supports this, and Dennison is our only authority for the term 'menye-singers', which looks suspiciously like an attempt to adapt the mediæval German *Minnesänger* to Scots by substituting an English (not a Norse) first element.[9] Dennison

refers to A as representing 'a few stanzas of the ballad', so the kinship is admitted. In fact the traditional core of the 'play' seems to be the third 'Fit'[10] and the substance of some verses in the fourth. It is difficult to see the rest as anything but Dennison's own composition, occasionally reinforced by lines which can be recognised as borrowings from other ballads.

At first Dennison's own account seems to claim only that he was reconstructing from a few fragments, but later it appears that every verse has a core of tradition:

> It is now well-nigh fifty years since I first heard parts of this ballad, and for forty years I have been gathering up fragmentary scraps of it from many old people in different parts of Orkney. But of all my informants, I owe most to my late accomplished friend Mrs. Hiddleston, a lady who, while fully appreciating the beauties of modern literature, never forgot the old tales and scraps of verse heard in the days of her childhood. We were both much puzzled by the name 'Milliegare', occurring in a line of her oral version. Both of us at length came to the conclusion that it was a corruption of Micklegarth, that being the old Norse name of Constantinople. It is right to say, that while the utmost care has been taken to preserve the original, and to select the best from the versions recited to me, I have often had to fill in a word, sometimes a line, in order to make the sense clear or to complete the stanza.

This is an understatement for the addition of the better part of eighty extra stanzas, but earlier nineteenth-century collectors had set no very good example.

Ernest Marwick, who has spoken to people who knew Dennison, tells me that by all he has heard, Dennison was not the sort of man to deceive his readers in such an elaborate way. He suggests that the Odivere ballad, if not purely traditional, may be the composition of some poetic laird of the seventeenth or eighteenth century which passed into oral tradition. But such a writer would hardly have used dialect, and an English or Scots original would be unlikely to have accumulated so much dialect *vocabulary* as the 'play' shows in a century or two of oral transmission. Moreover we have at least one other instance of a deliberately misleading introduction by Dennison. Of 'The Finfolk's Foy Sang' he writes:

> Among my juvenile papers I found a copy of the Finfolk's foy song; but as, when a boy, I added some lines to the oral original, and as I now, at a distance of nearly half a century, cannot distinguish between my tinkering and the original lines, it would be unfair to present the lines as a genuine product of tradition. . . . It is the only instance of continuous rhymes I have met with among our rude native verses, and is, so far as I know, a form of verse only used by some of the troubadours. (Dennison 1893:23).

A later note (Dennison 1893:81–2) elaborates the fiction: 'I believe this same Foy Sang is part of an oral drama called "The Finfolk's Play", once acted by the menye-singers.' Apart from the lack of a division into verses and the 'continuous rhymes'—all 35 lines rhyme on long *-a*—the only subject-matter is a quite untraditional example of the pastoral fallacy, put into the mouth of the seal-men with their underwater kingdom as

its Arcadia. In genuine tradition these beings were considered, like the fairies, to have fallen with Lucifer (*Tocher* 8:256–7) and were regarded as being at the least dangerous if not actually evil: no traditional singer would dream of putting himself in their place to compose a song beginning 'O' blithe is de land dat's fae man far awa!' and there is no question that the whole poem is Dennison's own. The note with its mention of menye-singers and plays shows the beginning of the process that produced 'Odivere', and the poem foreshadows the favourable view of the seal-people which is also taken in the 'play', where the heroine, though condemned to be burned for adultery with the selkie, is finally rescued by him, and the son is the only one to die—an ending unlike any version of the genuine ballad.

Supporters of 'Odivere' will no doubt consider the strong dialect in many lines as one of its genuine features. But other versions of our ballad are written in pure mainland Scots with hardly a dialect word, in the case of A and B, strongly influenced by broad-sheet English in D and G. In fact the lines of 'Odivere' which contain dialect words rather than dialect spellings are hardly ever those which derive from our original ballad or can be recognised as borrowings from other Scots ballads, but are largely designed to display Dennison's dialect vocabulary.[11]

Allowing at least that the sources of 'Odivere' are dubious, or as Dennison spells it in dialect 'jubish', we may treat its core, the Third Fit, as largely genuine. In the parallel texts below this (E) is given beside the North Ronaldsay text, B, with which many verses correspond. Where B has no parallel I have added comments to suggest whether Dennison's lines are traditional, new composition or a rewriting of the traditional original. It may well be that Dennison knew versions of our ballad from 'different parts of Orkney': the first line of the First Fit, 'In Norawa a lathie bed' [bade], is virtually the first line of D put into dialect, and it is possible that the offer of marriage in verse 22 below—quite inappropriate in Dennison's form of the tale, where the heroine is already married[12]—has crept in from a version of the South Isles redaction, which might indeed be the printed text D. Basically, however, it may fairly be assumed that he was using a version or versions from his native isle of Sanday, which could be expected to resemble one from the neighbouring isle of North Ronaldsay.

E	B
1 I heard a lathie ba'an her bairn; An' aye shü rockit, an' aye shü sang, An' teuk sae hard apo' de verse, Till de hert within her bothie rang.	1 I heard a Mither ba'ing her Bairn An ay she rockit an she sang She took sae hard upo' the verse Till the heart within her body rang
2 "Ba loo, ba loo, me bonnie bairn, Ba lo lillie, ba loo lay, Sleep do, me peerie bonnie budo! Doo little kens dee mither's wae.	2 O' row cradle an go cradle An ay sleep thou my Bairn within O' little ken I my Bairns Faither Or yet the land that he liggs in

3 "Aloor! I dinno ken dee faither,
Aloor, aloor! me waefu' sin!
I dinno ken me bairn's faither,
Nor yet de land dat he lives in.

[E 2 c,d and 3 a,b, are doubtful—the lady protests too much, no doubt because here she is married, and Dennison uses two of his favourite dialect words.[13]]

4 "Aloor! aloor! ca'd sall I be
A wicked woman bae a' men,
Dat I, a married wife, soud hae
A bairn tae him I dünno ken."

[Certainly spurious—emphasising the adultery element.]

5 Dan ap an' spak a grimly gest,
Dat stüd sae lech at her bed feet,
"O here am I, dee bairn's faither,
Alto I'm no' dee husband sweet."

3 O up than spake a Grimly Ghost
An aye sae laigh at her Beds feet
O here am I, thy bairns faither
Although I'm nae thy luve sae sweet

6 "Me bairn's faither I ken do are,
Na luve sae sweet I'll ever hae;
An' yet I hae a gude, gude man,
Dats far awa fae me dis day."

[Spurious—indeed contradicting the genuine lines of E3: note that E like B probably had "luve sae sweet" in the preceding verse, as it is echoed here.]

7 "I care no for dee wadded carl,
I wus his face I'll never see,
Bit whin sax munt is come an' gaen,
I'll come an' pay de noris fee.

5 An foster weel my young young Son
An' for a Twalmont an a day
An' when the twalmont's fairly done
I'll come an pay the nourice's fee.

8 "Hids no' be said doo tint bae me,
A bodle wirt o' warly gare,
Sae whin I come, doos get dee fee,
An' I me bairn tae be me heir."

[Very doubtful—again unnecessarily explicit, perhaps to make up for the omission of the "foster weel . . ." couplet in the preceding verse.]

9 "Noo, for de luve I bür tae dee,
A luve dats brought me muckle sheem,
O tell me whar dee heem may be,
An' tell me true dee vera neem?"

[The second line is still harping on her shame and must be spurious, but the question, if not its wording, may be genuine: *cf.* D4a, b.]

10 "San Inravoe hid is me neem;
I gong on land; an' sweem on sea;
Amang de ranks o' selkie folk
I am a yarl o' hich degree.

4 Jo Immrannoe it is my name
Jo Immranoe they do ca me
An my lands they lie Baith braid an wide
Amang the rocks o' Sule Skerry

11 "I am a man apo' de land,
I am a selkie i' de sea;
Me heem it is de Soola-Skerry,
An' a' dats dare is under me.

[Not in B but, except the last line, certainly genuine by other parallels.]

12 "Mair or a thoosan selkie folk,
Tae me a willan sarvice gae;
An' I am king o' a' de folk,
An' la' tae dem is what I say."

[No other version makes him king of the selkies, and I think this, like the preparatory lines at the end of the two preceding verses, is Dennison's addition.]

13 "Oh who can doo de bairn tak,
An who can doo de bairn save?
I' dee cald heem doo'l only mak
De grimby sea me bairn's grave.

[Read "hoo can doo dee bairn tak." Doubtful; no parallels and the rhyme of first and third lines is perhaps unlikely.]

14 "Me peerie bairn I'll safely ferry,
To I hae nather ship or skift,
Wi' muckle care tae Soolis-Skerry,
Afore de sin's hich i' de lift.

[To—"though." The rhyme of "ferry" and "Skerry" certainly sounds too good to be true.]

15 "Bit who sall I me young son ken,—
An' who sall I me bairn know?"
"O' a' de selkies i' Soolis-Skerry
He's be de middlemist o' dem a'.

6 But how shall I my young Son ken
An how shall I my young Son knaw
Mang a' the Selkies i' Sule Skerry
He will be midmost amang them a'

16 "His megs sall a' be black as seut,
His croopan white as driven snaw,
An' I beside him, like the sam'
I wus tae dee i' times awa'."

[Doubtful—could be added simply as an excuse to use the words "megs" (fore flippers) and "croopan" (trunk, body.)]

At this point we have the clearest evidence of all that Dennison has been tampering with the text: the gunner (married by the heroine in A, 'got'—which may well mean the same thing—by her in D and G, already married to her in B as in E) is too modern, and all mention of gunners and shooting is carefully deleted to suit the mediaeval setting, and replaced by a stout-fisted warrior with a club:

17 "Me ain gudeman a warrior prood,
An' aye a stival nave his he;
An' he may prick or club me bairn,
When he's a selkie i' de sea."

7 My husband is a proud Gunner
An aye a proud gunner is he
An the first Shot that he will fire
Will be at my young Son an' thee

8 I fear nae livin proud Gunner
I fear nae Mortal man quo he
For pouther winna burn i saut
Sae I an thy young Son'l gae free

18 "I fear no dat, I fear bit dis,
Dat cockra comes an' fiands me here;
Bit come what may, I come agen,
An' fetch me bairn i' ae half year.

[Doubtful—perhaps reconstructed on the basis of a verse like B8, using a genuine second line from another ballad?]

19 "For dan he'll be a seeveneth stream,
An' dan a man agen I'll be,
An' tak me bonnie peerie bairn
A' tae de boons o' Soolis-Skerrie."

[I suspect this is inserted to emphasise the belief mentioned elsewhere by Dennison (1893:176) that seals became men at every seventh spring-tide.][14]

20 Whin de sax munts were come an' geen,
He cam' tae pay de noris fee;
The tane o' his hands wus fu' o' gowd
De tither fu' o' white monie.

9 O when that weary Twalmont gaed
he Cam' to pay the Nourice fee
he had ae coffer fu' o' Gowd
an anither fu o white money

21 De lathie's taen a gowden chain,
Her wadin boon fae Odivere,
Shü tied hid roon her bairn's hars,
Hid for her sake shü bade him wear.

[Second line presumably editorial, but in substance this verse, which is essential to the plot later, must be genuine, whether it derives from the North Isles version or a South Isles one.]

22 "I'm come tae fetch me bairn awa;
Fare weel, for doo'r anithers wife."
"I wad dee wi' a gowden ring,
An' bide beside dee a' me life."

[The two inconsistent halves of this verse point to the use of a different, no doubt South Isles, version; probably only the third line retains the original words.]

23 "Doo wad no', whin I wad gude wife;
I winno, whin doo'r willan noo,
Dat day doo tint doo'l never fiand;
He's late, he's ower late tae rue."

[Doubtful in wording, but sounds reasonably authentic because of the use of well-known sayings.]

24 De lathie lived a lanely life,
An' aften looks apo de sea,
Still lipenan her first luve tae fiand,
Bit jubish dat can never be.

[Bridge passage to next Fit, certainly supplied by Dennison: such a leisurely tempo of narrative is alien to the spirit of the traditional ballad.]

At this stage the two versions of the ballad depart so radically from each other that there is no longer any point in giving parallel texts. Dennison brings home the heroine's husband Sir Odivere from the Crusades in his Fourth Fit to play the gunner's part: he and his men set out to hunt otters, but a selkie runs out of a geo and is killed by Odivere 'wi' a mester blow'.[15]

Den oot an' spak, een o' his men,
"Far hae I sailed an' muckle seen,
Bit never gowd on selkie's hars,
Till noo I see'd wi' baith me een."

Dennison ingeniously adapts a line from the comic ballad 'Our Goodman' (Child 274) in a form known in the Northern Isles to serve as his second line. The selkie is taken to the hall and Odivere calls on his wife in words adapted from another ballad, 'The Bonnie Hoose o Airlie' (Child 199):

"Co' doon, co' doon! Lathie Odivare
Co' doon, an' see me farly fang . . .[16]

"Here's de gowd chain ye got fae me,
Tell me gude wife, whoo cam hid here?"

"Aloor, aloor! me bonnie bairn,
Me bairn! what am I born tae see?
Me malisen be on de hand
Dats wroucht dis deed o' blüd on dee!"

With this lamentation, which may be partly based on tradition, we can leave Dennison's 'play': the husband and wife flyting which follows and the lady's eventual rescue by the seals while the men are distracted by a whale-hunt were certainly never a part of our ballad.

The ending of B is quite different from all the other versions of the ballad, though it accords quite well with the general pattern of supernatural traditions. These selkies, like other shape-changing beings, here cannot be shot except with a silver bullet—metaphorically expressed in B8 by the phrase 'pouther winna burn i saut'[17]—so, when the gunner fires, his bullet misses and hits his wife, who has come to see her son.

10 Upo' the Skerry is thy young Son
Upo' the Skerry lieth he
Sin thou will see thy ain young Son
Now is the time tae Speak wi he

11 The Gunner lay ahind a rock
ahind a Tangie rock lay he
an' the Very first Shot the gunner loot
It Strack his wife aboon the Bree

12 Jo Immranoe an his young Son
Wi heavy hearts took tae the Sea
let a that live on Mortal Yird
Ne'er Mell wi' Selchies o' the Sea.

Though there is little doubt that B was taken down from an oral, probably a sung version,[18] this seems a little contrived: the heroine no doubt deserves punishment for her relations with a non-human being, but the sympathetic reference to the *selkies*' 'heavy hearts' in the last verse does not ring true. 'The Skerry' would suggest the North Ronaldsay Seal Skerry, which unlike Sule Skerry is well within sight from the main island, to any local hearer, and it seems not unlikely that these last verses and the unparalleled verse 8 were added by some local person to supply the defective version of the ballad which he had heard. Perhaps he used another existing story as the basis of his plot, and at least one surviving line of the lost verses—'the very first shot the gunner loot': compare A7 c, 'the very first schot that ere he schoots'. Certainly he was working within the tradition, and his work is much more acceptable than Dennison's.[19]

The less doubtful parts of the North Isles versions show, as might be expected, some parallels with A—the 'proud' gunner, the selkie's first appearance as a 'grimly ghaist', and the lack of the opening reference to Norway as the scene; some with the South Isles versions—the coffers of gold and white money, the fostering for a (varying) period; and some individual features—'the heart within her body rang', the heroine's married status, the selkie's name and his son's 'midmost' place on the skerry. There are evidently three separate families or redactions attested. It could be argued, following Dr David Buchan (1972: 51–173) that these represent the orally-composed improvisations of three different seventeenth- or eighteenth-century singers working on an 'oral-formulaic' basis, deploying a repertoire of stock couplets, lines and phrases within an elastic plot framework: at some point a singer learned off a version, probably of his own composition,[20] by heart and from then on the variation within the various families has been much less. In favour of this are the totally different names of the Selkie in the North and South Isles redactions, and the different relationships between the heroine and the gunner, quite a basic feature of the plot. Against it are verbal correspondences between all three families in such speeches as 'Little ken I where my bairn's father is' or 'I am a man upon the land'. But it could be argued, particularly on the basis of parallels from the telling of folktales, that certain passages, especially formal dialogue, in a ballad story could be established in a fixed form at an early date while the rest of the narration was carried on in the singer's own words. On the other side it might be argued that the North Isles versions show what deliberate tampering can do to change the form of a ballad, in one instance without forcing it out of oral currency. What we can say is that a single act of creation, and that in Scots though in Orkney, therefore probably not much before the beginning of the seventeenth century,[21] lies behind all the versions. Our ballad may have been based on a tale that had been told in Norse, even on a Norse ballad, but as we have it it was launched into and carried down on a Scots stream of tradition.

It may yet be possible to save more tunes, if not more words, to set beside the versions above. I would certainly like to see one of the genuine tunes sung as widely as the modern composition used for text A by many 'folksingers' of the revival, which is

attractive enough but for the slow waltz rhythm which is not like anything in traditional Scottish songs. One judgment on the existing texts may be allowable. Traill Dennison's 'Play o de Lathie Odivere' is a brave attempt to write an extended poem—longer, though not very much, than any ballad actually sung in Orkney[22]—in full Orcadian dialect. The South Isles redaction represents the same Scots ballad which was the basis of Dennison's poem, converted, perhaps by the gradual influence of a new taste rather than by any conscious rewriting, into a song in the anglicised broadsheet manner. Yet however inferior the language the latter provides the more concise, more dramatic, more expressive and less sentimental telling of the story. The processes of oral transmission may absorb vulgarities from printed sources at times, but they act as a perpetual filter to clear out the extravagant and unnecessary with time, and achieve a natural balance and good taste which no conscious imitator of folksong has the detachment to emulate. I would rather have had the original Sanday ballad in full, with its tune, than the whole of Dennison's dialect epic.

NOTES

1 A selkie is simply a seal, though readers of the ballad have tended to assume that in itself it means a seal which can take human form. Hence 'The Silkie' has been used not only for the name of a group of singers, but for a science fiction novel.

2 Child gives Thomas's text unchanged, apart from punctuation and apostrophes, with the exception of 'quhen' in verse 6, which is probably not an archaism but an attempt to express a sound which in Shetland varies between *wh* and *qu*. 'Schot' and 'schoot' in verse 7 may also be intended phonetically, perhaps just for the sonorous Shetland back *sh*. Despite Thomas's punctuation, verse 6 is obviously spoken by the father.

3 SA 1970/229 A5, with some minor variants from a later recording, SA 1972/168 A5: see also notes 5 and 6.

4 'Go wed thu's weds' in both verses 7 and 10 on the later recording: perhaps Mrs Henderson sang 'Thou may go' as in C.

5 'Pocket' in the later recording: compare E20 below.

6 Possibly 'a gay gold chain'—is this a reminiscence of 'a gey good gold chain'? On the later recording Mr Henderson said 'a gold ring upon his hand' (verse 12) and ' . . . on his flipper' (in the narration), but this is no doubt merely a slip. Apparently the mother supplies the chain, as in E but not in D where the chain seems a substitute for the rejected ring, and so this verse, not the prophecy, follows verse 10.

7 In 1972 he also mentioned the late William Sinclair ('Billy o Stane'), a well-known singer in the South Parish of South Ronaldsay, as a source, but he has not repeated this, and though James Henderson and his cousin John Dass learned many songs from Billy, this was not one of them.

8 Verse 1, SA 1972/166 A7; verses 2 and 3, SA 1973/77 B7. Note that the selkie's Dutch-sounding name is clearly 'Miller' stressed on the last syllable here. There are several parallels for the difference in tunes within one island: thus John Halcro and his second cousin John Dass have quite distinct tunes for the shipwreck songs 'The *Middlesex Flora*' and 'The Brig *Columbus*' (of which the first is from Ireland and the second a local composition.) Though the old Scots lulling syllables 'ba loo (lillie)' are here assimilated to 'Alleluia' they are not long out of use: James Henderson's mother used them so often as a lullaby (to hymn tunes or any tune that came to mind in her old age) that his children called her 'Granny Baloo'.

9 He even writes: 'The writer thinks that the name came to Orkney from Germany.' (Dennison 1961: 83.) *Minne* of course means 'love'. The *Scottish National Dictionary* does quote some nineteenth-century and later instances of *menyie* in the sense of 'throng' or 'medley' from the North of Scotland, though the only Orcadian instances are Dennison's own compounds *menye-singers* and *menye-cogs*. His spelling is that commonly used by Scott and other historical novelists, and they may be the real source.

10 'The ballad was always divided into fits, but I have been told that its divisions were once called by another name, which I have been unable to discover' (Dennison 1894:53). It seems, however, that 'fit' (a romantic archaism) is claimed to be the current name.

11 'Probably most of the oral verse in Orkney would be lost when the Norse language was forgotten by the people; and the fragments that remained in the newly adopted language must have been rude translations by native bards or menye-singers. While it is therefore unlikely that we should meet with anything very old in our oral verse, yet it should not be forgotten that the Norse and the Scots languages existed together for a considerable time in these islands; and to a considerable extent the two languages became amalgamated. So that the dialect used by the peasantry during the eighteenth century may be regarded as Scoto-Norse, gradually fading into oblivion before the English of the elementary schools. Without dwelling on the subject, it may be said, that every word in the ballad added by me has been carefully chosen as the most suitable and oldest Orkney word I know' (Dennison 1894:53). The corollary holds true: wherever the dialect words (rather than dialect forms) are thin on the ground, the line is likely to be genuine and not added by Dennison. His picture of the linguistic history of Orkney is over-simplified: Norn ballads were current in North Ronaldsay about 1770 (Marwick 1929:227, quoting Scott) and may still have been being composed or added to in one island while our Scots ballad was circulating in others or even among the same people. (A similar situation between Gaelic and Scots or English is to be found in some bilingual regions today, with some local bards actually ready to compose songs in either language.) But the hybrid, basically Scots dialect of the 'peasantry' was not apparently used for poetry until recent times, with the possible exception of the New Year Song, 'St. Mary's Men', and did not even influence the vocabulary of imported Scots songs much in the course of oral transmission.

12 It seems that in B she is already married (to the gunner). But possibly Dennison's amplification of this detail into the basis of much of his poem draws on some different traditional tale, though his crusader setting smacks more of Ivanhoe than Earl Rognvald.

13 *Aloor!* (alas) and *büddo* (darling) are often used by Dennison—though admittedly they were not uncommon features in the spoken dialect: the first was certainly used a generation ago and the second can still be heard from the oldest generation in the North Isles.

14 He notes however (Dennison 1893:173) 'these periods were a subject of dispute among my oral authorities', and Keillor in his MSS. accompanying B (NLS 50. 1. 13 f. 324^{v}) gives it as the North Ronaldsay belief that seals could become men and women at every *ninth* stream tide.

15 'Mester' in the sense of 'mighty' is no doubt original in the titles of the traditional tales of 'The Mester Ship' and 'Assipattle and the Mester Stoorworm' given by Dennison (1891:68, 130) but again it is a word which he evidently liked and used as much as possible.

16 A minimum of adaptation is needed from the sound of 'Ogilvie' to 'Odivere' and from 'kiss me fairly' to 'see me farly fang'—*i.e.* 'see my wonderful catch'.

17 This is surely metaphor rather than actual belief: salt is usually invoked *against* supernatural beings and their magic, for instance to capture the vanishing isle of Eynhallow (Dennison 1893:117–20), and many Orcadians must have known that it was possible to shoot ordinary seals in or by salt water. The usual form of the belief is illustrated from North Ronaldsay in another passage from Keillor's MS (f. 323^{v}): a man shooting rabbits by night saw a strange pony which he decided must be Tangie (the Orkney sea-kelpie.) He could not shoot it until he put a sixpence in the gun; then it fell, and he left the body on the shore to be carried out by the tide.

18 Charles Thomson's MS consists of three folded sheets: the ballad is on both sides of the sixth leaf and is clearly intended to be part of the collection. But it is written in a hand barely recognisable as the neat if rather crabbed script in which the rest of the MS (containing the well-known tale of the Goodman of Westness and his seal bride) is written: in the accompanying letter he asks Keillor to transcribe his MS in a better hand, and must, I think, have meant the ballad in particular. There is no punctuation at all and the use of capitals is eccentric. In fact it looks rather like Campbell of Islay's own notes made in the field, and it seems very likely that the ballad was written down directly from the dictation or more probably singing of Thomson's informant, not retold in his own words like the accompanying tale. Thomson might incidentally be the educated North Ronaldsay source for Dennison's version of the latter (Dennison 1893:173), so he *may* also be one of his sources for the ballad.

19 This is not to say that his ballad is artistically more acceptable: in five verses, three of them apparently entirely genuine, the second line virtually repeats the first in a way which adds nothing to the effect. Possibly 'the very first shot' in B11 is simply deduced from B7 c, the line corresponding to A7 c, but if so 'very' has dropped out there in our text.

20 This seems probable on empirical grounds, since if other singers always improvised slightly differently it would be impossible to learn the ballad word-for-word by listening to successive performances: it would be necessary to perfect one's own improvised version to learn. Parallels from Gaelic prose storytelling support this: in Gaelic tales the narrative is always told in the teller's own words, but dialogue and descriptive passages in the more formal heroic tales draw largely on a stock of formulas —runs, proverbs, witty answers and other clichés. The South Uist storytellers Duncan MacDonald and Angus MacLellan were recorded often enough in their later years to make it clear that they repeated their longer tales almost in the same words each time, but it is clear from stories such as *Conall Gulban*, which both of them had learned from Duncan's father, that they were repeating not the words of their source, but a version deliberately put together and polished up for their own use.

21 Scots speakers were in Orkney long before it passed to the Scottish Crown, but Scots probably only overtook Norn as the language of the bulk of the people after the beginning of the seventeenth century (Marwick 1929:xxiv). I think it is fair to assume that a ballad in Scots would not have been made out of a native story before that date; and this agrees with the period from which the majority of extant historical ballads in the classical style seem to date by their subject-matter.

22 'Odivere' has 93 stanzas. Several ballads which were popular in Orkney before 1914, and were actually sung all through, are between half and two-thirds as long: 'Andrew Lammie' (Child 233, which incidentally *was* performed as a play in Orkney not so long ago) has some 55 verses, 'Sir James the Rose' (Child 213, the 'Michael Bruce' text) is equally long, 'The Turkey Factor' has 48 quatrains of longer lines. Typically, though all these three ballads seem to be of Scottish composition, only the first makes any pretence to be in Scots, and in the long modern version it is much anglicised.

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The Younger Generation in Argyll at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century

DAVID GRAHAM-CAMPBELL

When peace descended on Argyll at the end of the seventeenth century, the problem of finding a livelihood for younger sons troubled all classes. Neither military service under the Crown, nor emigration, yet held out much attraction. At the labouring level a bare subsistence might be supplemented by some members of the family going to work in the Lowlands at harvest time, but only too often resort was had to the sub-division of already inadequate possessions. At the land-holding level, the possibilities within the home country were also limited.

An eldest son could hope to succeed his father and, if the lands were sufficiently extensive, a second son might similarly be provided for; a third might become a tacksman and, if successful, aspire in due course to secure a charter under the Great Seal of lands of his own; and in a few cases, a younger son would enter the ministry of the established church.[1] The only other avenue of advancement within the shire was to become a bailie and chamberlain either to the Duke or to the Earl of Breadalbane and act as factor for part of their lands: the salary might be small but there were perquisites, and an opportunity for cattle-dealing on the side. Otherwise it was a case of going afield to Edinburgh, to Glasgow, Gourock, or even London, either to follow the Law—a lucrative profession which often enabled a man to invest his gains in land back in his home country—or else to be a merchant. Trade carried no social stigma and in those days of chronic shortage of ready money it was almost a necessity for a family to have a brother or a cousin who could act as financial adviser, broker and banker.

The letters of the Campbells of Inverawe in the Scottish Record Office show them as typical of this pattern, as were the neighbouring and closely-related families such as those of Barcaldine, Craignish and Stonefield. Dugall Campbell of Inverawe, who died in 1665, was the last in his line of the old school of warriors, and the central figure in a dubious incident in 1640, when Argyll had sent him to the Braes of Angus, to

> demolish my Lord Ogilvie's house and, further, see how ye can cast offe the Irone yeattis and windows, and take offe the rooff, and if ye find it be langsome, ye shall fire it weill, that so it may be destroyed. But ye will nott to let know that ye have directions from me to fyir it, only ye may say that ye have warrant to demolish it, and that to make the work short ye will fyr it . . . and to bring all the nolt and sheep (*Highland Papers* 1934: 100).

This Campbell of Inverawe had also fought through the Great Civil War, being first taken prisoner by Montrose at Inverlochy, and then, when the tide of war turned, becoming Governor at that Castle.

Even his eldest son Archibald was concerned briefly in clan violence in the final flare-up in Mull between the Campbells and the Macleans in the 1670s. When Argyll was in the ascendant, Archibald Campbell of Inverawe was made Governor of the Castle of Duart, and, as such, granted a receipt for the following MacLean arms: '185 swords 95 guns 3 pistols 5 Lochaber axes and ane two-handed sword' (*Highland Papers* 1914:317), but, as Argyll's influence waned, there were proceedings before the Privy Council which lingered on until 1689, when Archibald was finally granted an indemnity on payment of 5,000 merks. But it is significant that in the letters from that date onwards there is no reference whatsoever to violence.

Archibald eventually died without children, so his namesake, son to his next eldest brother succeeded to Inverawe. Another brother had been set up at Kilmartin out of the extensive family lands. A fourth, probably after a period as a tacksman of the Duke, established his family as 'of Whitestone' in Kintyre. Another became a merchant in Glasgow, and the youngest Dugall (with whom we are most concerned) became Bailie on the Earl of Breadalbane's lands of Nether Lorn.

Dugall was a prolific letter writer, especially to Breadalbane and Glenorchy on estate matters but he also kept up a regular exchange of family news with two of his cousins—another Dugall (always known as Captain Dugall) who had made a small fortune as a Merchant in London, and Alexander who was a merchant in Edinburgh—less successful but extremely busy, and relied on by the whole family for advice and financial assistance. When Alexander died, his place in this three-cornered exchange of news 1690–1720 was taken by his son-in-law, another Alexander Campbell, an advocate. Their place may be seen in the family tree shown in Fig. 1.

In this correspondence, affairs of state such as the coming of King William, the Treaty of Union and the first Jacobite rebellion, receive only the briefest mention. The one thing that concerned them deeply (apart from business) was the problem of coping with the younger generation.

The three men were much of an age and were clearly attached to each other: internal evidence suggests that they had probably been brought up together either at the parish school at Kilmartin or at the Grammar School at Inverary. The two Dugalls seem to have been specially close and one would like to think that they were the Dugall Campbell Major and Minor who were in the same class at Glasgow University in 1676, but a letter of Captain Dugall's suggests that he, at any rate, went straight from school to a legal training. Many years later, when arranging for one of his nephews to leave school, he wrote:

> My cus Dugall did last yeir tell me he wou'd send my nephew to Edr. tho not the tyme when, But since he is sent, I aprove of your putting him with some writing chamber and I think Ronald's may be as well as any—But be assured I designe he shall be keept in the most

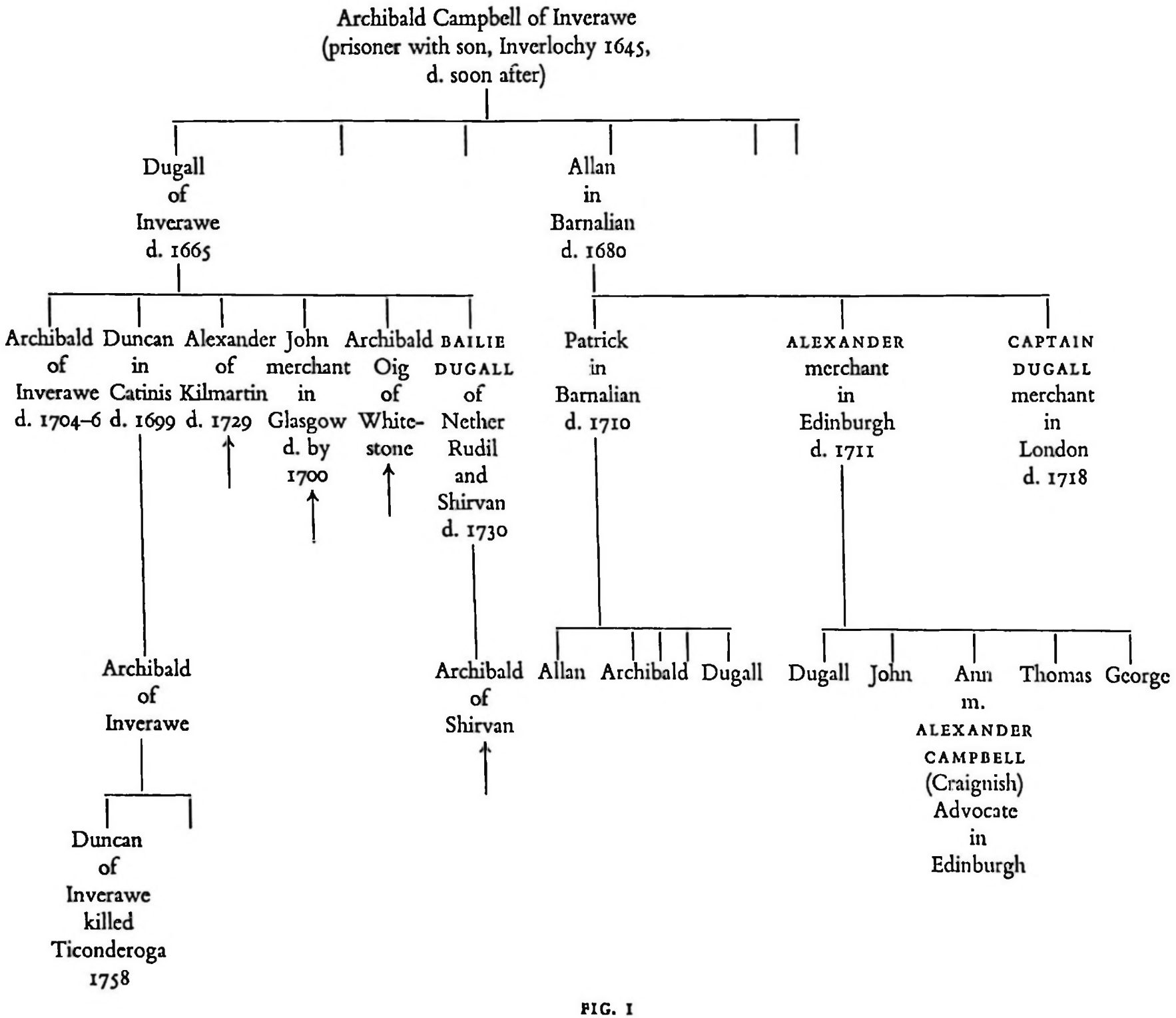
Archibald Campbell of Inverawe
(prisoner with son, Inverlochy 1645,
d. soon after)
Dugall
of
Inverawe
d. 1665
Allan
in
Barnalian
d. 1680
Archibald
of
Inverawe
d. 1704–6
Duncan
in
Catinis
d. 1699
Alexander
of
Kilmartin
d. 1729
John
merchant
in
Glasgow
d. by
1700
Archibald
Oig
of
White-
stone
BAILIE
DUGALL
of
Nether
Rudil
and
Shirvan
d. 1730
Patrick
in
Barnalian
d. 1710
ALEXANDER
merchant
in
Edinburgh
d. 1711
CAPTAIN
DUGALL
merchant
in
London
d. 1718
Archibald
of
Inverawe
Duncan
of
Inverawe
killed
Ticonderoga
1758
Archibald
of
Shirvan
Allan
Archibald
Dugall
Dugall
John
Ann
m.
ALEXANDER
CAMPBELL
(Craignish)
Advocate
in
Edinburgh
Thomas
George

FIG. 1

> frugal manner that may be. If you can conveniently keep him in yor own family and under yor eye for the first half year I am willing to pay for his board and after that he must provide for himself and get his own bread as I did my self—When I was younger than he, I got my bread, tho in a very scrimp manner, by writing in a chamber as he now does. Therefor let not the gentleman be pufted up as if he was to expect great matter from me . . . I know by experience there can be nothing so beneficial to young men as to begin with hardships at their first coming into the world (CP 121, 10 Dec. 1717).

The upbringing of the three cousins was in troubled times and they must have been influenced by the traditions of their elders. Not only the long history of cattle reiving, but also the religious differences of the times must have had their influence on the boys. Alexander was attended on his death-bed in 1711 by the deposed Bishop of Edinburgh and Captain Dugall left money to the poor episcopal clergy of Scotland but their views are more likely to have been decided by the ethos of Edinburgh and London than by the influence of the parish minister of Ardchattan when they were growing up. The Rev. Colin Campbell was more interested in mathematics (about which he corresponded with Newton)—and in extricating himself from an unfortunate charge of pre-marital intercourse with the daughter of the Laird of Calder—than in the Episcopalianism which he espoused only so long as it was the official religion of the country: he abandoned Bishops readily enough in 1694 (*Fasti* 1923:81). Certainly at school at Kilmartin or Inverary, the boys were more likely to have come under Presbyterian influence: Bailie Dugall, when against his better judgment he allowed his wayward son to go to Edinburgh, tried to find a Presbyterian minister for him to live with.

The Bailie was a busy and successful man who took his job seriously. He sent to Edinburgh for a copy of Mackenzie's *Criminalls*, as also for 'one fair little periwig of a roundabout for myself' and some thread to mount 'the enclosed set of buttons, either haire or silke as ye think fashionablest and strongest. . . . I pray that the wig may be good hair and pretty fashionable, not too thin of hair' (CP 53, 3 May 1693).

Apart from his court work, he must have been a busy man. He was collector of the vacant stipends in the former Bishoprics of Argyll and of the Isles, and he was Commissioner for Supply. He bought cattle on his own account (83 cows at £16 each in 1693) and sold them. And he looked after the extensive Breadalbane estates in Mid Argyll, collecting the rents, balancing the books and arranging the lets. In this work, he was not without his critics, as may be seen from a scrap of paper dated 1709:

> Ane compt of this business of giftes to Dugall Campbell, your Lordship's Chamberlain.
>
> Allan McDougall in Luing ane cow for the change of land Nill McLaerlich . . . ane boll of bear for the change of land and did not get it but the bailie kept it the boll of bear; the bailie putting Sandars McDugall out to Melfort one year and brought him back and did give him land in Beallchewan sett and he did give him ane cow for doing that favour.
>
> Archibald M'Fyer your Lordship's Maltman informed me of all this of which he is willing to give his oath (Breadalbane 17/1).

However, Dugall vindicated himself and, indeed, seems to have been generally liked and trusted in the neighbourhood.

The Bailie's cousin, Alexander, was no less busy as a merchant in Edinburgh, trading in every kind of commodity especially to Belfast and the Netherlands—cloth, wine, toys, jewellery, masks, spectacles, beads and so forth. His letters show that, apart from business, he had a most unhappy time because of the women in his life. For him, there was a generation gap upwards as well as downwards.

Shortly after their father's death, he and his brother had to write to their cousin the Provost of Dumbarton, March 1682:

> We do doubt not but that ye also will, with the rest of the burgh and shire of Dumbarton have heird how this good honest woman, with no small travail, wee must own for our mother has behaved herself since her husband and our father deceased . . . . She has been released from prison seven times and been banished four times so that our greatest fear was that the hangman would have gotten his hands upon her . . . It would but trouble you and us to give you all the particulars of her life since April 1680 so we shall forbear it, only in short we do with shame tell you that she is a thief, a drunkard and as we hear a whore. . . . She has so abused her sons in public wherever she was apprehended that wee are now as well known in this place by our mother's as by our own names so that we are advised by Succoth and our other kindest friends here, to prevent further disgrace to herself, and to us, to commit her to the Tolbooth of yor town because she is there best known, to be kept prisoner for the space of two months or three, to see what hopes there may be of an ammendment in her . . . we expect you will secure her and let her spend her time with the greatest disrespect imaginable . . . and for her diet, since we designe to give her no drink but water for some time we think that two shillings or half a crowne a week may keep her scrimply (CP 35).

How long she was kept in the Tolbooth we do not know but the unfortunate Provost was sent money for her keep, certainly for the next ten years; £10 a quarter till 1688 and then £12 a quarter when a new lodging had to be found for her and a completely new outfit of clothes. Unless the clothes were provided, wrote the ex-Provost, he would no longer be responsible for her, because he was ashamed of her nakedness.

Unfortunately, Alexander's wife seems to have been nearly as difficult as his mother. Captain Dugall was probably not an impartial observer but the view he expressed in this letter to Alexander's widow was certainly shared by the lady's son-in-law:

London 28 Dec. 1711

> Dr Sister
>
> I have received a letter from you some weeks agoe which I would have answered sooner but the truth is I had heard such horrid and strange reports from so many people of your barbarous and inhumane behaviour to my dear brother, both before and on his deathbed, that I could not, till now, prevaill with myself to put pen to paper to you. But hearing now, again, from so many good hands that ye continue to persecute my poor brother's memorie even when in his grave, I could no longer be silent and therefore I doe, according to my duty,

conjure you as ye have any regard for your own soule, to your reputation, to your own and your children's interest in this world, to leave off that malitious, hellish and most scandalous way your fury has put you in, and put on a resolution of living decently and like a Christian with all your friends and relations especially with your sone-in-law to whose care the best of husbands and fathers very prudently left both yourself and your children, a person who is known by all his acquaintances to be a man of honner, sense and religion so that whatsoever ye say to his prejudice will have no creditt with any that know him. And let me beg of you to throw off that idle tattling flattering mean beggarly company, which I hear ye keep, to the ruine of your owne family, and if I hear that ye doe this I shall be encouradged to continue the resolutione that I always had of looking upon you as my sister, and your children as my owne. But if you persist and goe on as you have done I doe assure you that neither yourself nor any child that was ever born of your body, shall be one groat the better by me, except one who I hear was allways dutifull to her poor ffather, and then you may safely judge what your children will say and think of you, when they come to consider what they have lost by such a mother.

I pray dear sister, ffor God's sake, for your soull's sake, for peace sake, for your owne and children's sake, be resolved on a new course of living, as ye desire to be happy heir or hereafter, and consider what an affectionate loving tender husband you had and consider what an expensive chargeable sickly peevish ill-natured wife he had of you, and yet with what Christian patience he bore it.

Consider when your husband's debts are payed that there will be but little, very little, left to be divided; and consider withal what very little fortune ye brought to your husband. I could offer a good deall more to your consideration but I hope that this will be enough at this time to convince you how much I am troubled at such reports of you, ffor I perceive you are not only the subject of the coffee houses' talk at Edinburgh but even here also, by all that do know my poor brother, which I hope you'll have the grace to put a stop to for the future, to the great satisfaction of all your friends, and I am sure it will be so in a very particular manner to, Dr Sister, your loving brother, if you mend your life Dugall Campbell

Sic Subscr (CP 126)

That Captain Dugall in London, the third of our correspondents, was a person of some force of character needs no further stressing. How and when he earned his military rank is unknown, but it was before 1692 when we first hear of him 'at London'. Since he became a man of business to the second Duke of Argyll, the origin probably lay there. But if the Captain could be a vigorous critic, he had a warm heart: he remembered individually no fewer than twenty nephews and nieces in his will, and also made large bequests to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, to charity schools in London and in the Highlands, to small debtors in the Marshalsea to help release them about Christmas-time, to Heriot's Hospital, and for similar purposes such as buying good books to be dispersed in Argyll (CP 169). He was very proud of belonging to the family of Inverawe, and provided money for the education of any poor boys of that family. Not long before he died, he had three two-handled, silver loving-cups made, engraved with the coats of arms of Bailie Dugall of Nether Rudil and Shirvan, his other brother

Alexander Campbell of Kilmartin, and the then head of the family, Archibald Campbell of Inverawe, with the following inscription:

When out of this you Chance to Drink
Remember on your Friend to think
These cupps are called the Three Brothers

(Wimberley 1898:20)[2]

(The Shirvan cup is lost, but the other two have survived). Inverawe also got £300 in the Captain's will to help pay off his debts, and the Bailie received a gold watch and seals 'as a token of his affection'.

Where the Captain came into conflict with the younger generation was not with his own family (his only child died as an infant) but over his attempts to help his nephews and nieces. In 1699 Alexander's second son, John, had been sent to London to serve some sort of an apprenticeship with a Mr Mill, and his eldest daughter, Ann, to live with Captain Dugall, to widen her horizon and to get some schooling. At the time, neither project was a success. The Captain reported on them both:

London 25 Apr 1699

D. Brother

I have not wrot to you now of a good whyle nor have I had any from you . . .

I have not been in the Citie never since I entered upon the passing of this acte but my cusen Patrick, who was latly ther, brought me complaints of Jno that he does not wait on his business as was expected, but uses too much freedome and goes abroad lyke a master on post might, and leaves word that he is to be found in such and such a place if ther be occasion for him. I wrot to Mr. Mill to send him to me but he never came, soe that I presume the mater is accommodated amongst them for some time. I am told he gives Mr. Mill and Blean very impertinent language and wishes he had known a little sooner that his attendance was to be soe strict; and for Mr. Blean, he says he is non of his master and therfor has nothing to do with him. I understand there is a private correspondence between him and his mother which I wish you may find out. I have not seen him but once . . . . When he comes to this end of the town he calls for his sister privately, and I doubt does her noe good, and this I believe the rather that I intercepted a letter of hers to her brother, and another to Mrs. Linn wherein she is earnest to goe to Scotland with Mrs Linn, and I am afraid this humor proceeds from some privat commission from her mother by Jon. For I do assure you, brother, I would not take the trouble I am forcd to have with her to make her doe well if anybody would give me 100£ a yeir, if she were not your chyld but, as she is, I doe us her as my own in all respects. I doe say nor promise I can please her mother in keeping her soe strictly but without it there's nothing to be done with her. Her whole business of the day is first to say her pr . . [*torn*] while she was at schooll then sh . . [*torn*] its a little and then she works a . . [*torn*] of her own which has been her nor . . [*torn*] business of the day indeed my wife will not let her goe abroad but with her self, or when she sends her maid with her to walk, and will not let her gallop about the fields with idle girls that doe nothing but swear and ramp and dirty their cloaths, and this the lady thinks a hard imprisonment, as she calls it in her letter to her broyr, which I have enclosed to you, by which you will see how little she has improved in her writing and spelling. I am sure my wife is as kynd to her as if she were her

own and loves her as well as such stubborn temper can be loved . . . I cannot imagine why the girle should continue soe chyldish soe long as to love nothing but play and ramping. My wife carried her to dinner the other day to my Lord Grandison's wher my Lord was soe kynd and civil to her as if she had been my Lord Argyl's daughter . . . but her mother, and her play, and idleness, runs soe much in her head that she can think of nothing else . . . My wife gives you her service and bids me tell you that any child of yors shall be as welcome to her as any of her owne and I am sure it is soe. Adieu.

I hope Dugall[3] does well with you since you had him. I am confident he will prove the best of yor children. My wife and daughter had alwayes that opinion of him.

The pathetic little enclosure reads:

Aprall the 24 1699

Dear brothe

I hope you wiell be so kind as to comen to see me ofener then you have done for if you know how great apleaseur it is to me yor wod. I might gone home with my cousen line not but I shud be exstremly sorey to part with you Dear brother but as I am har I am verey werey of my life I am verey mush obligd to my couse line for hear a bodoy is kipte as a presiner I toke the opertonity to ris this morning to rito you and my cousen line pray my sarvis to Mr Mill but I hop you wiell be so kind as to see mee with my cousen to moroy theas is all att present from yor erloving sister ann

Campbell (CP 44)

However, the story has a happy ending. Ann eventually became one of the Captain's two favourite nieces. When nine years later she was married he wished her and her husband 'both a great deal of happiness. I shall God willing this night drink their healths with some friends and shall be glade to doe them a better service when I can' (CP 445, 5 June 1711).

Ann is also the daughter singled out for praise in the letter on page 4; and, in Dugall's will, she is left not only £500 but also a personal gift of 'a new case with six silver spoons forks and knives of the new fashion and two new fashioned salts, a silver sugar box, a pr of gilt candlesticks and snuffers.'

No more is heard of John, who must have died young, and Dugall ends up as the Captain's principal heir, in spite of some threatening words on the grounds of his lack of consideration during his father's last illness. 'As for Dugald, he is but a weak silly young fellow that knows no better but I hope he'll grow wiser, though I will assure him he will be a loser by his folly and his ungrateful carriage at this juncture' (CP 121, 21 July 1711).

The really black sheep of this family was the third son. 'I'm heartily sorry for the account you give me of Thomas', wrote his half-brother, Alexander Campbell, Advocate, who, as Alexander's son-in-law, had taken control of the merchant's family when he died in 1711,

> and I'm much afraid he'll not prove a pin better than his godfather. I sent him credit upon John Campbell for £9 Scots but he writes me so far from being upon the frugall that the

cloaths he bought stand him above 10 and writes for more money. If ye see it necessary, intreat John Campbell in my name to advance him four or five lib. more . . . for cloaths victualls and lodging . . . he tells me that the ship gets to see in a month, so I hope this may serve him till that time. I know I need not desire your being at pains with him to go to sea again and shift for himself a little, until some more than pays the debts can be got in of his father's effects. 10 June 1712 Edinburgh

The answer came back by return:

London 19 June 1712

D[ear] N[ephew]

As to your broyr Thom, I can confirm what you say of him that he is the very picture of his worthy uncle. He has taken out his discharge and left the ship. He has received by ticket for all the pay due to him and was going to sell 36£ for the one half, but he was pleasd by somebody's advice to come to me and tell me of it, soe I got John Campbell to advance him £20 upon his ticket and if any more is got he will account for it, soe there is no occasion to advance more money at present. He told me he owed about 20£ thogh I know not how he could owe anything except for his cloaths, and those he has not payd, nor do I believe he designes it. Among his other good qualities he is the greatest lyar ever spoke. I expect not to see him any more nor do I desyre it. He talks of going to Scotland where he will be a disgrace to all of you if he mend not his maners . . .

Yours most affectionally, nephew,

D. Campbell (CP 121).

And, if that family were not enough to worry Captain Dugall, he also undertook the financing of the three sons of his other brother Patrick, a merchant in Greenock, who had died earlier that year. They were Allan, Archibald and (inevitably) Dugall; their subsequent careers may be forecast by their ranking in the final will: Allan £100 (the same as Thomas), Archie £400 and Dugall £500 and all the Captain's books save four.

Allan was old enough to be allowed to go to Edinburgh, but Archie and young Dugall were put under the care of Bailie Dugall back home in Argyll so that they could go to school in Kilmartin. Archie was to be 'set up for a trade' but the eventual hope for both him and Allan was 'Praise God willing I doe designe to give them both such a fortune as may enable them to live as country gentlemen of the lowest size. And for Dougall, if he prove a scholar and a young fellow of any metal, he will be the fittest to push his fortune abroad'. The sister was to go home 'and mary among her relations as other do for I see many inconveniences in women's coming abroad' (CP 121, 22 June 1714).

Dougall evidently did work hard. He went on to the grammar school at Inverary, and then to Edinburgh—but not to University. The Captain wrote to the Advocate, 5 July 1716:

I have lately had two letters from my Cusine Dugall [the Bailie] who tells me his opinion that I had better have my nephew (Patr's son) either to the latron or to serve some writer,

as I myself did when I was of his age [rather] than to send him to the Colledge, because he's observed that very few of the youth, there, make that good use of it that's expected of them, which I am convinced of. And therefore as I am told that the boy is a pretty good Latin scholar already. . . . Think seriously how you would have me to dispose of him at Edr. My meaning is whether you would think it proper to take him into your own familie for some little tyme till he knows a little of the wayes of the towne (CP 121).

But of the other two:

I wish that foolish young boy Allan were got into some kind of service that he be not lost—

and (18 April 1717) about Archie:

As to the third commission from my Cusin Dug: of R. in relation to my two nephews, I aprove of the ten pounds you sent him, and do desire you to send him what more he calls for, towards defraying the expenses of my nephew, for I am well assured he'll manage as well as he can. He tells me the eldest who, I perceive is ane idle rogue, talks of coming up here to me. If he doos, I do assure him, I shall be so far from doing anything for him that I will not see his face; and so you may tell him if you see him, for I perceive by my Cusine that he has squandered away the little stock was given him to set up with. But if you and my cusin can think of any ordinary trade to put him to, according to his capacity I shall be willing to pay the prentice fee, thogh I find he'll never be good for much and therefore would not alow above ten or 12 £ to set him up (CP 121).

Alexander the Merchant was dead before all this, and the Captain was, after all, only dealing with nephews. It was the Bailie who must have suffered most. Normally, he kept his own counsel about his two daughters and his one son Archibald but there is genuine concern in a letter written, while he was ill, to the Advocate in Edinburgh.

D Cusine 22 May 1716

In answer to your last letter . . .

I thank you for taking so many pains with the chirurgeon. I returned answers to his queries and hope he'l prescribe something for me. I verie much need it . . . .

I was not for my son's going afield this summer but he was so earnest yt I aggreed to it. And the rather that he has promised faithfully to follow advyse from provost Campbell and you in everiething. And is willing to settle in any quarter you advyse. If it was in a presbiterian Minister's house which I wish he could come to; ffor, as bad company corrupt good manners, Good company may mend bad ones. Therefore, I intreat ye, be at some pains to settle him in good company. And I hope you'l not find him soe foolish in his opiniones as he has been, in a little tyme. By all means, desire him to keep the Kirk. If he takes advyse I shall grudge the the less to hasten on his learning. I fear he'l soon tire of it. I reckon he is just upon winning or losing, soe D.C. I hope you'l take the greater concerne for him . . .

D.C.
your own
Dug. Campbell

Ardmadie 22 May 1716 (CP 143).

As it turned out, it was not in Edinburgh but while the young man, Archie, was at home that the worst occurred. He had two illegitimate sons (by daughters of tenants on the Nether Lorne estate) and he entailed on them the fine estate which his father had acquired. Neither Archie nor the sons proved any good and Bailie Dugall's worst fears were realised.

Perhaps the older generation worried too much. Perhaps it would have been happier for all concerned if these young men had been allowed to 'go to the Colledge' after all, and to get it out of their system. But attitudes of mind die hard. When, eighty years later, the Bailie's two great grandsons were minors and orphans, the chief preoccupation of their trustees was still the same: how, asked one of them, could they prevent the heir (or his brother) from falling into the society of

> some of the more dissipated young men in the country before he acquires more firmness and experience, lest he should get into habits of expense that would be the ruin both of his fortune and his morals; both his father and his uncle splitt upon that rock. They spent their estate before they succeeded to it (Shirvan letters 1801).

The solution then—until both boys could be commissioned in the Army during the Napoleonic Wars—was to make the younger a Midshipman and to send the heir[5] to Germany for two years with a suitable clergyman as tutor. *Tout ça change . . .*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mr John Imrie, Keeper of the Records of Scotland, kindly drew my attention to 'this business of giftes to Dugall Campbell'. This and other documents in the Scottish Record Office are quoted with his approval.

Grateful acknowledgment is also made to Mrs Graham-Campbell of Shirvan for permission to quote unpublished letters in her possession.

NOTES

1 In 1710, at least 15 out of 36 parish ministers were younger sons of landed families (*Fasti* 1923: *passim*).
2 Wimberley (1894) did not know of Alexander's existence, and is inaccurate in several of his references to Captain Dugall. The cups are also mentioned in CP 121, 22 Jan. 1714.
3 The Dugall referred to in the postscript was Alexander the Merchant's eldest son, who had also spent some time in London with Captain Dugall.
4 Another daughter in that family is described as a 'female monster', but even she and the wicked Thomas got small bequests in Dugall's will. Fortunately the youngest of all turned out well. Ten years later (CP 175) he is writing home from Paris in order to send his sister a scarlet apron embroidered with gold and silver flowers, and a scarlet and gold ribbon.
5 The arrival of the boy and his tutor in Weimar is mentioned in an interesting account of the sort of life led by other Scottish boys there in 1801 (Gillies 1969:39).

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The Emergence of the Crofting Community: The Religious Contribution 1798—1843

JAMES HUNTER

The modernisation of the Highland economy in the hundred years after 1750 has recently been the subject of a great deal of investigation and analysis.[1] The mechanism of economic change in the region has been laid bare. Old simplifications about the nature of Highland history have been demolished. In their place are scrupulously documented accounts of the development of commercial land management; the coming of sheep farming; the rise and fall of the kelp industry; and the establishment of the modern crofting system. The exploration of these essentially economic occurrences has been carried out, however, at the expense of neglecting the social changes and adaptions necessitated by them. In the present century, for instance, there has been only one serious attempt to investigate the impact of economic change on the Gaelic consciousness; and that by a Gaelic poet, Sorley MacLean, rather than by a historian (MacLean 1939). Thus while we know by what means the modern crofting system emerged from the Highland's traditional agrarian structure, the way in which the crofting community, considered as a social and cultural entity, was created out of the commons of the clans remains something of a mystery. This article is an attempt to cast some light on one aspect of the north-west Highland and Hebridean crofting community's development: the part played in it by evangelical presbyterianism, still an important element in crofting life and, in the past, one of its vital components.

'I have lived in woeful times', an old Highlander is said to have remarked to Sir Walter Scott: 'When I was young the only question concerning a man of rank was, How many men lived on his estate? Then it was, How many black cattle could it keep? But now it is, How many sheep will it carry?' (quoted, Graham 1937:210). For clan chieftains, long used to moving in the two cultural universes represented by the Gaelic Highlands on the one hand and lowland Scotland and the rest of western Europe on the other, the crisis of adaptation involved in such a transformation was not too profound; and in the eighteenth century the Gaelic aristocracy of the Highlands were accordingly assimilated into the emerging capitalist order with remarkable ease. The social groups who constituted the lower strata of the traditional society found the abandonment of the old ways more difficult to accept, however. Most tacksmen emigrated rather than adapt to the new order (Adam 1919); while the mass of tenants,

subtenants and cottars who made up the clans' lower orders were left to fend for themselves in a strange new environment in which the land of the kindred could be bought and sold for cash and the people who lived upon the land treated as an element in a calculation of profit and loss by men 'grown so niggardly'—as one Gaelic poet put it—that they 'would geld a louse if it would rise in value a farthing':

Dh' fhalbh na ceannardan mùleant'
Dh' an robh sannt air an fhìrinn,
Dh' an robh geall air an dìlsean
  Agus cuing air an nàmhaid . . .

Seallaibh mun cuairt duibh
Is faicibh na h-uaislean
Gun iochd annt' ri truaghain,
  Gun suairceas ri dàimhich;
'S ann a tha iad am barail
Nach buin sibh do'n talamh,
'S ged dh'fhàg iad sibh falamh
  Chan fhaic iad mar chall e;
Chaill iad an scalladh
Air gach reachd agus gealladh
Bha eadar na fearaibh
  Thug am fearann-s' o 'n nàmhaid . . .[2]

(Matheson 1938:199–203)

The sense of betrayal which is all too evident in that poem by John MacCodrum is but one symptom of a process of cultural disintegration testified to by late-eighteenth-century travellers' accounts of a confused, disturbed people and by the steep decline in Gaelic culture as the language was abandoned by the upper classes and as the old certainties gave way to growing doubt and perplexity (MacLean 1939:295–7).

Until the eighteenth century a man born in the north-west Highlands or islands lived his life in much the same way as his father and grandfather, the essential continuity of past and present symbolised in genealogies and traditions which spanned several centuries. Then within the space of a lifetime all was changed. The crofter working his single holding and labouring for a wage as a kelper was, in the Highland context, a pioneer and like his landlord had little use for much of what had gone before. He had not been born into a culture familiar with the capitalist order in which he found himself, for that order had come from outside—insidiously, through the operation of economic forces of which the crofter had no comprehension and over which he could exercise no control; violently, through military conquest and the deliberate and systematic destruction of his traditional way of life. In attempting to cope with the situation created by commercial landlordism crofters were therefore at an acute disadvantage, not least because they were complete strangers to the social antagonisms which are an integral part of capitalism.

The traditional society of the Highlands, like all societies based on kinship, was by no means an undifferentiated, homogenous mass. It was, on the contrary, highly stratified and contained several distinct layers of rank and position. It was nevertheless a highly unified society, for although a great gulf was fixed and was known to be fixed between the chief and his tacksmen on the one hand and the lowly commons of the clan on the other, both sides—for reasons of military security if for no other—had an interest in maintaining all sorts of bridges across the chasm. Economic inequalities were consequently transcended by an egalitarianism expressed in terms of blood relationship, however remote, and encapsulated in the right of every clansman to shake the hand of his chief (see *e.g.* MacCulloch 1824: IV. 442–3). Class conflict between feudal lords and peasant masses, an important feature of the history of pre-capitalist Europe, was therefore unknown in the Highlands where, as in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa in more recent times, it was only under the impact of capitalism and the associated imposition of a commercialised agricultural structure that a peasantry in the usual sense of the word was created from the lower strata of traditional society (Saul and Woods 1971).

The crofter therefore inherited no popular tradition of resistance to feudal oppression and exploitation. Instead he inherited a folklore concerned with conflict between clan and clan, locality and locality—traditions which hindered rather than helped the creation of a sense of unity among crofters as a whole. And to the stultifying influence of such a folklore was added the confusing fact that, initially at least, most Highland landlords were the descendants of traditional chiefs. That a nineteenth-century Clanranald, Seaforth or MacLeod of Dunvegan was a landowning aristocrat rather than a tribal patriarch is obvious to the historian. For an unsophisticated people, however, the weight of traditional loyalty to the chief rendered more difficult the appreciation of the social and economic transformation than would have been the case if the Gaelic aristocracy had been expropriated and swept into oblivion, as happened in Ireland. Even in the 1880s when a radical critique of Highland landlordism had been developed there was still 'on the side of the poor much reverence for the owner of the soil' (Napier 1884: 36), an attitude enshrined in the work of Mary MacPherson whose poetry was the most forceful to emerge from the land agitation of that decade but who was unwilling or unable to criticise the traditional landowning families of her native island of Skye (MacLean 1939:319).

As far as the small tenantry of the Highlands were concerned, therefore, their own historical inheritance constituted the single most retarding influence on their developing a coherent critique of landlordism. Eventually, however, crofters were able to rid themselves of much of the dead weight of the past, adapt to their new situation and gain some control over their own destinies. The crofting community's decisive victories were won in the 1880s by means of political action and well organised social protest. But in the beginning, like many other people whose traditional way of life has been destroyed by western civilisation (Lanternari 1963:4), crofters sought relief from the frustrations and sufferings of their new existence in the sphere of religious experience.

Until the eighteenth century most Highlanders had little interest in protestantism of the presbyterian variety. Its individualist ethic was not calculated to appeal to a people for whom work and war were necessarily communal activities and only in the heartland of Clan Campbell, already aligned with the Whig and Hanoverian ascendancies and consequently with the Established Church, was there a properly inducted and popularly accepted presbyterian clergy in the years immediately after 1700. Outside the Campbell pale and outside the belt of Catholic predominance which traversed the region from the southern part of the Long Island to Arisaig, Morar and Lochaber, Episcopalianism, like the Jacobitism with which it was usually associated, had survived the revolution of 1688 and its associated re-establishment of presbyterianism (Ferguson 1969: 16; Smout 1969: 333). To put down episcopacy was the eighteenth-century Kirk's main mission in the Highlands; and in the Highland context, therefore, the Established Church, like the Whig state whose support it enjoyed, was uncompromisingly modernist, committed not only to rooting out religious and political dissent but to destroying the society which underpinned that dissent (MacInnes 1951: 14). Opening with the foundation of the SSPCK in the century's first decade and intensified after each of the Jacobite risings, the presbyterian offensive reached its climax in 1746 when many Episcopal chapels and meeting houses were destroyed by Cumberland's troops and episcopacy was officially proscribed (Grub 1861: IV. 43; Prebble 1961: 152, 163, 306). Thereafter episcopacy ceased to be an effective force in the north-west and by the 1790s the Episcopal Church retained significant numbers of Gaelic-speaking adherents only in a narrow belt of territory stretching along the eastern shore of Loch Linnhe from Appin to Ballachulish (MacKay 1914: 205–7; OSA: I. 491).

Although presbyterians were in undisputed control of Highland pulpits by the eighteenth century's end there was little sign of popular enthusiasm for, or attachment to, the Establishment. The latter, admittedly, laboured under immense difficulties. As the General Assembly was informed in 1760, many parishes in the north-west were 'so Extensive as to render the charge of them resemble a Province, requiring the Labour of a Body of Clergy' (Report 1760). And everywhere there was a chronic shortage of churches—many congregations whose domiciles were remote from their parish church or whose parish church was in ruins being forced to worship 'in the open fields' (*ibid.*). Not until the 1820s when government funds were made available for the construction of a number of 'parliamentary churches' was a serious attempt made to come to grips with this problem; and even in the 1830s it had by no means been resolved.[3]

But while it would be uncharitable to discount these and other problems, notably of finance, it must be said that many Highland ministers regarded the difficulties of their situation not as spurs to action but as convenient excuses for doing nothing. Whatever its performance elsewhere in Scotland, the record of the Kirk in the Highlands during the period of Moderate ascendancy was not a proud one. John Buchanan who took a special interest in ecclesiastical affairs during his travels in the north-west in the 1780s drew a picture of a neglectful and apathetic clergy, out of touch and usually out of

sympathy with ordinary people (Buchanan 1793:219–51). Not a few Hebridean incumbents held large tacks and 'like some other tacksmen' were 'too prone to treat their subtenants with great severity' (*op. cit.*: 36–7). And in this respect at least the nineteenth century brought no improvement. In the 1820s and 1830s several Skye ministers were also sheep farmers and some of them acted as factors on the larger estates (*Present State* 1827:2; Fullarton and Baird 1838:26–30)—pursuits scarcely calculated to enhance their popular appeal. Although the more extreme allegations made against such ministers must be treated with caution[4] there seems no reason, therefore, to doubt the general accuracy of the contemporary opinion—as stated to the General Assembly in 1824—that the clergy of the north-west were for the most part 'inattentive to the interests of religion'—at least in so far as 'religion' was understood to incorporate a sense of evangelising mission (*Present State* 1827:2). Several of them did not possess even a working knowledge of Gaelic (see *e.g.* MacKenzie 1921:192), a state of affairs which in itself placed an insurmountable barrier between them and their congregations.

The irritating effects of such abuses were aggravated by the tendency for the Established Church to become identified in the popular mind with the interests of the landlords. In the old Highlands ministers had been drawn from among the tacksmen and like them had occupied something of an intermediate position in the social hierarchy. In the Highlands of the early nineteenth century, however, the clergy were inevitably drawn into the society of farmers, factors and proprietors and away from the small tenantry who constituted the bulk of the population. One vital consequence of this development was that ministers who objected to evictions were few and far between. One or two, notably Lachlan MacKenzie who was minister of Lochcarron from 1782 to 1819, earned a lasting popularity among the crofting population by denouncing removals (Beaton 1929:81; Campbell 1930:19–20). But ministers who adopted such a stance were invariably Evangelicals who felt landlords' control of church patronage to be a threat to their own position and their views were not shared by the Moderates who occupied most Highland pulpits. Donald MacLeod's claim that the ministers of Sutherland threatened 'the vengeance of heaven and eternal damnation on those who should presume to make the least resistance' to the evictors (quoted, Prebble 1963:75) might have been exaggerated; but there can be no doubt that most of the Established clergy gave at least tacit consent to landlords' policies and that their role during the clearances has ever since haunted the reputation of the Church of Scotland in the Highlands.

Disorientated and demoralised by social and economic change and bereft of their traditional leadership, the small tenantry could not, therefore, look to the Established Church for guidance and assistance. And in fact the religion to which they adhered was not the religion of the Establishment; certainly not the religion of the Kirk's Moderate ascendancy. It was a popularly orientated and fervent evangelism which, in a series of dramatic 'revivals', swept through the north-west Highlands and Hebrides in the opening decades of the nineteenth century and eventually carried the greater part of the people of the region into the Free Church. As already suggested, the origins of this

'deep and stirring religious awakening' (MacRae 1929:81) are to be found in the social and psychological consequences of the collapse of the old order. The 'spiritual destitution' which nineteenth-century Evangelicals discerned in the Highlands was very real. It was the inevitable outcome of the absence—since the mid-eighteenth century—of any real sense of social cohesion or framework of moral reference. The evangelical faith helped make good this deficiency. It provided new beliefs and new standards. It created a new purpose in life and in an insecure world it gave some sense of security. As in modern Africa a people whose world had been shattered found in a particularly fervent brand of Christianity 'a place to feel at home'[5] and a way of coping with the problems inherent in the commercial world into which they had been propelled.

In parts of the eastern Highlands, especially Easter Ross, the evangelical faith had gained a foothold in the seventeenth century (MacInnes 1951:13). In the north-west, however, the spark had to come from outside, its main bearer in the first instance being the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home founded in Edinburgh in 1798 and dominated by Robert and James Haldane and their particular brand of congregationalism. The Society's object was 'to supply the means of grace wherever we perceive a deficiency'. And since the Highlands seemed particularly lacking in grace as in much else its missionaries at once turned their attention northwards, their efforts being quickly rewarded by a religious revival in southern Perthshire, the first of a northwards- and westwards-spreading series (Haldane 1852:181 *et seq.*; Campbell 1853:3).

The Establishment's reaction, however, was decidedly hostile. In 1799 the General Assembly adopted a resolution prohibiting 'all persons from preaching in any place within their jurisdiction who are not licensed' and in a Pastoral Admonition condemned the doctrines of 'false teachers' who assumed 'the name of missionaries' (MacKay 1914:227). Apart from resentment about the latters' attacks on what they called 'the false doctrines of unfaithful ministers', there were fears that the revivalist movement might be socially subversive (Meikle 1912:209 *et seq.*). The Haldanes were no Jacobins but their congregationalism did have a mildly democratic aura (Grub 1861: IV. 170), and there hung about the popular nature of the movement they initiated enough of a revolutionary taint to make it suspect—especially in the neurotically repressive political atmosphere of the late 1790s. The Society's missionaries included numbers of 'mechanics' and artisans and in 1797 Neil Douglas, a former member of the Friends of the People acting independently of the Haldanes preached in Argyll (Haldane 1852:248; Douglas 1799). It is hardly surprising therefore that it should be remarked that

> Some of these reformers of religion, as they wish to be considered, intermix their spiritual instructions with reflections on the incapacity and negligence of the clergymen of the Established Church and on the conduct of the landlords whom they compare to the task-masters of Egypt (Stewart 1825:I. 130–1).

Stewart of Garth, the author of that comment, deplored the spread of new-fangled democratic ideas among his beloved Highlanders with all the considerable ire of which

his romantic Toryism was capable. And the blame for this development he laid squarely on the shoulders of the itinerant preachers—those 'ignorant and fanatical spiritual guides', he called them (*op. cit.*: 125)—to whom Highlanders were increasingly turning. Even more significantly, there seemed to him to be an obvious connection between the itinerants' degree of success and the discontent engendered by economic change:

> Wherever the people are rendered contented and happy in their external circumstances by the judicious and humane treatment of their landlords . . . no itinerant preacher has ever been able to obtain a footing (*op. cit.*: 131).

Much the same point was made by James MacDonald in the perceptive account of Hebridean agriculture he published in 1811. This is what he had to say of the Western Isles' crofting population:

> The bond of connection and the ties of clanship which lately subsisted between these tenants and their landlords . . . are dissolved. In many cases, indeed, they are replaced by a spirit of jealousy and hatred. Discontent and a desire for change are almost universal. The ancient attachment to church and state is grown very feeble . . . Without fixed or definite ideas concerning any failure in duty of their clergy, they gradually relax in their respect for them, and have no small hankering after the pestilent fellows who under the name of different sectaries . . . swarm over these neglected regions. Without any original tendency to bigotry or indeed any serious attachment to or predilection for any specific articles of faith, they frequently indulge in a disputatious vein of religious controversy. This, with political speculations, some of which would astonish a man not accustomed to the amazing powers of the common Hebridean in conversation, inter-larded with reflections upon the character and conduct of their superiors, and upon the hardships of their own condition, fills up their leisure hours. They have an idea that they deserve a better fate than that which has fallen to their lot . . . They always suspect that they are peculiarly ill-treated, and live under an ungrateful government and oppressive landlords. In support of these charges they mention . . . above all . . . the dearness of land, and the shortness or absolute want of leases (MacDonald 1811: 109–10).

On occasion, therefore, the apparent connection between religious revivalism and social dislocation was manifested not only in the fact that small tenants—many of whom were being subjected to removal and innovation of one kind or another—were particularly susceptible to the new religion, but also in the fact that the doctrinal proclamations of the revivals' originators and adherents embodied some part of the social aspirations just beginning to be formed by crofters. Thus, in one early revival,

> . . . many of the converts became emaciated and unsociable. The duties of life were abandoned. Sullen, morose, and discontented, some of them began to talk of their high privileges and of their right, as the elect few, to possess the earth. . . . The landlord was pronounced unchristian because he insisted on his dues (*State of Religion* 1819: 142–4).

Such millennial visions of social justice were bound to appeal to the dispossessed and demoralised lower strata of Highland society, just as they have always appealed to those

whose traditional way of life has broken down (Cohn 1970:52). And though the number of small tenants attracted by such notions is impossible to estimate, millennial movements could, clearly, be significant locally. Around 1800, for example, such a movement was initiated in the Great Glen

> by certain religious itinerants who addressed the people by interpreters and distributed numerous pamphlets calculated, as they said, to excite a serious soul concern. The consequence was that men who could not read began to preach, and to influence the people against their lawful pastors. . . . They next adopted a notion that all who were superior to them in wealth or rank were oppressors whom they would enjoy the consolation of seeing damned (*Remarks* 1806:39–40).

Haldanite influence extended into north-west Sutherland (Adam 1973:1. 135) and in 1805 John Farquharson, an itinerant associated with the Haldanes, preached for some months in Skye (*Present State* 1827:46). But for the most part the north-west was still outside the Haldanite sphere of influence when, towards the end of the nineteenth century's first decade the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel fell victim to its own doctrinal dissensions (MacKay 1914:229). Almost at once, however, its evangelical mission was taken up by another body, the Gaelic School Society founded in Edinburgh in 1811. Although that society—as its name suggests—was primarily concerned with helping Highlanders become literate in their own language, it was also interested in the propagation of the gospel and seemed to attract men imbued with evangelising fervour (Anderson 1854:125–8). Gaelic school teachers consequently played a prominent part in the religious life of the communities in which they were stationed, not the least of their contributions to it being the use they made of the Gaelic Bible, the only book used in the society's schools (*GSS* 16th Rep. 1828:28–9).

The task of translating the scriptures into Scottish Gaelic was completed in 1801 and in the next twenty-five years 60,000 Gaelic Bibles and 80,000 New Testaments were distributed in the Highlands by the SSPCK and the British and Foreign Bible Society (*Moral Statistics* 1826:21). The Bible was thus the first and for long the only book to be widely available in Gaelic. Its appearance coincided with the highly successful literacy campaign launched by the Gaelic school movement (Nicolson 1867:84–5, 130). And its importance to the nineteenth-century crofting population can hardly be overestimated.

Until about 1800 the vast majority of the people of the north-west were dependent for their knowledge of the Bible on the clergy of the Established Church. They alone had access to the sources and their interpretation was, in consequence, almost impossible to dispute. After 1800 that situation changed. More and more crofters were able to read the Bible for themselves in their own language. In itself this development was bound to enhance the self-confidence of the small tenantry. More important, however, was their discovery that the Established clergy were not necessarily infallible; that the Bible appeared to have much to say that was relevant to their own predicament—not least to the land question; and that, in short, the fundamental principles of Christianity could be applied to their own lives in a way that was very different from that usually

suggested to them by their Moderate ministers. It is no accident, therefore, that religious revivalism in the north-west coincided with the spread of the Gaelic Bible and the growth of Gaelic literacy.[6]

Being well aware of this connection, Moderate ministers looked on the Gaelic schools with some disfavour; and many of the Society's teachers consequently found themselves hauled up in front of church courts on charges of irregular conduct of one kind or another. In 1829, for example, the Presbytery of Mull recorded its regret

> . . . that two teachers of the Gaelic School Society of Edinburgh stationed in the parish of Ardnamurchan have assumed to themselves the office of public exhorters and are in the stated practice of abstaining from public worship. . . . The presbytery find themselves called upon to put an effective stop to such practices—practices subversive of all established order and so calculated to produce the most pernicious consequences (CH 2/273/3: 23 Apr. 1829).

A year later, however, several of the Society's teachers in the area under the presbytery's jurisdiction were persisting in 'schismatic and irregular practices'. They refused to attend worship in the Established churches 'on the ground that the Gospel is not preached' and were 'in the regular habit of publicly exhorting and expounding. Thus . . . exhibiting an example in all respects pernicious and engendering dissension among the people . . . and a spirit of disaffection towards all those in authority over them' (*op. cit.*: 10 Mar. 1830).

Elsewhere there were similar developments. In Lewis the establishment of Gaelic schools was quickly followed by a revival (MacFarlane 1924: iv). In Back, for example, the Society's teacher preached every Sunday to the people of the township. His activities, the minister of Stornoway reported, 'alienated the people from me in a great measure, so that on the Sundays I preached at Back they would in droves that day pass me on the road' (CH 2/473/3: 28 Nov. 1832).[7]

The same result was produced by the Society's endeavours in Wester Ross and in this area a few of the local men employed as catechists by the SSPCK joined the more evangelically-minded newcomers. Thus John Davidson, an SSPCK catechist in Lochcarron, set himself up as a 'public expounder of Scripture', attracted a mass following, and one Sunday in March 1820,

> assembled the greater part of the population of Lochcarron to a place within sight of the Parish church, and there, while public worship was conducting regularly by the Parish Minister and such of the Parishioners as were with him . . . [he] employed himself in reading, lecturing, and praying with his congregation' (CH 2/567/3: 4 Apr. 1820).

The latter development indicates that while the revivalist faith came initially from outside the Highlands, the revivals very soon developed an impetus and produced a leadership of their own. Thus one result of John Farquharson's 1805 visit to Skye was the conversion to the evangelical faith of Donald Munro, a local man who was a catechist in the pay of the Establishment but who was more renowned for his ability as a

fiddler than for his devotion to religion. After Farquharson's departure Munro put away his fiddle and began to conduct prayer meetings at various places in the northern part of Skye (MacCowan 1902:1–30), the eventual outcome of his activities being best described in a more or less contemporary account of it:

> In the year 1812, by means of these meetings, an uncommon awakening took place among the people, which was attended with distress and trembling of the body. . . . Some persons came under convictions when attending these meetings; others when they came in contact with awakened persons who attended them. . . . These were days of power and of sweetness to as many as had spiritual taste and discernment; so that frequently when they met they were reluctant to part (*Present State* 1827:62–3).

At least one of the initiators of the Lewis revival of the 1820s—John MacLeod, the Gaelic schoolmaster at Uig—had been involved in the events of 1812 in Skye (MacRae 1907:80). But in Lewis too local preachers quickly appeared and during 1823 the Established clergy began to complain of the 'religious frenzy which . . . has become so prevalent of late' and of the activities of 'the blind, daring fanatics who now infest this Island . . . disseminating wild unscriptural doctrines' (A. Simpson to J. Adam, 5 Feb. 1823; W. MacRae to Seaforth, 23 Dec. 1823: SP, GD 46/17/vols. 62–3). The extent of the divergence between the popular religion and the Establishment was demonstrated at a communion service in the parish church at Lochs in the south-eastern corner of Lewis in August 1823. When the parish minister, Alexander Simpson—who, according to Evangelical tradition was a drunkard as well as a Moderate (MacFarlane 1924:245)—began his sermon he was interrupted by several 'fanatics' who challenged the validity of the doctrines being propounded from the pulpit. On being asked to leave, Simpson's critics refused to budge and had to be 'dragged off'. Not a whit intimidated they then began to 'sing and expound Scripture and read it among themselves in the neighbourhood so near that their singing seemed meant to disturb the service'. Angered by this calculated defiance of his authority Simpson, with the support of the presbytery of Lewis, lodged a formal complaint with the civil authorities. Five men who had played a prominent part in the disturbances were promptly arrested and shipped to Dingwall where they were jailed for a month (J. Adam to Seaforth, 31 Oct. 1823; 8 Apr. 1824: SP, GD 40/17/vols. 63 and 65)—a proceeding which did nothing to quell the revival but which had the effect, as one of MacKenzie of Seaforth's Lewis correspondents remarked at the time, of setting the Established clergy firmly 'on the fair road to damn their popularity in the Lews' (A. Kelly to Seaforth, Dec. 1823:SP, GD 40/16/vol. 65).

Such events were not confined to Skye and Lewis. In Harris a revival began in the early 1820s under the leadership of John Morrison, a Rodel blacksmith—better known for that reason as Iain Gobha (*Present State* 1827:75–6). And by 1829 'Fanaticism and Sectarianism' were reported to be 'making rapid progress' on the island where Murdoch MacLeod, another ' . . . lay-preacher or exhorter . . . had exerted all his influence to prevent the Parishioners from attending Divine Worship in the Established Churches' (CH 2/361/2:7 Sept. 1829; 3 May 1832). Throughout the north-west there were

identical occurrences. In North Uist in the 1830s and early 1840s many people were following 'divisive courses' and organising their own Sunday services (CH 2/361/2: 27 Mar. 1839). In parts of Mull dissent had 'proceeded to an alarming extent (CH 2/273/4: 3 Dec. 1835). And in Lochcarron by 1825 the leadership of the popular movement had devolved upon John Finlayson, another blacksmith, who was accused by the presbytery of

> following divisive and schismatic courses in absenting himself from attendance on the public ordinances of religion . . . and in collecting crowds at his house during divine service upon the Lord's day and in reading and expounding Scriptures to them (CH 2/567/3: 20 Nov. 1825).

The emergence of the class of lay-preachers made up of John Finlayson, Donald Munro, John Morrison and their fellows was one of the revivalist movement's most important features, not least because these preachers—known as *na daoine*, the men, in order to distinguish them from the ordained clergy—constituted the first leadership of any sort to emerge from the crofting population's own ranks. Although they had a long history in those parts of the eastern Highlands where evangelical Christianity had been implanted in Covenanting times (MacInnes 1944:16–41), it was only in the early nineteenth century that *na daoine*, defined as a 'definitely recognised but ecclesiastically unofficial order of evangelical laymen who won public veneration by their eminence in godliness' (*op. cit.*: 16), made their appearance on the north-west coast and in the islands. In some cases, as in that of Donald Munro in Skye or John Davidson in Lochcarron, 'the men' had some previous connection with the Established Church or with the SSPCK—organisations which had long maintained a staff of lay catechists whose duty it was to assist the ministers of sprawling Highland parishes. For the most part, however, the lay-preachers seem to have been ordinary men drawn from the lower strata of Highland society.[8] Usually they were crofters. Occasionally they were craftsmen—blacksmiths seem to have been especially prominent. But their distinguishing features generally consisted solely of their own strength of character and the profound conviction of their religious beliefs, qualities which enabled them to preside over the popular religious movement from the start, conducting prayer-meetings, services, and above all the huge open air 'fellowship meetings' which became a feature of the Friday before communion throughout the evangelical Highlands (Kennedy 1927:86–8).

Well aware of their status in the community 'the men' cultivated a distinctive appearance, wearing their hair long and in some areas adopting a recognised 'uniform'—on the northern mainland this consisted of 'a camlet coat and a spotted handkerchief tied over the head', while in Skye multi-coloured nightcaps were favoured (Investigator 1850: 36; *Puritanism* 1851:309). And their fervour had its counterpart in the emotional, often hysterical nature of the movement which they led—a movement in which can be discerned at least a shade of those vast and mysterious upsurges of chiliastic and millennial fervour which occasionally gripped the imagination of the masses of mediæval Europe

and have more recently erupted in widely separated parts of the Third World (Lanternari 1963; Cohn 1970). Thus one contemporary observer, noting that 'It is known to every one conversant with the Highlands that the recent degradation and misery of the people have predisposed their minds to imbibe these pestiferous delusions to which they fly for consolation under their sufferings', went on to describe how those affected by the revivals 'see visions, dream dreams, revel in the wildest hallucinations' (Browne 1825: 142–3). In Skye, for example, many people—especially women—were said by contemporaries to have become 'fanatical' and fallen prey to fits of religious ecstasy (*Present State* 1827:63). In Lewis, too, many people were 'seized with spasms, convulsions, fits, and screaming aloud' (A. Simpson to J. Adam, 5 Feb. 1823: SP, GD 46/17/vol. 63); and *bliadhna 'n aomaidh*, the year of the swooning, was long remembered in the island (MacKay 1914:248–9).

The millennial character of the revivals had its counterpart in 'the men's' religious teaching. Their theology was of the most elemental type, combining a harsh and pristine puritanism with a transcendental mysticism that had less to do with nineteenth-century protestantism than with an older faith. Visions of heaven and hell, prophetic utterances, intensely personal conflicts with the devil and his angels: these were integral to their creed and a common part of their experience; while in their preaching homely illustration was combined with mysticism and allegory (MacInnes 1944:35, 41). And while 'the men' were often fully literate, knowing their Bibles 'as few besides have known them' (Kennedy 1927:128), they did not hesitate to introduce into their Christianity concepts which were clearly derived from the traditional cultural heritage of the Highlands. Many 'men', for example, believed themselves to have the power of second sight (MacInnes 1944:39–40; MacRae 1932*b*), and even Lachlan MacKenzie of Lochcarron, one of the earliest of the north-west Highland's Evangelical ministers was considered a prophet by his congregation (Campbell 1928:10).

'The men' were no primitivists, however. They had, on the contrary, a very low opinion of much of the traditional culture of the Highlands; and indeed their onslaughts upon that culture undoubtedly destroyed much that was valuable in it (see *e.g.* Carmichael 1928:1. xxv–xxxiii). What is not generally recognised in all that has subsequently been written about the devastating effect of Highland puritanism on Gaelic culture, however, is that the society which supported that culture was destroyed in the eighteenth century and that 'the men's' attack upon the Highland's cultural heritage can consequently be interpreted as a more or less conscious attempt to come to terms with the realities of a social and economic system dominated by landlordism rather than by clanship. Thus the revivalists' social teachings were infinitely more advanced and closer to the needs of the crofting population than those embodied in the secular poetry of the period—a considerable proportion of which, in Sorley MacLean's view, is nostalgic and pessimistic, shying away from confronting the reality of clearance and eviction (MacLean 1939: *passim*).

As early as the 1760s, for example, Dugald Buchanan of Rannoch—perhaps the

greatest evangelical poet to write in Gaelic—included in *An Claigeann*, The Skull, a telling indictment of the commercial landlordism which was just beginning to make its mark on the Highlands. Several bitter verses are devoted to the rack-renting laird who flays his people and thins the cheek of his tenants by his excessive exactions. If the rent is delayed the cattle are seized, no heed being paid to the cries of the poor. Before the landlord stands an old man, his head uncovered in the bitter wind. His petition is ignored. For striking down such a tyrant, Buchanan concludes, death is to be praised (MacBean 1920:114; MacInnes 1951:283).

Here is no anachronistic reluctance to admit the exploitative role of the former chief. And indeed Buchanan's tirade marked the beginning of a long association between Highland evangelicalism and anti-landlordism. Alexander Campbell, the leader of an early secessionist movement in Argyll, thought it worthwhile to record his 'testimony against covetous heritors that oppress the poor' (Investigator 1850:78); and not least among the faults of the Moderate clergy, according to *na daoine*, was that they 'dined with the laird' and generally associated with the upper strata of Highland society (MacKenzie 1914:86). And at another level, the social protest implicit in the vision of hell accorded to David Ross of Ferintosh, Ross-shire, requires no elucidation:

> In one spot David saw a poor soul surrounded by busy devils. "There is a rich miser for you", said the angel. "They are pouring buckets of molten gold down his throat. There again", said he, pointing to another, "There is a laird who has been driving out tenants from their farms, squandering his means after strange women, rendering poor people miserable and himself so miserable that at last he had to take away his own life. He is now for ever doomed to be alternatively bitten by serpents and have his wounds licked over by hell hounds. Poor fellow! Little did he think during his moments of heartless pleasure and dissipation that he was sowing for himself the seeds of such an eternity of woe" (Sinclair 1867:61–2).

'The men' and their movement thus posed a threat to all those whose interests lay in maintaining the social and economic *status quo* in the Highlands, whether Moderate ministers, landed proprietors or sheep farmers. As far as the Church of Scotland was concerned only the comparatively small number of Evangelical ministers—whose own beliefs at least approximated to the tenets of the popular religion—had anything approaching a cordial relationship with 'the men'. Of the Evangelicals the most popular were probably *Maighstir Ruaraidh*—as Roderick MacLeod of Bracadale was popularly known—and Alexander MacLeod who became minister of Uig in Lewis shortly after the beginning of the revival in that island. These men's churches were regularly filled to capacity with the evangelically-minded people in their own congregations and in the congregations of neighbouring parishes (MacRae 1907:82–3; Beaton 1929:188). But elsewhere, as already mentioned, 'the men' and their adherents simply abandoned the parish churches. In Skye in the 1820s, for example, there were only two parishes—one of which was Roderick MacLeod's Bracadale and the other the neighbouring parish of Duirinish—in which there was no 'meeting held for social worship on the Sabbath distinct from that carried on in the parish church' (*Present State* 1827:67).

In view of 'the men's' obvious leanings towards anti-landlordism it was inevitable that the Established clergy's concern about these developments should be shared by landowners and their associates. Not only did 'the men' articulate crofters' growing dislike of landlords, but the very existence of a profoundly popular movement equipped with its own leaders clearly constituted a threat to the latter's hitherto undisputed dominance in the Highlands. The opinion of the minister of Barvas in Lewis, a man who thought it 'easy to see that no good can come to society from the raving effusions of . . . ignorant men who, with consummate effrontery, assume the character and office of public instructors' (W. MacRae to Seaforth 23 Dec. 1823: SP, GD 46/17/vol. 62), was accordingly echoed by many proprietors. 'No gentleman', it is recorded, 'associated with Donald Munro' (MacCowan 1902:18); while at his meetings and those of his fellows there might be seen, among the hundreds of crofters and their families 'an occasional sheep farmer, if a native of the district, but never a factor' (Brown 1890: 670). Lord MacDonald's factor in fact considered 'the men' to be 'an evil influence', an opinion shared by MacLeod of Dunvegan who thought that 'the influence of lay preachers . . . was injurious to the people' (*Sites* 1847: Q. 5094 *et seq.*). And a group of Skye sheep-farmers reacted to the 1812 revival in the island by making representations to Lord MacDonald 'soliciting his Lordship's power and authority to suppress these meetings and to proceed against those who held them' (*Present State* 1827:63).

Such apprehensions were not unjustified. Crofters' shared experience of the religious revivals undoubtedly helped to make possible the united and concerted action which constituted the basis of the crofting community's offensive against landlordism in the 1880s. Highland Land League meetings, it was observed, were 'always held in the open in defiance of rain or tempest', and at them 'the person selected to preside opens and closes the proceedings with prayer' (*Scotsman*: 1 Dec. 1884). The resemblance between these gatherings and the assemblages convened by 'the men' during the heyday of the religious revivals was not coincidental; nor was the fact that the local leaders of the Land League—men like John MacPherson of Glendale who opened and closed his meetings with passionately delivered Gaelic prayers and whose eloquence in his native tongue was such as to move men to tears or to fury (MacLeod 1917:74–5)—occupied positions in the townships that were in all respects analogous to those held by 'the men' of a preceding generation. As the first of the crofting community's leaders 'the men' had pioneered the route the Land Leaguers followed, and their influence is as obvious in what Land League leaders said as it is in the ways they said it.

The declaration of a Tiree crofter and Land League organiser who was imprisoned for his part in a land raid on the Duke of Argyll's Tiree estate in 1886 speaks for itself:

> He held that he was standing on the side of justice and he had the Bible as his authority. The earth belonged to the people and not to the Duke of Argyll or any landlord (OT: 28 Aug. 1886).

The texts on which these views were based were the common currency of Land

League politics and were to be seen on banners at any one of scores of Land League meetings:

> The earth is mine. . . . The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. . . . Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field. . . . The earth He hath given to the children of men (OT:29 Dec. 1883; *Scotsman*:4 Sept. 1885).

'If the landlords consulted Moses or Joshua', declared Norman Stewart a crofter from Valtos in Skye and a branch secretary of the Highland Land League,

> 'they would find there substantial evidences as to who are the rightful owners of the soil. The Lord Advocate and Sheriff Ivory can quote Acts Georges and John, but we can quote the Act of God—the Bible' (OT:21 Feb. 1885).

By the 1880s, when the power and prestige of the Highland Land League was at its height, 'the men' had largely faded from the scene and the popular religion had been institutionalised within the framework of the Free Church. But while the Free Church inherited Highland evangelicalism it was John MacPherson, Norman Stewart, and a host of other Land League activists who inherited 'the men's' leadership of and influence over the crofting community.

In the context of the history of the popular religious movement in the Highlands the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843 was a largely fortuitous event. The internecine conflict between Evangelicals and Moderates which led eventually to the former's secession and to the formation of the Free Church had nothing to do with Highland affairs and was, on the face of it, of little interest to the mass of the crofting population. As the ecclesiastical crisis approached, however, the Evangelical leadership made a determined effort to win popular support in the Highlands. Gaelic pamphlets were circulated; Evangelical deputations toured the region; and most important of all, the local Evangelical ministers strenuously endeavoured to win to their side the adherents of the indigenous Evangelical movement.[9]

On their side the Evangelicals had many advantages. They were the only ministers for whom crofters felt any respect or affection and they were consequently able to draw on a fund of popularity built up over many years—*Maighstir Ruaraidh*, for example, was able to draw large and enthusiastic crowds to his pro-Evangelical meetings in the winter of 1842–3 (MacKay 1914:266). The Moderates had no such advantages. For them there was only a deeply felt animosity. It is not really surprising, therefore, that 'the men' adhered unanimously to the Free Church (MacCowan 1902:82; Sutherland 1844:9, 12–13) and that throughout the north-west Highlands the secession amounted to 'a tidal wave which . . . carried the population en masse' (Simpson 1909:I. 433). The situation in Lewis where less than 500 people out of a population of some 20,000 remained in the Established Church was not untypical (*ibid.*). There as elsewhere the parish churches were 'swept bare of worshippers', their congregations being reduced to a handful of sheep farmers and their shepherds (Barron 1913:xxxix). When on the

first Sunday after the Disruption the Durness church bell was muffled with an old sock and a dead dog hung over the pulpit in Farr (MacRae 1932*a*:51) the symbolism was, therefore, very apt. The Established Church had ceased to have any claim to authority over the crofting population.

The immediate cause of the Evangelicals' withdrawal from the Establishment having been their opposition to landlords' control of church patronage, the Free Church held decidedly anti-landlord views. Landlords, in their turn, were intensely suspicious of the new denomination, their antipathy towards it manifesting itself in a campaign of obstruction and harassment which usually took the form of a refusal to sell sites for Free churches. Although not confined to the Highlands the latter practice was more widespread and effective there than anywhere else simply because the sheer size of Highland estates enabled their owners to deny the Free Church access to whole parishes and in some cases to entire islands or even counties (Sites 1847:iv). In one famous episode caused by Sir James Riddell's persistent refusal to provide a site for a Free church at Strontian the problem was overcome by the provision of a floating church which was moored in Loch Sunart (Brown 1890:427–8, 655–7). Elsewhere persecution was more difficult to counter. In Mull a Free Church congregation was obliged to worship in a gravel pit below the high water-mark (*Sites* 1847: QQ 4088–94); while Lord MacDonald, the owner of the largest estate in the Hebrides, refused sites to no less than seven congregations (*op cit.*: Q 91). When in the winter of 1845 the people of Paible on the MacDonald estate in North Uist attempted to build a Free Church meeting-house on the township's common pasture the building was promptly pulled down by the estate management and nine of the crofters involved in its construction evicted. A subsequent attempt to hold services in the lee of a large rock on the common grazing was countered by the simple expedient of ploughing and sowing the ground around it (*op. cit.*: 3684–5, 4437–62).

Visiting the north-west Highlands five years after the Disruption, Robert Somers made the following comments about it. In the Highlands, he wrote,

> there are only two ranks of people—a higher rank and a lower rank—the former consisting of a few large tenants . . . and the latter consisting of a dense body of small lotters and fishermen. . . . The proverbial enmity of rich and poor in all societies has received peculiar development in this simple social structure of the Highlands. The clearances laid the foundation of a bitter animosity between the sheep farmers and the lotters; and as these violent changes were executed by the authority of the lairds, they also snapped the tie which had previously, amid all reverses, united the people and their chiefs. One link still bound the extremities of society in formal, if not in spiritual union. The parish church was a common centre where all classes met. . . . But even religion . . . was converted at the Disruption into a new fountain of bitterness. . . . There is thus a double point of collision between the two ranks—an ecclesiastical as well as an agrarian enmity. . . . It is consequently almost impossible to find an individual in the upper rank who has not a grudge against the people, either on the score of their Free Churchism, or on the score of their hostility to the sheep walk system (Somers 1848:65–6).

Although the link between social conflict and religious dissent went back farther than Somers realised, his remarks contain an essential truth. In the Highlands the Disruption was not just an ecclesiastical dispute. It was a class conflict. Its battle line was the line of class demarcation, the line between the small tenantry on the one hand and sheep farmers, factors and proprietors on the other. In that fact is to be found the explanation of what is otherwise inexplicable: the intensity of proprietorial opposition to the Free Church.

Highland landlords' experience of the popular religious movement had done little to convince them that its institutionalisation in a Church founded on an essentially anti-landlord principle would be to their advantage. The Free Church, declared Sir James Riddell, would lead the people 'astray from the ministrations of the regularly ordained clergy who were placed over them for their spiritual good and edification' and make them more than ever dependent upon 'the teaching of illiterate laymen'. Besides, he added—and the argument must have seemed a powerful one in the politically troubled world of the 1840s—once one part of the established order had been challenged there was no knowing where the process might end. Already, he thought, the Free Church had 'bid defiance to the powers that be' and 'broken up society from its very foundation' (*Sites* 1847: 1st Rep. 96; 2nd Rep. 92).

Such expectations were exaggerated. Ultimately dependent on the urban middle class of lowland Scotland the Free Church was unlikely to sanction a serious challenge to private property in land or in anything else. The real threat posed to landlords' interests by the Free Church was more subtle—though nonetheless serious in the long term—than the red revolution suspected by Sir James Riddell in his more fevered moments. It was, as pointed out by Hugh Miller—who in his capacity as editor of the evangelical newspaper *The Witness* was one of the most effective of Highland landlordism's early critics—that the Free Church threatened to end crofters' political isolation; 'to translate their wrongs into English and to give them currency in the general mart of opinion' (Miller 1843:35).

Broadly speaking this was in fact what occurred. Among the Free Church's southern membership there immediately appeared a feeling that 'the enthusiastic adhesion' of the crofting population to their cause imposed upon them a special charge and responsibility (Fleming 1927:70), a feeling which made possible the financing of the Free Church in the Highlands and greatly contributed to the success of charitable relief efforts during the famine of the later 1840s. At the same time, through the medium of the Free Church—which a recent historian has described as 'the bulwark of the Scottish Liberal Party' (Kellas 1964:31)—the first concrete links were established between the incipient agrarian radicalism of the crofting population and the mainstream of Scottish Liberalism and radicalism. It is not without significance, therefore, that the crofting population, acting in concert with an important and vociferous section of southern public opinion and the Liberal and Evangelical press, was able, through the medium of a parliamentary enquiry which unreservedly condemned the landlords' conduct (*Sites*

1847), to force the site-refusing proprietors to give away. The passing in 1886 of the first Crofters Act—a measure which ended the crofting community's long insecurity and recognised crofters' rights in the land—was the outcome of a very similar sequence of events.

Of more immediate importance, however, was the fact that in the north-west Highlands the Free Church came into existence as a profoundly popular institution, the heir to a long tradition of religious dissent. It was, and still is, the church of the mass of the small tenantry and in a very real sense it was their creation, a victory for their interests over those of their landlords. It was in this way above all that the victory of 1843 contributed to the more important victory of 1886, for the Disruption and the revivals which preceded it were largely instrumental in welding a disparate collection of small tenants into a community capable of acting collectively and possessing a distinctive character and outlook. That the future of the Gaelic language is still bound up with the fate of the Free Church is not accidental (Thomson 1971:136); nor is the fact that even the socialism and anti-clericalism of a modern Gaelic poet like Sorley MacLean is expressed in a language reminiscent of the early evangelical revivals (MacInnes 1973). Evangelicalism and the emergence of the modern crofting community are inseparable phenomena if only for the reason that it was through the medium of a profoundly evangelical faith that crofters first developed a forward-looking critique of the situation created in the Highlands by the actions of the region's landowning and therefore ruling class. The principles at stake in 1843 were ostensibly religious. But they reflected the deep-seated social antagonisms which underlay the more explicitly political conflict of the 1880s and which are by no means absent from the Highland scene today. In 1843 a majority of the crofting population stood up to their landlords for the first time. And they won. Not even the catastrophe of the famine and the renewed clearances which followed it could obliterate the significance of their victory.

NOTES

1 See Gray 1957; Cregeen 1964; Gaskell 1968; Richards 1973; Adam 1973.

2 The warrior chiefs are gone who had a yearning for the truth, who had regard for their faithful followers and had a yoke on their foe. . . . Look around you and see the gentry without pity for poor folk, without kindness to friends; they are of the opinion that you do not belong to the soil and though they have left you destitute they cannot see it as a loss; they have lost sight of every law and promise that was observed by the men who took this land from the foe. . . .

3 For details see *Reports of Commissioners for Building Churches in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, 1825–1835; *Specimens of the Ecclesiastical Destitution of Scotland* pp. 35–50 (Edinburgh 1835); *Commissioners of Religious Instruction, Scotland*, 4th Report, Parliamentary Papers 1837–8, XXXIII.

4 Roderick MacLeod of Bracadale is said to have 'declared that the first presbyterial act he performed after ordination was to assist his co-presbyters to bed. They were so helplessly intoxicated' (MacRae 1907:68). Such allegations of loose living—and especially the identification of Moderatism and alcoholism—are common in Free Church sources.

5 The phase is borrowed from the title of a recent study of independent church movements in Kenya (Welbourn and Ogot 1966).

6 Again the African experience is relevant. A comparative study of independent church movements in Africa has demonstrated a close connection between the availability of the Bible in the vernacular and the appearance of religious independency in one form or another (Barrett 1968: 127 *et seq.*).

7 It is noteworthy that the Lewis Presbytery Minutes and the Seaforth Papers generally corroborate the traditions of the Lewis revival included in MacFarlane 1924.

8 Several of 'the men' are referred to in this article. For short biographies of some of the best known see MacCowan 1902; MacFarlane 1924.

9 For details of these activities see *The Witness*, 21 Dec. 1842; 25 Feb., 28 Apr. 1843; Brown 1890: 58–74; Kennedy 1927: 242 *et seq.*

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Gaelic Proverbial Lore in Embo Village

NANCY C. DORIAN

Traditional Gaelic folk material in East Sutherland

Embo village, near Dornoch in Sutherland, has in this century been one of the chief relic areas for Gaelic speech in the north-east of Scotland. During the decade of the 1960s over one hundred people, or about half of the adult population, used Gaelic as their everyday language. The Gaelic-speaking half of the population is, however, the older half: the younger people speak no Gaelic, and the language will die out completely in Embo within the next forty to fifty years.

East Sutherland Gaelic, including Embo Gaelic, is notable for the aberrance of the dialect and for the poverty, in many areas, of the folk culture. There are no local songs and no internationally-known traditional stories, and according to a Gaelic-speaking schoolmaster who came to Embo during the 1930s, there were none even then (Calder 1960: 290). I have collected only two Gaelic riddles in the course of nineteen months of field work, spread over a nine-year period, in the area: one of these was learned by a local woman from an outsider, and the other is current in English as well and may therefore be a translation. The one or two children's rhymes that survive are apparently translations from the English and co-exist with the English models. Place-name lore is similarly thin.

The poverty of the Gaelic folk culture in general makes the relative wealth of Gaelic proverbs available in Embo striking by contrast. This paper presents the results of work with the Embo family who emerged as the chief source of proverbial lore and with other Embo villagers who were asked to establish a body of truly local material by confirming or rejecting the proverbs provided by the leading tradition-bearing family. A final section presents the proverbs common to Embo speakers which do not appear in Nicolson's collection of Gaelic proverbs (Nicolson-MacInnes 1951).

Encountering the proverbs

The first proverbial material that I collected emerged naturally in the conversational give and take of the Embo household in which I was working most in 1963–4. This was the home of Christina (Teenie) and John Fraser, an Embo couple in their early sixties and early eighties respectively. Sharing their home was Christina's considerably

younger sister Margaret Ross and Christina's slightly older brother Peter Ross. Peter was at home only at weekends, however, and I scarcely knew him at that time.

The Fraser-Ross household was known in the village as an uncommonly rich source of proverbial material, but I had no idea of this then. I simply registered interest and pleasure when proverbs arose naturally in conversation or were quoted in connection with the linguistic work we were doing, and gradually the Frasers began to offer them to me as items of independent interest. After I returned to the United States, Christina, who was more or less literate in Gaelic, even wrote me an occasional proverb in her letters, saying she had forgotten to tell me that one before. But the prevailing pattern with the Frasers was the introduction of proverbial material only where it was germane, for example to counter someone in an argument or to explain an attitude.

After Christina and John Fraser died in 1966, I continued to work in the Ross household with the surviving sister and brother. Peter Ross had retired in the interim and was now at home all the time. In the summer of 1967 I lived in the Ross household for two weeks, and during this period Peter took to producing proverbs and sayings in a steady stream, usually *à propos* of nothing, but simply because he liked them and knew I was interested in them. I learned to come to the breakfast table with paper and pencil because Peter was sure to have recollected several more sayings during the night. Peter is in fact something of a specialist in proverbs, given to saying very little beyond what he can couch in the language of traditional wisdom. This is in marked contrast to his sister Christina, who was extremely loquacious and for whom proverbs formed only a small, though cherished, part of the verbal repertory.

The bulk of the material in my collection of proverbs and sayings comes from Peter Ross and was gathered in 1967–8. Peter alone provided 205 items,[1] only thirteen of which overlapped with the forty provided by his sister Christina during the brief time I had worked with her. Although Peter only rarely gave a proverb which Christina had also given, he very frequently suggested that the proverb he was introducing was common family property by invoking Christina's name: 'Did Christina ever tell you this one?' Peter never admitted to having learned a proverb on the west coast of Scotland, where he spent many years working, or through reading. He commonly introduced his contributions with the kind of reference to his sister Christina already mentioned or with reference to deceased villagers as his sources: 'My mother used to say . . .' or 'The old people used to say. . . .' But he also introduced a good many proverbs simply by saying 'Did you hear the one, . . . ?'

There is no generic term of the type 'proverb' or 'saying' in common use in Embo Gaelic, and Peter's unedited material is quite various. It includes proverbs, maxims, proverbial phrases, and what Archer Taylor has called Wellerisms (Taylor 1931: 201). Also offered by Peter with exactly the same introductory remarks were one riddle, one trick question, one tongue-twister, a few archaic turns of phrase, and one or two lines from popular songs: these are not included in the corpus.

Establishing a corpus of local material

Much of the material given by Peter Ross was suspect in terms of a search for a truly local tradition. There was, to begin with, the fact that there was so much more of it than contact with other local people suggested was current. Furthermore Peter's sister Margaret sometimes disclaimed knowledge of the proverb he quoted. Then there was the fact that Peter sometimes quoted a proverb which he himself could not translate, or a proverb with Gaelic words common in other parts of the Highlands but not locally. Examples of the former are *Faodaidh bean a cothrom dol air bean a caimis* [*sic*], which Peter explained in the following words: 'a rich woman can go anywhere she likes, not a poor woman', without being able to give a meaning for *caimis*; or the rhyming proverb /fanəs u bɪɔs nə l′um er tɔt nə tum/, which I can only give phonemically because the words /l′um/ and /tɔt nə tum/ are obscure. Peter explained that it meant 'you can tell on a person's face', but was unable to translate any part of it directly. He connected /l′um/ with the local word for 'beer', but this is unlikely because the word 'beer' always has a long nasal vowel: /l′ũ:m/. An example of a proverb using a word common elsewhere but not locally is *Rud air clar an aodainn, chan urrainn dha bhith air fholach*, 'A thing on the surface of the face can't be hidden', with *aodann* instead of the local *aghaidh* 'face'. A still more striking example, because Peter's own sister Margaret did not know the proverb and objected to the non-local word, was *Thig uabhar roimh sgrios*, 'Pride comes before a fall', with *uabhar* instead of the local *pròis* 'pride'.

Because of the uncertain provenance of much of Peter's proverbial material, his collection of proverbs and sayings was submitted to a jury of fellow-villagers ranging in size from two to seven individuals as people came and went during the sessions. The proverbs were submitted in English translation and with rare exceptions (*e.g.* where feeling was strong that the proverb was common but the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon seemed to be preventing its total recall) no proverb was accepted as local unless the jury could provide a Gaelic version identical with, or reasonably similar to, Peter's and Christina's.

The local corpus

The Embo jury was able to reproduce eighty of Peter and Christina's proverbs and sayings and claimed to have heard twenty-four additional items without being able to reproduce them. In the process of reviewing the proverbs already in the collection they added just one new saying of their own: to the considerable list of sayings designed to put a young upstart in his place they added *Cha do phàidh e am bainne fhathast* 'He didn't pay the milk yet', which they say is used especially of a young and green man marrying.

Embo is a thoroughly bilingual community where Gaelic and English are used side by side. A number of proverbs are common to both languages, and beyond this the

impulse to translate from one language to the other must be ever present. It is interesting, therefore, that seven of Peter's proverbs were rejected by the jury on the grounds that they were really English proverbs rather than Gaelic, *e.g. 'S olc a' ghaoth nach seid gu math do fear a choireigin* 'It's an ill wind that blows nobody good',[2] and *'Sfhearr am muileach aig seann duine na tràill aig duine òg* 'Better an old man's darling than a young man's slave'. On the other hand one saying common to both languages was specifically claimed as 'a Gaelic one' by one of the jury: *Dé feum a' ghlasadh an stàbull 'nuair a tha na h-eich air falbh?* 'What use locking the stable when the horses are gone?'

Five other shared sayings were simply given in Gaelic with no comment at all, *e.g. Chan fhaigh thu snàthad ann an cruach feur* 'You won't find a needle in a haystack', and *Chan e airgiod na h-uile nì* 'Money isn't everything'. Just once the jury commented that a saying was both Gaelic and English: *Tha an leanabh 's a' chreathall nas glic na 'm fear a tha fulaisgeadh e* 'The baby in the cradle is wiser than the fellow who's rocking it'. These shared sayings were accepted as part of the local corpus, while the sayings identified as English were excluded on the basis of the jury's rejection.

An interesting development was the discovery that the sort of obscurities which originally made many items in Peter's stock of proverbs suspect to me proved to have parallels even within the established corpus of local proverbs. It is evidently not possible to disqualify a saying on this basis.

Sometimes speakers used a word freely in a proverb which they admitted to not knowing outside the proverb, as with *gionach* in **Théid cù gionach a sgaldadh* 'A greedy dog gets scalded'. This word was translated correctly in the context of the proverb although the word 'greedy' had previously been unelicitable from several members of the jury. Furthermore it was mispronounced by two of them as /gin'ax/ rather than /ginax/, suggesting that it was not part of their active vocabulary but rather a relic surviving precariously in the proverb.

In the case of the proverb *Rigidh each mall muileann uair-eigin* 'A slow horse will reach the mill sometime', the locally unfamiliar word *mall*, which survives only in this proverb, was variously translated as 'lame', 'weak', and 'slow'. The proverb is nonetheless widely known and correctly used, since all three translations make sense in the context of the rest of the proverb.

A case where the unfamiliar word is perhaps less guessable from context, and yet the proverb remains current, is **Cha ghabh thu dar gheobh thu, 's chan fhaigh dar 's àill* 'You won't take when you'll get, and [you] won't get when you want'. The translations offered by both Peter and the jury indicated that they understood the meaning of the proverb in a general sense and applied it appropriately to such as finicky people, but when pressed for a translation of the expressions [də s a:l'], which to the best of my knowledge does not occur in the dialect outside this saying, Peter hazarded a guess that [s a:l'] had 'something to do with meat'.

One widely quoted proverb, given by five informants, including one from Golspie, a

* Proverbs and sayings marked with an asterisk are not found in *Nicolson's Gaelic Proverbs.*

village 10 miles away from Embo where proverbs are much less in evidence, is completely obscure in its last half. This last half exists in several variations, none of which makes clear sense. The first half in all versions runs **Cha dhaor am bolla* 'Not dear the boll'. The ending is given variously as /(s) gə fɛtəra/, /s gə vɛtəra/ and /ə bɛtəra/. All speakers agree that the proverb means roughly that a commodity, represented by the boll, is not expensive as long as it's available at all, and one of the attempts at a more or less literal translation runs 'when you can get it', suggesting that the element /fɛ-/ or /vɛ-/ or /bɛ-/ is the local dialect form of *faigh* 'get', which does indeed take the first two of those shapes.[3] Christina Fraser, who was the first to offer the saying, suggested that the second half was a corruption of *gum faigh duine e* 'that a man will get it'. The interesting thing about this proverb is that its obscurity to its users in no way reduces their sense of its effectiveness. They quote it confidently as an embodiment of traditional wisdom in what they believe to be appropriate circumstances, and they had no hesitation in bringing it to my attention. In East Sutherland, clearly, a proverb need not be completely comprehensible to be maintained and transmitted.

The content of the local corpus

The eighty proverbs and sayings in the local corpus cover the usual wide spectrum of traditional wisdom and experience. Certain areas are relatively richly represented, however.

Five proverbs deal with material well-being and the difficulties of securing it:

Chan eil port an asgaidh a' dol. 'There's no free ferry running.'

Cha sheas poca falaimh ri balla. 'An empty purse won't stand against a wall.'

*Gheobh an caithdear na chaitheas e, agus chan fhaigh an caomhnadair na chaomhnas e. 'The spender will get what he will spend and the saver won't get what he will save.'

*Ithidh an t-acras rud 's am bith. 'Hunger will eat anything.'

*'Nuair a bhios a' bhròg agam, cha bhi stocain agam. 'Whenever I have the shoe, I don't have a stocking'.

Another popular theme is the unexpectedness of life and the uncertainty of fate:

*Cha téid an ràthan air an tòn air am bheil thu na shuidhe.[4] 'Don't go guarantee for the bottom you're sitting on.'

Rud a thig leis an t-uisge, falbh e leis a' ghaoth. 'A thing that comes with the water will depart with the wind.'

'S iomadh rud a chì, fear an t-saobhal fhad'. 'Many a thing he'll see, a man who lives long.'

'S iomadh rud a' tachairt eadar a' chreathall 's an uaimh [=uaigh]. 'Many a thing happens between the cradle and the grave.'

'S iomadh rud thig air an laogh nach saoil a mhàthair. 'Many a thing comes on the calf that his mother doesn't expect.'

Fools and foolish behaviour, sometimes contrasted with wise behaviour, are the focus of five proverbs:

Ceann mor air duine glic, ceann cearc air amadan. 'Big head on a wise man, hen head on a fool.'

*Chan eil baile 's am bith gun amadan. 'There's no village without a fool.'

*Cleib Culmhàilidh, cleib a' Phort. 'The Culmally fool, the Ferry fool.' (This is the only saying in which local place-names appear. The saying refers to a local anecdote in which a drunken Culmally man insists on seeing his equally drunken Little Ferry friend home, but is in turn seen home by the Little Ferry man, and so the two spend the whole night walking back and forth between Culmally and the Little Ferry, seeing each other home.)

*'S iomadh rud nì ceann gun chiall air casan gun lùthas. 'Many a thing a head without sense does on feet without strength.'

Tha cuid an duine glic tòn a' phoca, cuid an t-amadan beul a' phoca. 'The wise man's share is at the bottom of the bag, the fool's share at the mouth.'

A number of weaknesses and vices are dealt with in proverbs and sayings, but pride attracts the most frequent comment:

*Cha deach thusa a dhèanamh 's a' chèardaich nas mù na neach eile. 'You weren't made in the smiddy any more than anyone else.'

Cha'n eil comunn aig na h-Iùdhaich ris na Samaratanaich. 'The Jews have no intercourse with the Samaritans.'[5]

*Sàilean àrd, 's pòcaidean falaimh. 'High heels and empty pockets.'

*'S ann dut a rug an cat an cuilean. 'It's for you the cat bore the puppy.'

Suidh gu h-ìosal, 's pàidh gu h-uasal. 'Sit lowly and pay nobly.'

Only persistence among the virtues receives much attention:

*A' chearc a sgrìobas, gheobh i rud-eigin. 'The hen that scratches will get something.'

Rigidh each mall muileann uaireigin. 'A slow horse will reach the mill sometime.'

*'S e straoi ni buaidh. 'It's striving that makes victory.'

All of these themes are further developed in the material Peter adds to the common store. He has three additional sayings on material well-being, six on the uncertainties of fate, two on the behaviour of fools, four on pride, and one on persistence. The rest of his material is thoroughly miscellaneous except for a conspicuously rich stock of proverbs on the dangers and disappointments of love and marriage, on which he offers eight proverbs in addition to the jury's one. As a slightly misogynistic bachelor, Peter delights in these last and he has evidently made a special point of preserving traditional wisdom on this theme.

The style of the proverbs

The couching of proverbial wisdom takes very various forms, as demonstrated already in the proverbs and sayings quoted above. The nearest approach to a proverbial formula is the frequency of the introductory phrase *'S iomadh* 'There is many a . . .', which occurs eight times among the eighty items of the local corpus and is the more striking because the word *iomadh* is not particularly frequent of occurrence outside proverbial matter. The formula 'better——than——', which is frequent in Peter and Christina's material, occurs only once in the corpus established by the jury.

A stylistic device peculiar to proverbs is the juxtaposition of two nouns in the absence of any verb. The two nouns then stand to each other in various relationships, *e.g.* the second is the result of the first (*Cadal fad' 's an t-iomradh teth* 'Long sleep and the hot rowing'); the second is intended to contrast with the first (**Casan iarunn air latha na Sàbaid, 's casan fiadh air Di-luain* 'Iron feet on the Sabbath, deer's feet on Monday'); or the two are intended to represent two of a kind (**Cleib Culmhàilidh, cleib a' Phort* 'The Culmally fool and the Ferry fool').

Imperative sayings (that is, maxims) are relatively rare. Only four occur in the local corpus, *e.g.* **Cha gheall*[6] *nichean do leanabh* 'Don't promise anything to a child.'

Four proverbs use diametric opposites in stylistic contrast, *e.g.* riches versus poverty in the proverb **Cha toir beartas iad, 's cha chum bochdas air falbh iad,* 'Riches won't bring them [children], and poverty won't keep them away.'

What Taylor calls expansions (Taylor: 25–6) are popular in Embo, that is, tag-lines added to a familiar proverbial expression. In the proverb already cited above, *Tha cuid an duine glic tòn a' phoca, cuid an t-amadan beul a' phoca,* the second half would appear to be an expansion when contrasted with the form given by Nicolson, which reads simply *Bidh cuid an amadain am bial a bhuilg.* In another proverb given by Nicolson, *Fear 'an aite fir 's e dh' fhàgas am fearann daor* 'Tenant after tenant makes the land dear', the Embo version gives the reason for the dearness only in a tag (rarely used but generally known): *'S e sin a dh' fhàg am fearainn cho daor, cho luath 's a tha aon duine a mach, tha duine eile a staigh* 'It's that that left the field so dear, as soon as one man is out, another man is in.' Peter thrice added tags to proverbs included in the local corpus. The jury agreed to the tag in the first case (*Tha iasg 's a' chuan cho math 's a thàinig as—ach cha'n eil h-uile h-iasg*

cho blasdail 'There's fish in the sea as good as came out—but not all the fish are so tasty'), although the proverb appears in Nicolson without any expansion. Peter's second tag, which consists of a line running parallel to the first, was rejected by the jury: **Tha iasg 's a' chuan do'n an leanabh nach do rug*[7]*— 's tha feur air fàs do'n an laogh nach do rug* 'There's fish in the sea for the child not born—and there's grass growing for the calf not born.' Peter's third tag is an answer to the proverbial question mentioned above, *Dé feum a' ghlasadh an stàbull 'nuair a tha na h-eich air falbh?*, namely *Faodas e bhith gum bheil acfhuinn luachmhor innte.* 'What use locking the stable when the horses are gone?—Maybe there's a valuable harness in it.' The jury claimed not to have heard this answer before. In one case a jury member actually added a tag to one of Peter's proverbs: **A' chearc a sgròbail, gheobh ise rudeigin, ach a' chearc a grùban, chan fhaigh i dad* 'The scratching hen will get something, but the sitting(?) hen will get nothing.'[8]

Proverbs with rhyme or other word resemblances were not common in the local corpus. The only two rhyming proverbs collected were: *Rud a chì leanabh, nì leanabh* 'A thing a child sees, he'll do', and *Théid reodhadh 's t-earrach troimh bòrd darach* 'A spring frost will go through an oak board'. Two additional proverbs had internal word resemblances: *Suidh gu h-ìosal, 's pàidh gu h-uasal* 'Sit lowly and pay nobly', and **Cha bheir aireachas air toileachas* 'Regret won't catch up with happiness'. Peter included six further proverbs with rhyme or assonance in his larger corpus, two of which had been given by Christina as well, but none of these were reproduced by the jury.

The future of proverbial lore in Embo

With the death of Christina Fraser, Embo lost one of its great proverbial tradition-bearers, and this was clearly recognised by the jury. Christina was a shopkeeper and was in conversation with one or another villager virtually all day long. She was known and cherished as a treasure-trove of proverbs and old sayings, and the jury often said 'I used to hear that one with [*i.e.* from] Teenie'. Although the jury ventured the opinion that Peter actually knew even more proverbs than his sister, his sphere of influence is much more limited owing to the fact that he is something of a recluse and quite taciturn in most circumstances. He was also home in the village only at weekends for part of his adult life.

The role of the Fraser-Ross household in preserving proverbial lore can hardly be over-estimated, at least within the circle of their acquaintance. The jury members mentioned specifically only three sources for the proverbs they knew. (Most proverbs were given without source, as part of the common knowledge of the village.) Twice a member of an earlier generation was mentioned, a father and an 'old auntie'. Otherwise, when a source was given, it was always Christina or Peter who was mentioned. In their own time, Christina and Peter had become a source of proverbial material on a par with vanished earlier generations.

Outside the Fraser-Ross household I only once heard a proverb introduced naturally

into a conversation, and that was from an elderly man now dead, the father of one of the jury members. The jury clearly relished the proverbs we discussed, and they valued Peter highly for his command of proverbial lore, but they themselves seem to use proverbs very little. Beyond this there is the decisive fact that no one under the age of 40 continues to speak Gaelic, so that even passive knowledge of Gaelic proverbs will die out in Embo within the next fifty years. Without Christina Fraser or Peter Ross to act as source and catalyst, no very full corpus of local Gaelic proverbs would be forthcoming, and this collection consequently represents a final page in the survival of Embo's traditional Gaelic proverbial lore. It is entirely possible, however, that the Gaelic proverbs will survive nevertheless through translation and transmission in English. Perhaps an investigation fifty years hence will be able to establish whether this in fact has happened.

Additional Embo proverbs and sayings

The following proverbs and sayings are not included in *Nicolson's Gaelic Proverbs* (material introduced with an asterisk above is not repeated here):

An latha nach bi iad a' bruidhinn ma do dhéibhinn, cha mhór a 's fhiach thu. 'The day they won't be speaking about you, you won't be worth much.'

Bean gun leanabh beag, bean gun leisgeul. 'A woman without a small child, a woman without an excuse.'

Cha deach thu troimh 'n a' mhuileann fhathast. 'You didn't go through the mill yet.'

Cha dug thu salainn do'n a' chat. 'You didn't give salt to the cat.'

Chan eil h-uile facal sireadh freagairt. 'Not every question requires an answer.'

Chan fhaigh thu cloch 's a' chuaraidh. 'You won't get a stone in the quarry.'

Chan fhaigh thu neach a thachaiseas do thòn mar thu fhéin. 'You won't get anybody who'll scratch your bottom like yourself.'

Chan fhaithnich thu an t-each breac dar nach fhaic thu e. 'You won't recognise the speckled horse [*i.e.*, your own property] when you don't see it [*i.e.*, if it's been stolen and you never missed it until you saw it elsewhere].'

Chunnaic thu iad, ach cha dh' fhaithnich thu iad. 'You saw them, but you didn't recognise them [*i.e.* what manner of men they were].'

Fàsaidh caileag fo tuba. 'A girl will grow [even] under a tub.'

Ma dh' fhuiricheas tu taobh an teine agad fhéin, cha chluinn thu nichean a chuireas deuchainn ort. 'If you stay at your own fireside you won't hear anything to vex you.'

Mur toir iad gàire ort, cha tòir iad caoin ort. 'If they [children] don't make you laugh, they won't make you cry.'

Rud nach tig air a' chraobh, thig e air a' mheangain. 'A thing that doesn't come on the tree will come on the branch.'

'S fhaide cuimhne brogach. 'A boy's memory is longer.'

Sguabadh e beul a theine fhéin mu téid e gu neach eile. 'Let him brush his own fireside before he goes to some one else['s fireside].'

'S iomadh rud a chì thu 'nuair nach eil gunna agad. 'Many a thing you'll see [hunting] when you don't have a gun.'

Tha bò sgàrdach sireadh bò sgàrdach.[9] 'A skittery cow looks for another skittery cow [for company].'

Tha cus coin gun choileirean ann. 'There are too many dogs without collars [all after the same thing].'

Tha h-uile fear bòidheach cho fad' 's a tha an craiceann slàn. 'Every man is bonny as long as his skin is whole.'

Tha i air sporan duine eile. 'She [a fat wife] is on someone else's purse.'

Tha iomadh gealladh bòidheach 's a' phòsadh. 'There's many a bonny promise in marriage.'

Théid cailleach ri [=le?] cnoc. 'An old woman will go with a hill.' [*i.e.* even an old woman can do an easy thing, or, take the line of least resistance.]

Thoir leòir tobha do duine agus crochas e e fhéin. 'Give enough rope to a man and he'll hang himself.'

NOTES

1 These 205 items by no means exhaust Peter Ross as a source. They represent only the items checked with the jury (see below) in 1968. At subsequent sessions Peter gave an additional thirty-five proverbs (plus many repetitions of proverbs already given earlier).

2 William Matheson and others know Gaelic variants of this proverb in Lewis and Harris: *e.g.*, *'S olc a' ghaoth nach séid an seòl fear-eigin*, 'It's an ill wind that does not blow in somebody's sail.'

3 John MacInnes has suggested that this may be a fossilised local passive taking the form *faigheadar*.

4 The phrase *na shuidhe* does not conjugate for person in East Sutherland Gaelic: lenition appears with all persons.

5 A Biblical reference (John IV. 9.).

6 This is the normal negative imperative for East Sutherland Gaelic.

7 This is an alternative form of the passive *rugadh*. Either may occur, as in *rugadh mi an seo* or *rug mi an seo*, 'I was born here.'

8 *Grùban* is probably a syncopated and metathesised form of *gurraban*, 'sitting', 'crouching'.

9 East Sutherland adjectives in *-ach* do not palatalise in the superlative.

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Notes and Comments

The Kelp Industry in North Knapdale

L. RYMER

The second half of the eighteenth century saw the rapid transformation of Britain from a mainly agricultural country into one predominantly industrial. One consequence of this was a much increased demand for industrial chemicals which, coupled with the drastic cuts in foreign supplies brought about by, for example, the American War of Independence and the Napoleonic wars, led to the rapid development of the kelp industry. I recently made a survey of the general history of the industry and its social and economic consequences, but most of the information derives from the Hebrides and Orkney, and is of a rather general nature (Rymer 1974). Here it is proposed to examine the state of kelp manufacture in the mainland parish of North Knapdale on the west coast of Argyll towards the end of the eighteenth century, and to look at some details of the trade that are not covered in the general survey.

The northernmost boundary of North Knapdale more or less coincides with the Crinan Canal: the area is almost bisected by the sea-inlet of Loch Sween, and is further dissected by branches of this loch such as Linne Mhuirich. Particulars of kelp manufacture are available for the lands of Danna, Taynish and Ulva, which were then owned by Sir Archibald Campbell (d. 1791) of Inverneill (Inverneill Papers 1769–1928). Taynish is a long, narrow peninsula, while Ulva and Danna together form another peninsula, Danna being, in fact, an island connected to Ulva by a single road bridge. Considering the great length of coastline in relation to the land area, it is not surprising that kelp-manufacture became important there.

The earliest reference to kelp occurs in 1773 when Archibald Campbell of Danna, 'finding his affairs in disorder', was forced to sell his estate. At this time the industry was already well established in the Islands, kelp being sold for £5 a ton. However, in the rental of Danna we find that 'The kelp of Mid Town and New Town was sold summer 1773 at £7 strl. and it will sell at the end of every three years at that price' (IP Record Book, Folio 1st 1769–77:154). It is very unlikely that just over a ton of ash was produced, so it would seem that 'kelp' is being used (in the modern sense) as a synonym for sea-ware, the shores being let to independent contractors who arranged the collection and burning of the weed, and who reaped most of the profits. This seems to have been general practice in the area, for in the same year Major Donald Campbell let the sea-ware of Castle Sween and Kilbryde shores at £1 10s. 0d. p.a., or £4 10s. 0d. for the three-year period (*op cit:* 67).

The next cut of the Danna shores was not until the summer of 1776 (a three-year rotation being practised) when Neil Brown, change-keeper in Keills, paid £9 for them (*op. cit:* 182). The rent of the shores then showed a rapid increase and in 1782 John Stewart and Hugh McDougall paid £37 for the right of cutting the rock-weed. They manufactured 12 ton 12 cwt (Clyde weight)[1] of the ash, but Duncan Campbell, the Invemeill factor, was uncertain as to 'whether the necessary attention was paid to the manufacturing it by that CoY' (I.P. Letter book. Sir Archibald Campbell. 2 Nov. 1787, p. 77). At that time kelp-ash was worth about £6 a ton, so Stewart and McDougall would have collected at most £75, leaving £38 after deduction of rent. Production costs must have been kept low if they were to make a reasonable profit; yet in 1788, when kelp ash was still £6 a ton, Duncan Campbell told Lieutenant Archibald Campbell of Greenock that he was expecting 'Fourty pounds sterling . . . [for] the sea-ware on the Estate of Danna fit for kelp cuttable next summer' (IP Letter book on Sir Archibald Campbell's Business. 2 Nov. 1787:80).

As the industry became increasingly important, the people bidding for the shores came from further afield and increased in number. In 1788 the Danna shores were finally let to Messrs Angus & Neill Shaw and MacDougall and Co., of Lagg in Jura. It is worth quoting from their contract, as it is the only one surviving in the papers. The company were given

> Full power . . . to Cut and Manufacture during the ensuing Summer the whole sea-ware fit for kelp, . . . with Liberty for that purpose to errect and use Kills and pits and take Turff and stones for the same upon and from the said shores and nearest Ground thereof beyond the highest Tide of flood on the same for Manufacturing and securing the said Kelp properly you always committing thereby the least damage possible to the ground . . . and carrying off the said Kelp from the same before the first day of November next (*op. cit:* 95, 96).

Under normal conditions a good crop of seaweed took three years to grow, and the crop was sold as soon as it became ready for cutting. In 1790 the factor decided to change this system. He proposed that, instead of selling each area of kelp as it became suitable for cutting, he would give a lease of the shores of the whole Estate (Taynish and Ulva as well as Danna) for nine or twelve years. Consequently, in August 1790 Duncan Fisher, merchant at West Tarbet, was offered the lease of all the sea-ware on the estate 'which is cuttable in hags at 3 years age and affording a cut every year after Whitsunday next including a cut for summer first' for a yearly tack duty of £50. As 'overtures for the kelp shores are daily made' he was warned that if he wanted to become lessee of that 'valuable subject' no time ought to be lost in placing his offer (IP Letter book. Sir Archibald Campbell. 11 Jan. 1790:24). So far as the papers reveal Duncan Fisher made no offer; nor did anyone else. But it may be that offers were made and rejected, because between 1790 and 1791 the price of kelp ash increased from £6 to £9–£10 a ton. At any rate, in May 1791 Sir James Campbell was told that the sea-ware of Danna had been sold to the tenants for £44; the tenants of Taynish had paid £44 for the seaweed on that estate; and the ware on Ulva and Knap shores was expected to fetch

£16 and £12 respectively (IP Letter book. Sundries. 30 Aug. 1790:60). This was considered a more beneficial measure than 'employing undertakers to manufacture it, unless a person resided on the lands to superintend them daily'. As the Ulva shores were not let, Alexander McNab of Ulva 'engaged hands meal and tools' for manufacturing its kelp on behalf of Sir James, second of Inverneill (IP Letter book. Sundries. 30 Aug. 1790:70). He produced 10 tons 3 cwt which was sold at £4 10s. a ton with a further 2 tons 18 cwt described as 'not marketable' and presumably of low quality (IP Stated Accounts. Sir Archibald Campbell 1784–88: IV.55). The ash made on Danna in that year was sold at £5 9s. a ton and fetched the same price in 1793. By 1794 the price had risen to £5 15s. a ton and in 1798 the kelp manufactured was sold at £7 17s. 11½d. a ton (*op. cit:* IV. 55, 121, 243). But even this 1798 price was significantly below the £10 per ton being paid for kelp manufactured in the Islands (Rymer 1974).

This difference in price between kelp produced in Knapdale and that produced in the Islands may well be a result of the smaller quantities of ash produced on the mainland and the greater effort and inconvenience required by the purchaser to go and collect it. On the other hand, it may simply reflect the fact that, at this time, there were many available outlets for the ash, each requiring different quantities and paying different prices. This contrasts with the situation at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early part of this century, when only two companies were in the market: the British Chemical Company, Limited, of Glasgow bought all the ash manufactured in the west of Scotland while Messrs Fairlie of Falkirk purchased all the kelp manufactured in Orkney (see AF 40/73). I have been unable to determine the final destination of the Knapdale product, but it probably varied from year to year. Thus in 1791 about 20 tons were offered to John Stevenson, merchant in Oban, who was already the owner of kelp that had to be shipped from the Oib Campbell Estate in Knapdale (IP Letter book. Sundries. 30 Aug. 1790:129). The same year Duncan Campbell enquired of James Campbell of Bolton Lemoor, near Liverpool, whether there was going to be any demand for 'kelp or Highland wool, clean or laid with tar at Liverpool Manchester Leeds, or any of the manufacturing towns in your neighbourhood'. A letter of similar import was sent to Richard Paley Esq., a merchant in Leeds (IP Letter book. Sundries. 24 Sept. 1792:239, 242). The coupling of kelp and wool is not as strange as it may seem, for the woollen industry would use large quantities of soap for cleaning, and kelp was important in the manufacture of soap.

Of especial interest are the detailed accounts of kelp manufacture given in the Taynish rent roll for 1794 which includes a full and detailed breakdown of the cost of manufacture and shipping of the ash, and enables an estimate to be made of the number of people taking part in the industry in this area (Rent Roll book of the Estates of Taynish, Ulva and Danna 1794). Table 1 lists the amount of kelp produced in each division of the Taynish Estate cut that year. The manufacture was carried out on behalf of Duncan Campbell. The Scotnish, Kilmory and Taynish divisions are rather unusual in that they were on a four year rotation. A total of 31 tons 4 cwt 24 lb of ash were made 'but

rendered on delivery at Glasgow including ¾ ton of a very small kelp' 31 tons 4 cwt 48 lb (Clyde weight). This was sold at £5 15s. per ton, realising £179 10s. 3d. Table 2 then shows the deductions made against the price received. All items are self-explanatory except, perhaps, for the 'Clatters', the kelp irons, implements used for stirring the burning ash. The largest single item is £71 11s. 4¼d. for the wages of the labourers.

TABLE 1

Details of Kelp manufactured on the Taynish Estate in 1794

	tons	cwt	lb
Scotnishes: 'wreck 4 years old', manufactured by Donald Munro	6	8	48
Kilmory: same age, manufactured by Malcolm McLean	5	12	72
Taynish: as Kilmory	8	16	96
Barnashallag, Barbreck, and North Ardbeg: 3 years old, manufactured by Dugald Graham	10	8	48
Total	31	4	24

TABLE 2

Cost of manufacturing 31 tons of kelp on the Taynish Estate in 1794

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Freight at 10s. per ton	16	0	0			
Tonage	1	10	0			
Custom House Fees		10	0			
Commission for sale	4	8	0			
Discount of ¾ ton small kelp at half price	2	3	1			
				24	11	1
To 30 sheeting hooks		11	3			
To 1 cwt good rope	2	7	6			
To wages of hands manufacturing	71	11	4¼			
				74	10	1¼
To 12 stone iron for Clatters	2	8	0			
To smith for making same		18	4½			
				3	6	4½
				102	7	6¾

Free proceeds £77 2s. 8¼d.

An examination of various account books suggests that a man received 6d. for one day's work, and if this was the case for kelp labour, simple arithmetic shows that about 2,860 man days went into the production of about 31 tons of kelp, or that 90 man days were required to produce 1 ton of kelp. This would appear to be a very low productivity, but when one considers that 20 tons of wet seaweed were required to produce one ton

of ash; that the seaweed had to be cut from the rocks on which it was growing, gathered, dried, placed in pits dug in the ground and burnt, the estimate does not seem too outrageous, and it does go some way to explain the profound social consequences of the industry (Rymer 1974). As in any one year (*e.g.* 1791) kelp might be manufactured on Danna, Taynish, Ulva and Knap—and the rents received suggest Danna produced a similar amount of weed to Taynish, with Ulva and Knap together producing about half as much as Taynish—it can be seen that a considerable portion of the work-force must have been involved in the industry. Of course, not all the tenants were working at the kelp every day of the season. In the rent roll for Old Ulva, 1796, we find the entry 'By work at Kelp summer last per folio 1st kelp book 18/–', showing that at least one tenant put in 36 days work at kelp. Unfortunately, none of the kelp books appear to have survived, so it is impossible to gain any clear idea of the total number of people involved, or the effect that this industry might have had on agriculture. It is interesting to note, however, that in 1791 Sir Archibald Campbell was writing that his estates in the parish ' . . . abound with more inhabitants than sufficient employ can be had for,' (IP Letter book. Sundries. 30 Aug. 1790: 171) and that in 1792 the population of Taynish, Ulva and Danna amounted to 632, 330 of whom were under the age of 16 (IP Letter book. Sundries. 24 Apr. 1792: 143).

No reference to the kelp trade has been discovered in the estate records later than 1798. John Leyden, who visited the area in 1800, mentioned that 'On the shores of Knapdale . . . the manufacture of kelp has been carried on to great advantage', but there is no reference to the industry in the parish entry dated 1844 in the *New Statistical Account* of 1854. One can only suppose that it was discontinued sometime after 1822 when, for a variety of reasons, there was a sudden and drastic fall in the price of the manufactured ash (Scott 1914: 173, 174). In the Islands the industry was able to recover, because of plentiful supplies of iodine-rich drift-weeds, but the rock-weeds of Knapdale and other mainland areas were suitable only for the production of alkali salts which were in plentiful and cheap supply from other sources.

The decline of the industry must have had some effects on the parish economy, but there seems to be no evidence to show how great they were. The population of the parish began to decline in 1821, and even more rapidly after 1831, but this is just as likely to be associated with agricultural depression as with the demise of the kelp industry. The economy of the parish seems to have remained basically agricultural throughout the period considered here, and the profits made were in no way comparable with those made on some of the Island estates.

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NOTE

1 According to a note in the Rent Roll, Estate of Ulva 1776, one ton of kelp weighed 2,520 lb. on the Clyde, 2,408 lb. at Liverpool.

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Some Wool Cloth from St Kilda

M. L. RYDER

The cloth fragment here described was found in August 1972, by John Hodder, a member of a National Trust working-party on Hirta, the main island of the St Kilda group, and is now in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland. The cloth was wedged in a crevice of the dry-stone wall of a house situated toward the west end of the earlier of the two nineteenth-century villages—that which was built during the years 1834–6 (MacGregor 1960: 8, 28).

With the cloth was found a piece of rusted iron, a semi-circular piece of brass, and what was apparently human hair. Although identification of the hair was not confirmed, such a find is in keeping with the practice, known also in Ireland, of storing hair-clippings in the rafters to prevent them being used for witchcraft, or, as some would say, because one has to account for them at the last judgment. (Dr J. Morton Boyd has informed the writer that in 1959 the Nature Conservancy boatman, Mr Murdo MacDonald, found human hair wrapped in the pages of a Gaelic Bible in a similar situation in a byre in St Kilda, where he replaced it.)

The cloth is of interest because, so far as I am aware, there is no other surviving example of wool cloth made on St Kilda earlier than the present century. Also, since the results of this investigation suggest that it was made from the wool of the now extinct Hebridean sheep which was ousted by the introduction to St Kilda of the Scottish Blackface about 1870, the findings have a relevance to fleece evolution that is of more than local interest.

The Construction of the Cloth

Miss A. S. Henshall, M.A., F.S.A., who kindly examined the construction of the cloth for me, found that both yarns had a Z-twist (spun in a clockwise direction), and that the weave was a 2/2 twill, with 10 threads per cm (23 per in.) in each direction. The fragment had apparently been part of a garment, because one edge had been turned in to make a seam, and there were remains of a two-ply sewing thread.

Microscopic Examination of the Wool

Microscopic examination indicated a general lack of natural coloration (and no evidence of dye). Only a few of the coarser fibres had natural pigment, thus the brown coloration visible to the naked eye is presumably the discoloration commonly found in archaeological specimens of wool cloth.

There were one or two fibre tips, but no clear root ends that would enable a distinction to be made between shorn and plucked wool.

The assumed warp had no evidence of hairy fibres and little fibre-medullation, but the assumed weft had some fibres with non-latticed medullation and a few hairy fibres with latticed medullation. Fibre diameter measurements are shown in Table 1 with other measurements for comparison. These measurements showed that the assumed warp had 1% medullation, and the assumed weft 9% (*cf.* 15 % medullated fibres in the Boreray Blackface).

TABLE 1

*Wool Fibre Diameters (Microns)**

	Range	*Mean ± Standard Deviation*	*Mode* †	*Coefficient of Variation* (%)	*Distribution and Fleece Type*
? warp	14–44, 56	24.4±7.7	20	31.7	skewed to fine (generalised medium)
? weft	16–56, 60	27.6±10.4	24	37.6	skewed to fine (hairy medium)
woolly Soay	11–46, 50	24	20	—	skewed to fine (generalised medium)
hairy Soay (Ryder 1968a)	14–98, 100, 104	32	20	—	skewed to fine (hairy medium)
fine Shetland	16–40	24	22	—	skewed to fine (generalised medium)
hairy Shetland (Ryder 1966)	14–54, 86	27	20	—	skewed to fine (hairy medium)
Boreray Blackface (Ryder 1968a and unpublished)	15–170	40.7±38.3	26	94.2	continuous (hairy)

* 1 micron = 0.001 mm. † most frequent value.

Discussion

On historical evidence the wool in this cloth could have come from three main kinds of sheep (Ryder 1968b). First, the prehistoric Soay that now runs feral on Hirta, as well as on Soay; second, the mediæval and later Hebridean sheep; and third, the Scottish Blackface, which was introduced about 1870, and has lived feral on Boreray since the islanders left in 1930. (Fleece studies are now being made by the author on a group of these sheep, which were removed in 1971.)

The wool-fibre diameter measurements (Table 1) indicate that the wool is not of Blackface type, and the general lack of natural pigment shows that it was not from the Soay.

One is therefore left with the Hebridean sheep, extinct on St Kilda for the last century or so. This did, however, belong to a larger group of breeds known as the Old Scottish Shortwool, or Dunface, and the surviving Shetland breed was a member of this group. The fibre-diameter measurements in Table 1 are in keeping with the wool being from this general type. But the general similarity in fleece type between the Soay and Shetland, and the variability in diameter within each breed, make diameter comparisons less conclusive. A more conclusive observation is the pigmented nature of the coarser fibres: this is a feature found in the Shetland, but not in the Soay breed.

This identification therefore favours the assumption that the cloth was deposited before 1861–2, when the St Kildans removed to their last village. It could not have been put into the wall before 1834, although it may have been made before, or after, the house itself was built.

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Book Reviews

A Social History of Scottish Dance by G. S. Emmerson. McGill–Queen's University Press, Montreal and London 1972. Pp. xviii+352+39 plates.

This eclectic work covers the history of Scottish dancing from earliest times to the present day. The first three chapters deal with the mediæval festivals, the ritual dances associated with the passing of the seasons, and the social dances of the Scottish court and countryside up to the end of the sixteenth century. Chapter 4 reviews the dances of the courts of the Stuarts in London in the seventeenth century, while Chapter 5 deals with the corresponding period in Scotland, where the Church viewed social dancing with disfavour. The eighteenth century is covered in Chapters 6–8 which deal respectively with dancing in polite society in Edinburgh and elsewhere, with Scottish dances on the London stage, and with dancing in the Scottish countryside. These three chapters are the best part of the book, and it is obvious that the eighteenth century represents to the author the golden age of Scottish dancing.

Chapter 10, which comes almost halfway through the book, represents a fresh start, with more attention being paid to the dances and less to the social background. Following a general and rather diffuse survey, the author treats in succession Reels, the Highland Fling, Seann Truibhais, the Gille Callum, the Jig and Hornpipe, Dramatic jigs, and Highland Games. The book ends with four chapters on the Country Dance which include an account of the Country Dance revival movement and bring the history up to date. Four appendices give further information about the Papa Stour Sword Dance, early Reel steps, the Directors and Directresses of the Edinburgh Assemblies, and the Northern Meeting at Inverness. In this second half of the book the chapters on the Jig and Hornpipe incorporate much original research, though the relevance of some of the material to Scotland seems doubtful. The book also includes an interesting set of 39 plates, though again not all of these refer to Scotland.

Perhaps surprisingly, the author does not include any detailed descriptions of Scottish dances other than the Scotch (Foursome) Reel and one or two dramatic jigs. He does include a reproduction of the instructions of the English Country Dance 'Newcastle' from Playford's *Dancing Master*, but he does not reproduce any of the Country Dances from the early Scottish manuscript collections. Indeed, I am not sure that he has even consulted some of these manuscripts, since he does not appear to know (p. 276) that the Menzies MS of 1749 is dated. There are also very few musical examples, and in one of those included, Cailleach an Dudain (p. 233), the author omits to say that the tune is the pipe setting, so that sharp signs for notes C and F are omitted.

The book owes much to the researches of others, particularly Anna J. Mill, Margaret Dean-Smith and E. J. Nicol, Melusine Wood, and Hugh Thurston. The extent of the author's indebtedness to these and other workers in this field is far from clear, for he sometimes uses, without acknowledgment, not only their remarks but also their bibliographical footnotes (on five occasions the *wrong ones!*), so that the reader might well feel that he is reading the product of original research. It is perhaps churlish of this particular reviewer to make such criticisms, since my wife and I are thanked for our 'valuable field researches' no fewer than five times, and references to our book *Traditional Dancing in Scotland* and our articles are too numerous to count. But there is much in this book which one could condone in a pioneering work but which is inexcusable in a work compiled in well-mapped territory.

The author has tried to write both a scholarly book for those deeply interested in the history of European dancing and of Scottish dancing in particular, and also a popular book for enthusiastic Scottish dancers. The result is unfortunately neither: the frequent emotive passages in which the author paints the social background contrast oddly with the passages where he determinedly takes the reader through every known reference (Scottish *and* English *and* Irish) to some particular topic. The number of minor errors is high, and the author's attempt to be popular causes him to mix surmise and conjecture with historical fact in a manner that makes it difficult to distinguish them.

To illustrate with just two of many such items, I would query what evidence there is for the statement (p. 20) that 'ritual sword dancing . . . [was] well known in mediæval Scotland, certainly in the principal east coast towns . . . '? Previous researchers have listed references to only three occurrences of such dances in Scotland before the year 1700, in Edinburgh at the entry of Anne of Denmark in 1590, in Perth *c.* 1609–33, and at Elgin in 1623.

Again, what evidence is there that (p. 152) 'many Scottish reels' of the early eighteenth century were of the longways formation of the English Country Dance? If the author has such evidence it should certainly have been quoted, for the earliest reference to a reel in longways form that has been discovered so far is dated 1805.

It is a revealing exercise to try to follow the author's arguments in his treatment of Scottish dance technique, particularly in relation to Reels and Country Dances. Thus on page 288 we read:

> There is no reason to believe that the Scots employed the same steps as the English in the ballroom Country Dance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and much reason to believe, as was expounded at some length in the previous chapter, that they would favour the same steps—both travelling and setting—as they employed in the reel.

There is in fact abundant evidence from oral tradition that in that part of the nineteenth century covered by living memory Scottish dancers did distinguish in both style and steps between Reels and Country Dances; this evidence, with a list of sources, is given in our book *Traditional Dancing in Scotland*, to which the author refers so frequently.

But in any case, what are the reasons 'expounded in the previous chapter'? The only relevant passage is (p. 279):

> If the Scottish contribution to the figures of the Country Dance could be considered slight in the eighteenth century, there can be little doubt that the difference between the Scottish and English manner of executing the Country Dance was at least as great as the difference between the dancing characteristics of the two peoples. The evidence of several observers, some of which has been quoted in Chapter 18, confirms this.
>
> We have been told of the electric effect of the music of the reel on the Scots. Who can believe, then, that in a dance performed to this music and involving the sequence set-to-and-turn-corners-and-reel, for instance, a sequence so similar to that of their favourite dance, the Scots would not naturally set and travel as they would do in a reel to the same music.

The second of these paragraphs ignores the evidence from the Scottish manuscript collections of Country Dances that *c.* 1740 reel tunes were played at half-speed for Country Dances (see *Scottish Studies* 11: 141), just as the Duke of Perth is so played today. The first paragraph refers us back to Chapter 18, but none of the descriptions of Scottish dancing quoted there can definitely be said to refer to Country Dancing. Indeed, the only relevant passage in Chapter 18 appears to be the author's curious assertion at the end of the chapter (p. 264) that it 'is Highland Dance *tradition* that is the fertilizing force in Scottish dancing; and the Scottish Country Dance is all the richer because of it, and indeed may have little peculiar identity without it'.

This argument by intimidation, using a rhetorical question which is subsequently assumed to have been answered in the sense that the author would like, and using a phrase such as 'there can be little doubt', 'doubtless', 'no doubt', 'surely', is only one of many examples that could be quoted, and is certainly not history, social or otherwise.

The last two chapters of the book concern the creation of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, and one cannot help contrasting the author's fulsome remarks concerning Miss Jean Milligan, co-founder of the Society, with his treatment earlier in the text of the late Ion C. B. Jamieson and Mrs Mary Isdale MacNab.

Ion C. B. Jamieson receives only a grudging mention (p. 280) from Professor Emmerson: 'We have to thank Ian [*sic*] C. B. Jamieson for collecting these dances [Haughs of Cromdale, Braes of Busby, and Loch Erichtside], although not all of them are well-conceived.' One might have expected that a history of Country Dancing in Scotland would pay a better tribute than this to the man to whom, more than any other person, we are indebted for the collecting of Scottish Country Dances from oral tradition. He was the factor of a large estate at Langshaw, about 5 miles from Galashiels, and between about 1925 and 1935 he collected over forty Scottish Country Dances from old people in the Border country and Galloway. Many of these were published in the *Border Dance Book* and (without acknowledgment) in the R.S.C.D.S. *Scottish Country Dance Books*. His knowledge of oral tradition was unequalled among the early leaders of the Country Dance revival, but he found himself in increasing disagreement with the

policy of refinement so well described by Professor Emmerson in this book, and eventually he resigned from the Society.

Mary Isdale MacNab of Vancouver can be joined with Jamieson as one of the most notable collectors of Scottish dances. Her collecting was carried out largely from about 1910 to 1930 in Western Canada among the descendants of emigrants from Scotland, and the dances she obtained, which include a number of elaborate set dances, belong to the Highland tradition rather than to the Lowland Country Dance tradition. Over twenty of the dances she collected have been published in pamphlet form by the R.S.C.D.S.

Professor Emmerson permits himself two comments on Mrs MacNab. Thus of the Threesome Hankies Reel he remarks (p. 166):

> Mary Isdale MacNab published another version which she entitled The Shepherd's Crook. This is a very pretty dance in Strathspey style, but since no source is declared, our suspicions are confirmed that, whatever the original, the published dance is largely of Mrs MacNab's own devising.

One can only wonder why the author makes no similar criticism of the R.S.C.D.S., for in only a very few cases have they named the sources of the Country Dances collected from oral tradition that they have published!

The second comment (p. 225) is even more sweeping:

> Mary Isdale MacNab published a version of the [Swedish weaving dance] Vava Vadmal called Hebridean Weaving Lilt which, she tells us, was collected from a Canadian whose Norwegian ancestors had settled in Iona. Unfortunately, Mrs MacNab did not publish the raw material from which she fashioned her many attractive re-creations; it is to be hoped that this will be made available some day.

As a point of interest, the Hebridean Weaving Lilt is known to have been performed in Shetland by fisher girls from the Hebrides long before Mrs MacNab collected it from her source. We may ask what evidence Professor Emmerson has that Mrs MacNab's dances are 're-creations', and why has he not produced it in his book? If on the contrary there is no such evidence, then these comments are both ungracious and out of place in what is supposed to be a serious work of scholarship.

T. M. FLETT

The Ballad and the Folk by David Buchan. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1972. Pp. xii+326. £4.50.

A Scottish Ballad Book by David Buchan. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1973. Pp. xii+232. £3.50.

This is the first large scale attempt to bring ballad scholarship up to date in Scotland. That the first book is both important and valuable has already been recognised in the

many favourable reviews that have welcomed it, in the award of a doctorate, the Chicago distinction and the Blackwell prize at Aberdeen to the author. The second book, though designed to stand on its own legs independently of the first, is essentially an appendix to it containing the texts of some seventy-two ballads and folk-songs on which Dr Buchan's thesis is based.

The general argument starts from A. B. Lord's notions, themselves derivative of Milman Parry's work on formulae in Homer, that the traditional ballad-singer in the non-literate society, not having definitive texts, memorised not the words verbatim or the details of the incidents, but the story in a more general way, with patterns of word formulae, stanza arrangement and narrative motif. Every performance was in a sense *de novo* in which the singer filled in impromptu with his formulae the general skeleton of the story which he carried in his head. The result might be compared roughly, in musical terms, to a kind of simple fugue, and Dr Buchan devotes three chapters with diagrams in the approved modern paramathematical manner to showing how various ballads are structured according to this thesis. This is done with much expository skill and is one of the most illuminating parts of the book. He shows how the pattern is built up in triads, balanced stanzas, and frequently in a circular form so that the story winds and unwinds itself in a regular and even manner. This, according to Dr Buchan, is the type of the classical ballad of the early eighteenth century, handed down orally from one generation to the other until the population became by and large literate. Chapbooks, broadsheets, song-books and the like began to circulate among the popular singers, who gradually developed an undue reverence for the printed text and started to memorise a ballad word for word instead of 'structurally' and so lost that freedom to 'recreate' with each performance that, according to Dr Buchan, is the essence of the authentic balladist, and that distinguishes the old ballad tradition from the new.

His business of course, having worked out this neat theory, is to prove it, and Dr Buchan turns for support to one of the very best of ballad traditions, that of the North-East of Scotland, which stretches from the mid-eighteenth century to the present day. After a very well-written and persuasive analysis of North-East society and its development from the Middle Ages, from the clan structure, especially in the upper part of Aberdeenshire, the land of the Gordons and the Forbeses, to the agricultural revolution and the drastic changes it involved, Dr Buchan sidesteps into the world of theory on ballad-singing, as propounded by Parry and Lord, shooting the usual American line that everyone got it all wrong in the past and that what is needed is a new polysyllabic terminology which will make it all plain. If one may judge from what has happened in other disciplines, like linguistics, this is in danger of ending up in a blind alley of jargon. Its real weakness lies in failing to make clear beyond a peradventure the *practical* distinction between memorising the structure and memorising the words, in ignoring the relationship between the 'formulae' and the story, and in dealing in equivocal concepts like 'literate', 'oral minds', 'recreating', *etc.*

Dr Buchan then produces Mrs Brown of Falkland whose large repertoire of ballads,

learned from older relatives and nurses from Braemar, went back into the first half of the eighteenth century, as a classical example of the traditional balladist. No one can possibly deny the importance of Mrs Brown in the tradition or the excellence of her ballad texts, but she was certainly not the pure uncontaminated illiterate ballad singer of the theory. She was literate in the fullest sense of the term, the daughter of an Aberdeen professor brought up in the academic cloisters of King's College: Robert Jamieson, who got most of his ballads from her for his 1806 Collection, says she gathered 'all the varieties of the same tale which she could meet with. In some instances, these different readings may have insensibly mixed with each other, and produced, from various disjointed fragments, a whole, such as reciters, whose memories and judgments are less perfect, can seldom produce'. In other words Mrs Brown was not only a singer but also an editress, in her own way, of ballads, not unlike Sir Walter Scott. Can we be sure that the undoubted structural symmetry of so many of her texts was not due to Mrs Brown's literary skill and her upbringing in the humanities? From the theoretical point of view the repertoire of the 'Old Lady', another North-East ballad singer, who was from her spelling at least much less literate, would have been a more satisfactory source, though her texts are less stylised and sophisticated than Mrs Brown's, as Dr Buchan admits (p. 155), and as can be seen very clearly by comparing their versions of *The Kitchie Boy* (No. 25 in the *Ballad Book*). Despite Dr Buchan's insistence on Mrs Brown's 'positive recreative approach', compared favourably with Bell Robertson's rigidity in the matter of text, it is very difficult to see much difference between her earlier and later versions of *Willie's Lady* (Child 6*a* and *b*), except that *b* is incomplete in its narrative and its deficiencies are more obviously due to faulty memory than to 'recreative' variation. And the same appears to be true of the two texts of *The Lass of Roch Royal* (p. 155). In *The Twa Sisters* the enlarged cast of characters is noted as a feature of the early ballad, though later we are told that this crowding of the stage is a symptom of literacy. In fact if one were to look for a palpable example of the creative process, one could find it in Bell Robertson's version of *Fair Annie* which is fuller than any of the others and shows evidence of patching where the original was forgotten and in which the story is developed with more detail (see Nos. 9 and 45).

The thesis develops through an able and well-documented survey of the effect of the Agricultural Revolution, the spread of education, and the changing social structure in the North-East in the late eighteenth century. This, according to Dr Buchan, brought a general literacy to the community and a consequent degeneration of the old tradition as described in the second paragraph above. This argument is followed through by an examination of the ballads collected by Peter Buchan of Peterhead and his sub-contractor, James Nicol of Strichen. Dr Buchan has much interesting and useful matter here, especially casting new light on Nicol, who was no less 'literate' (in any sense of the term) than Mrs Brown. Peter is rightly defended against the hypercriticism of Child, though often at the expense of the 'theory'. Nicol is criticised for prolixity in his texts, ascribed to the result of a 'deteriorating structural sense', but this is mere assertion and

anyone who has listened to a real folk-singer going on and on apparently interminably will not be easily convinced that this is a new and decadent feature in the art, as indeed Dr Buchan seems implicitly to admit on page 213, in agreement with Grundtvig.

There are again questionable statements here. It is doubtful if the commonalty in lowland Aberdeenshire was as illiterate or non-literate as Dr Buchan labours to make out, and a reference to Simpson's history of education in the county should be made as a corrective. That there is a good deal of bathos in Nicol's texts cannot be denied but can as plausibly be attributed to the fact that his particular singers were less rather than more literate, or to put it another way, to avoid the ambiguity of Dr Buchan's use of 'literate', were less skilled 'creators', poets, or improvisers, and the mention of doctor's shops and the like prosaic items merely incorporate the social changes which every folk-singer in close contact with his milieu is bound to reflect.

Nicol's text of *Tam Lin* (No. 27) compares unfavourably with the version rescued by Burns but we don't know what an artist like Burns did with the text when he got it. Again in *Bonny John Seton* (No. 36) there are more non-ballad traits, less structure and more comment, as Dr Buchan points out. Yet the ballad is pretty accurate in its historical detail, leading us to assume that it had survived fairly intact from 1639 to about 1825, and we are obliged to ask what the original text was like and whether Nicol (or his sources) tampered with it and if so, how?

When we come to the discussion of Bell Robertson, Gavin Greig's great source, we again run into difficulties with the theory. Many of Bell's texts derive plainly from pre-Buchan versions, as Gabrielle Humbert demonstrated, that is to a period not far short of Mrs Brown's, and we know that Bell was a stickler for the text as she got it aurally from her mother, and not from printed texts, though they undoubtedly intervened earlier in the tradition. If Bell's texts are inferior to Mrs Brown's in spite of being frequently contemporary, it by no means follows that the deficiences are due to corrupting influences in the interval. One begins to suspect that Dr Buchan is not really comparing like with like. Mrs Brown is really more 'literate' than Bell Robertson. What would an eighteenth-century Bell Robertson have given us, for instance? We might here profitably compare the texts given by Maidment or Motherwell, especially those collected by the latter from Renfrewshire singers. Another useful study would be the three versions of *Lady Isabel* (No. 42) collected by Peter Buchan, all showing different workings of the same theme, which deserves a closer examination than Dr Buchan has given it. And the same applies to *Leesome Brand* (No. 43).

Incidentally one is surprised to find so little mention of Herd in Dr Buchan's book. Herd was contemporary with Mrs Brown, a most accurate and reliable collector, who almost certainly got most of his material, which was used by Percy, from roughly the same area in the North-East and whose texts also are very relevant in the discussion. And the same criticism is true to a lesser extent in his treatment of Kinloch.

It may be that the whole problem of the ballads has been bedevilled partly by Child's

misguided efforts to establish a 'pure' text and partly by fruitless wrangles about origins which Dr Buchan touches only at arm's length. It still cannot be said to have been settled; perhaps we are still asking the wrong questions; and Dr Buchan's thesis begs as many more. Gabrielle Humbert's words are still true: 'We have not yet succeeded in drawing a hard and fast boundary between folk-poetry and literature nor yet in clearly separating folk influence and literary intrusion in the orally transmitted fragments'.

With all these strictures on Dr Buchan's theories, the fact remains that Dr Buchan's book is an excellent one, fully deserving the general approbation with which it has been received. Indeed the sceptical reader could ignore the theory altogether and still find the book a mine of information, an invaluable guide to a most complex subject, easy to read and to follow. Together the two books form the most substantial and penetrating contribution to ballad study that has come out since the war.

DAVID MURISON

Bàrdachd Shìlis na Ceapaich (*Poems and Songs by Sìleas MacDonald*), edited by Colm Ó Baoill. Scottish Gaelic Texts, Volume 13. Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh 1972. Pp. lxvii+271.

This volume contains the works of the MacDonald poetess Sìlis nighean mhic Raghnaill (Sìlis na Ceapaich). It is of particular interest since it provides the first collected edition and translation of her poetry, access to which had often been difficult even for Gaelic scholars; and it is the more welcome in view of the strength and variety of the compositions themselves. In keeping with the practice in the present series the text and translation appear on facing pages; they are preceded by a substantial introductory section (in which is assembled what can be known of the origins, life and posterity of Sìlis, and other general questions), and followed by sets of notes dealing with specific points (historical, textual, and metrical *cum* musical), so that when appendices, index and glossary are counted in, the actual text takes up little over one-third of the book. The nature of their material, and the dearth of scholarly work in so many fields, forces editors of Scottish Gaelic texts to become pioneers in many areas besides the strictly textual.

Sìlis was born, it appears, around 1660, the daughter of Gilleasbuig, 15th chief of the MacDonalds of Keppoch, and died about 1729; she married Alexander Gordon of Camdell—perhaps in 1685—and moved to live with him in Camdell and then Beldorney, in Gordon country in upper Banff-shire, where their family was reared and where she seems to have spent the rest of her life. This framework of basic facts may have been attainable before now, but it is here established methodically—often

by the use of documentary evidence newly turned up by Dr Ó Baoill's researches. And when we look beyond this outline the story is the same: a new and different picture is offered, at a closer range than was hitherto possible. Where we no longer have to accommodate the mooted love-affair with the Skye poet Lachlann mac Theàrlaich Óig, we are offered in its stead evidence as to what sort of business it was that took Alexander Gordon into Lochaber and MacDonald parts, both before and after his marriage to Sìlis (pp. xlvi–xlvii); we are shown the sasine whereby Sìlis was guaranteed an annuity from her husband's lands (Appendix IV); in short, we have some factual and circumstantial detail to set beside the enlarged *corpus* of poems now presented, and it is no surprise that new points from within them are now seen to be salient, while others are shown to have been false scents.

A brief analysis is given (p. lviii *et seq.*) of the sorts of song composed by Sìlis, dividing them formally, by metre and thematically, into the categories of family, political comment, laments, religious verse, moral verses, and the harp and its music. The latter is not, of course, to be taken as a rigid classification of song-categories; indeed the themes themselves overlap considerably in Sìlis' work, and, if the distinctions fall short of being clear-cut, that fact comes near to explaining part of her appeal: Sìlis expresses in verse, as she clearly lived, a continuity which drew all aspects of her life together. At all events, it is to the present editor's credit that he goes on to ask how, and on what occasions, and for whom did Sìlis compose her songs (though one question seems to have been begged at pp. ix, lxi, 128, 173, where he uses the term 'writing' to describe her activity); and it seems plausible to hold with Dr Ó Baoill that she composed for her family and household and perhaps visiting relatives and friends, more or less occasionally, and perhaps not starting until well on in her married life. (The most precisely dated are those political songs associated with the events of 1715, though these, it must be added, include at least one whose association with Sìlis herself is not so secure.)

It has been to Sìlis' disadvantage that, while her reputation—perhaps mostly in Lochaber and Badenoch—won her a place in most of the early printed collections of Gaelic songs, few of them give more than a couple of her compositions. Perhaps she suffered for being a woman; perhaps she was overshadowed by the MacDonald bards of her father's generation, in her own and other branches of the family; perhaps she suffered the fate of one removed from the hub of things (from a MacDonald point of view), though one cannot say that she would have been moved to compose when and as she did, had she remained in Lochaber. Certainly a feeling of isolation seems to come through in the poem on Lachlann Dall, the blind harper who (she tells us) used to be plied with her questions about MacDonald families and with requests for the most esteemed compositions—on MacDonald subjects—of the time. It would be tempting to see Sìlis as a Highland mother asserting the Gaelic side of their heritage for her children and household in Strathavon, which must have appeared relatively *gallda* ('lowland') to a Keppoch girl, and was perhaps already subject to anglicisation at

certain levels. (*Cf.* pp. lxi, xlix, where one should not omit Professor Watson's *Baile Dòrnaigh*, *C.P.N.S.*, p. 488, as the Gaelic form for Beldorney; *cf.* also K. N. MacDonald, *MacDonald Bards*, p. 92.)

As to the songs themselves, one is pleasantly surprised at how well they read together, and at the familiarity one now feels with their maker, who had previously been only a little better known than a host of minor figures of a comparable period. They do (with a couple of exceptions) strike one positively as being by the same person, a quality by no means to be taken for granted when one thinks of the pressures which an oral tradition could exert in the direction of uniformity both before and after composition. That person is one who is confiding and warm, with strong maternal (if not matriarchal) instincts for her family, and a crusading sense of right and wong which extends from this forgivably partisan base to inform her attitudes in the compromised and contradictory world of politics. For Sìlis was ready to take up cudgels and join in the political song-mongering of her time. We have to regard the sectarian fervour of such lines as, *e.g.*, 288–92 in this light too; for such uninhibited strictures against the ministers of the Reformed Church are less theological than political—part of the ammunition available to one railing against Whiggery, Hanover, the Union, the Reformed Church and other associated targets.

There is thus no real contradiction—Sìlis would not have noticed one—between the militant Catholicism implicit in her Jacobite stance and the non-doctrinal, personal religion which we encounter in her *laoidhean* ('hymns'), whose directness and simple piety echo that of the *Carmina Gadelica*. A crucial point emerges here: her hymns echo the popular Gaelic ones because she has allowed their form and tone to provide the model and register for her own: her religious poetry substitutes for timelessness a persistent feeling of unique circumstance and occasion—one might say, of personality—but she is thoroughly traditional in her assumption of the existing *genre* as a starting-point.

It seems to me that we can make this into a general point about Sìlis' art: she shows awareness of the formal and stylistic requirements of the various traditions of Gaelic song she uses, but has a distinct matter-of-factness about her approach to them; she will bend them to suit her own needs rather than subsume her case in the traditional model, in a way which is enough to mark her off from most of her contemporaries. Thus she can cast herself in the 'below stairs' women's world of such songs as 'To her Daughter Mary' (Number I in the present collection), or, again, conjure up the *ambiance* of the chief's hall in the elegy on Alasdair Dubh (Number XIV). In both of these songs, as in the *laoidhean*, we find the appropriate vocabulary and conceptual framework, with scarcely a false note: the obligatory formulae are honoured, whether it is 'my child is too good for A, B,...' (listing hypothetical spouses) in a *tàladh*, ('lullaby'), (see ll. 18 ff.), or whether it is in the enumeration of the age-old princely qualities (see ll. 831 ff.). She can get inside these—or any other—chosen subjects for versification, but for whatever reason (as an amateur? as a woman?) she is comparatively resistant to the mesmeric, centripetal pull of the tradition. If her poetry is unsteady in places

because of this readiness to throw aside the crutches of the tradition, her firmer paces stand out for that very reason.

Finally, one cannot altogether avoid having thoughts on the subject of her alleged conversion to the religious life after an immoral youth: I should not like to have to say definitely whether these stories are motival (*i.e.* likely to attach themselves to any female poetical figure in Gaelic tradition), the result of false inference, or fact. It may be that she did have a frivolous period in her youth, and also reached some personal crisis later on in life, whether or not the two are to be causally connected. For what it is worth, a hint of the conviction of the convert may be sensed in her religious songs, which might be suggestive for the persistent traditions of her trance and recovery (see especially *Laoidh nan Ceudfathan*, the 'Hymn of the Senses', printed as Appendix I). Whatever the answer is, the poems are now there for each to make his judgment, and the speculation and guesswork of earlier authorities has been trimmed down to size. The reader can only be recommended to make the acquaintance of this very worthwhile lady.

From what was said at the outset of this review it will be clear that we are dealing with a very well-served text: it should be added that the marshalling and evaluation of whatever sort of evidence, often a complicated task, is accomplished with sympathy and lucidity. As for the text itself, it is only here that one's respect for this volume must be tempered by a degree of reservation; for it seems to the present writer that the editor's other efforts are detracted from, and the text itself, while being serviceable, does not show up well by the highest standards (which one would like to be able to apply to this series if to any).

Bearing in mind that he has had to start almost from scratch, one feels that there should have been more research into the Gaelic used by Sìlis: there are limitations to the usefulness of strings of parallels and analogous usages, but one suspects that the very unearthing of such linguistic material would have caused a number of misinterpetations to fade away at an early stage. For example, the *raspars uasal* of lines 100–7 is pursuing the same quarry as the *misdear* in *Songs of Duncan Ban Macintyre*, lines 1279 ff., *ag èaladh 'sna cùilteau/ 'se rùdhrach gu h-ìosal fo mhàgan*, and there is no need for *'sa' chùil* to be emended to *mar chùl*, whatever the latter is supposed to mean.

One is also irked by a number of departures and inconsistencies in orthography, but in the absence of any agreed guide-lines on the subject it is perhaps as well to let that pass at the present time: it will better serve the interests of those likely to read *Scottish Studies* if this review confines itself to the two points most affecting readers dependent on the present edition and translation for their knowledge of Sìlis' poems. Of these, the first concerns Gaelic text and the second translation.

Most of Sìlis' poems occur in two or more of the early collections (manuscript or printed) of Gaelic poetry, and Dr Ó Baoill supposes that a synthetic text can be constructed from these, which will go nearer to what Sìlis herself composed than any one of the sources themselves. Thus (p. ix) ' . . . in some cases I have partially fused two or

more versions of the same poem . . . '; and in others, where he claims to follow the version giving ' . . . the best text of the poem as a whole, . . . very often the oldest text', his practice is still influenced by this synthetic ideal, for he is frequently to be found looking over his shoulder to the other versions when his chosen one is unexceptionable. Thus, at line 338 the Stewarts' version (which is being followed here—see p. 190) has *Bha fuil air faobhair, 's claig'nean sgaoilte*, but the Irvine MS has caused Dr Ó Baoill to read *fuil is faobh is claignean 7rl.*. Sìlis herself would have called this weakness *cleas a' choin sholair*—see lines 584 ff., where the dog sees a reflection of his bone in the water, and loses the real one through snatching at the insubstantial one. In fact it is the prime assumption, that a meaningful synthetic text is attainable in these circumstances, which really needs questioning. Fuller reasoning will have to be enunciated elsewhere, but a simple example may be allowed to symbolize the present *malaise*: at lines 350–1 Sìlis is saying, 'curses on those who left you in the lurch . . . ' in both the sources, and they then diverge in what they say about these turncoats. One calls them *luchd spuinnidh nan ceud* and the other describes their activities *ri pluntruin nar deighe* (*i.e. ri plùnndrainn 'nur déidh*). These are *equivalent* readings, and there is no reason, historical, syntactical or metrical, for preferring one to the other, except that it be the reading of the source one happens to be following. This sort of divergence is well-known in Gaelic songs, and, as I say, I must hope, unless anticipated, to investigate the principles that govern it, and the problems it provides for an editor, on a future occasion. Dr Ó Baoill is not the first to have blunted the sharp edge of textual criticism (of the conventional sort) on the too yielding substance of orally transmitted Gaelic poetry; but whatever the precedents I feel it is misguided to believe that conflation can make a more authentic text than these sources, and I hence regard Dr Ó Baoill's reading at line 351, *luchd plùnndrainn nan ceud*, as a less than legitimate exercise of editorial judgment. Nor may this sort of procedure be dismissed as mere harmless self-delusion when it can lead to the appearance of a text like the present Poem II ('Advice to Young Girls'), which fails to match the degree of coherence and sense offered by either of the two main source-versions taken by itself: the editor's difficulties with this song (see p. 126) are, in my opinion, largely self-inflicted.

Secondly, the translation: this is usually intelligible (a heartfelt compliment), but sometimes allows itself freedom beyond the minimum required to enable a just rendering. This leads inevitably to imprecision, to which is added in the present volume a larger number of plain errors than we are entitled to expect. Thus *aontadh* (l. 50) is 'consent', not 'uniting' (which is *aonadh*); the advice at line 105 is much more precise and practical than would appear from the translation, though here *pudicitia* may have caused the translator's pen to waver; *cuir sgairt ort* (l. 269) is 'bestir yourself', 'gird yourself up' (against the army *etc.*), not 'call out to'; *buachaillean* (ll. 1000, 1101) are 'shepherds' not 'herdsmen'; *faosaid* (l. 1226) is 'confession', not 'penance'; *cur* and *gabhail* (l. 1304) in a musical context mean 'to accompany' and 'to sing', not 'to make music' and 'to recite'; *etc.*, *etc.*

The glossary is not satisfactory: if, as stated, it is to contain 'the less common words', why is the celebrated *socair dhàna* (l. 1309) omitted, and the rare form *oighear* (l. 32), and the rare meaning 'long-lived' for *saogh'lach* (l. 830)? And what are such entries as '*fhìn*, self (1st person singular)' doing in it? Again, it sometimes baldly repeats meanings given uncertainly in the text, as if the fact of repetition would give them (much-needed) strength: thus, *e.g.*, '*sèamhaidh*, wise, 380' (*recte* 'mild' =*sèimhidh*). Sometimes, it must be admitted, the Glossary silently corrects errors made in the text (*e.g.* '*sròl*, satin'—contrast ll. 471, 784); but equally the Glossary ventures some errors where the treatment of the text is perfectly correct, as at line 61, where *saobhadh* is correctly construed 'dissembling', but the Glossary gives 'infatuation'.

It is not intended to excuse these faults—they are serious enough—yet it is only fair to say that one is brought back in the final summing up to this book's positive achievements. One's lasting impression, like one's first, is still one of gratitude to the editor. On the historical side Dr Ó Baoill has been diligent and shrewd, and he has presented his discoveries in a sober, characteristically modest way, with the result that Sìlis herself can emerge as a real person in a reliable and confidence-inspiring setting, as far as possible removed from the vague, repetitious material which has mostly served as her 'biography' up till now. In musical questions his familiarity with the 'Irish dimension' is to our advantage when he comes to discuss the filiation of tunes.

Sìlis na Ceapaich was not the greatest Gaelic poet of her sex or her age, but she stands up very well to being edited. We are indebted to Dr Ó Baoill for enabling us to discover her—a Highland lady, a Jacobite, a MacDonald, a Catholic, and the composer of songs both robust and tender.

WILLIAM GILLIES

The Various Names of Shetland, written and published by Alexander Fenton, National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Edinburgh 1973. Pp. 22+vi. 20p.

In this model of systematic research and exposition Mr Fenton explores the whole history of the name Shetland from its first appearance in an old Norse skaldic poem of *c.* 1000 as *Hjaltland* through *Hj-* and *Sh-* forms with an occasional *H-* or *Y-*, written in Middle Scots as 3- and later supplanted through the caseroom deficiencies of Scottish printers by a *z-*, as in *Menzies*, *MacKenzie*, *spulzie*, *tailzie*, ending up in the pronunciation Zetland in the English manner, still affected in the marquisate title of the Dundas family and in bureaucratic usage—but one that the modern Shetlanders justifiably abominate. All this is of course well-trodden ground for historical linguists, of whom there are still one or two surviving in our Universities, but Mr Fenton has assembled and deployed all the evidence, primary and secondary, with exemplary thoroughness: he adduces parallels to the various developments of O.N. *hj-*, not only

from Scots and Northern English place-names like Shap and Shipton but also from Norwegian, which is very useful, and there are plenty of supporting instances from the modern vocabulary of Shetland and Orkney. Another, if remoter, parallel could have been mentioned in the history of the word *sherry*, also spelt *xery* after Spanish and occasionally *zery* in Scots.

The derivation of *Sheltie*, the pony, is slightly tricky. Gaelic *Sealtainn* is rightly dismissed as having no relevance here, its form suggesting straight derivation from the O.N. dative case. The likeliest explanation is to trace the word to *Hjalti*, n., a Shetlander, following Jakobsen, used as a kind of nickname attributively, as a *Shelty horse*, the first instance of the name, found early in the eighteenth century.

The pamphlet, of some two dozen pages, is packed with facts, though the argument is never lost sight of and is easy to follow; there is a surprisingly large bibliography, an interesting, if somewhat crude, Dutch map of 1643, just about the time when the Dutch were beginning to discover Shetland; and the format and design with the Jarlshof viking ship drawing on the cover are particularly attractive. In Shetland itself, where every man and woman is a born philologist and can quote Jakobsen more or less by heart, the book should give the greatest satisfaction.

DAVID MURISON

Folklore and Traditional History, edited by Richard M. Dorson. Mouton, The Hague, 1973. Pp. 118. Fl. 22.

This symposium, the first of a new series of 'Studies in Folklore', is a reprint, with a new index, of *Journal of the Folklore Institute* vol. 8, nos. 2–3 (1971), which in its turn was based partly on a panel at a meeting of the American Historical Association in 1970. It has nothing to do with what it is now fashionable to call 'oral history', the study of social data and recent events through living memory: all the papers are concerned with accounts of historical events handed down by oral tradition over periods of a hundred years or more. Predictably, the most interesting comes from Africa, where this sort of study is developing most rapidly. Kwame Y. Daaku gives a fascinating description of the historical sources available among the Akan of Ghana, which include not only verbal material but triumphal slogans sounded by 'talking' drums and horns, ceremonial umbrellas decorated with pictures of historical scenes, and rooms full of the blackened stools of office of departed chiefs ranged in chronological order, to be watered every forty weeks with libations poured by the chief while all his chiefly ancestors are invoked by name. Ceremonials are still important enough in this part of West Africa for tribes mixed in population to the point where they speak the same dialect to continue to observe different festivals at which their separate slogans are proclaimed. Oral tradition remains essential not only to chiefs but to anyone, as the only

title to land and property. The parallel with former times in Scotland is clearest in the description of funeral laments, which are sources for the names of ancestors, and oaths, which are based on formulae recalling the kingdom's disasters and defeats, like some Highland and border clan slogans—'Cuimhnich bàs Ailpein!' or 'Remember Broomhouse!'

Another study of West African tradition, by David Robinson, compares accounts from two different classes of Fulbe professional oral historians. One class is associated with the chiefs of the settled agricultural Fulbe, the other with the nobility of the nomadic pastoral groups. The first praise Umar Tal, a member of their race who led a nineteenth-century Muslim *jihad*, and even their oral performance is based on written contemporary Arabic and vernacular sources. The second class, more concerned with musical performance and less accurate in their history, continue to glorify Umar's defeated pagan opponents, members of the group which they serve. Both in their stories stress the role of members of their own class as makers, not only transmitters, of history, able to sway public opinion.

Barbro Klein's paper examines in detail the tradition that Charles XII of Sweden was shot by one of his own soldiers with a button off his own coat, and the controversy over the claim that the actual button had been found in 1924. Some surprising details about this emerge, but in view of parallel international traditions about the death of supposedly invulnerable heroes—Claverhouse among them—it is impossible to claim the tradition as true, though, as Dr Klein points out, if the king *was* believed invulnerable in his lifetime a would-be assassin *might* have used such a bullet. Swedish public interest in the controversy reflects the place of Charles XII as an aggressive national hero.

In shorter papers Marlene Ciklamini gives a digest of current ideas on the historical value of Old Norse skaldic verses as against the fictionalised Kings' Sagas and Sagas of Icelanders, and Albert Lord uses a parallel from his favourite Bosnian epic singer to show that Homer's Catalogue of the Ships may represent an element of a particular performer's style rather than an authentic Mycenaean Greek order of battle somehow preserved in tradition. The last and longest paper is Professor Dorson's own. He has chosen to leave aside the North American scene which he knows so well and break new ground in 'the Scottish highlands and outer islands whose history and folklore are notoriously intertwined and the product well collected'. True, but in selecting items from the archives of the School of Scottish Studies for transcription and translation (a saga in itself when the completed manuscripts were stolen by a thief to use as camouflage on University premises and the work had to be done again) he seems to have been guided less by local advice than by a preconception that 'for the Highlands, three episodes in particular have caught the folk imagination: the bloody battle of Culloden; the escape and wanderings of Prince Charlie . . . ; and the Glencoe massacre'. Anyone collecting Gaelic historical traditions in the field soon discovers that these are subjects on which most tradition-bearers may have opinions, but few have information,

true or fictional: the Heroic Age of the Scottish Gaels which generated the best of the legends was the period of unrestrained clan warfare which in most areas had been stamped out long before Glencoe, and the heroes and events known to the average storyteller are almost exclusively those of his own island or district. Fortunately Dorson also considers some material from printed sources—two of John Lorne Campbell's collections, Hugh Miller's *Scenes and Legends*, the MacKechnie edition of a few of the Dewar Manuscripts, and Alasdair Alpin MacGregor's *Peat-Fire Flame*—which despite the very different qualities of their editors all provide a more representative selection of themes.

Dorson ploughs steadily through forty or fifty tales from these sources, weeding out obviously non-historical international motifs. This done, he is not equipped to carry out a significant analysis of either the style or historical content of what remains. His most notable comment on the storytelling is the baseless suggestion that Angus MacLellan's comic tales as opposed to Dewar's 'grim clan histories' show a change in the balance of Gaelic repertoires over the past century. On the historical background Dorson only provides a few quotations from Prebble and the editors of the printed collections he uses, and clearly has not taken the time to look into other sources: he interpolates stories of the Appin Murder (whose victim is allowed to appear first as 'Campbell of Glure') among accounts of the Massacre of Glencoe as if they referred to the same event, and treats Prince Charles's disguise in woman's dress when accompanying Flora MacDonald as a 'legendary accretion'. The seven 'criteria for evaluating the historical validity of oral traditions' with which he concludes are admittedly preconceived, and the whole lengthy paper can hardly be seen as building up to the single Scottish example which he gives of each criterion.

ALAN BRUFORD

Books Received

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

New Shetlander Writing. An Anthology from the first hundred numbers, edited by John and Lawrence Graham. Shetland Council of Social Welfare, Lerwick 1973. Pp. 112. 80p.

Folklore and Traditional History, edited by R. Dorson. Mouton & Co., The Hague, Paris, 1973. Pp. 118. Fl.22.

The Black Douglas by I. M. Davis. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1974. Pp. 184. £2.95.

Scott: Bicentenary Essays (Selected Papers read at the Sir Walter Scott Bicentenary Conference), edited by Alan Bell. Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh and London 1974. Pp. 344. £3.75.

Robert Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation by F. N. McCoy. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1974. Pp. 244. £5.

Record Apart by Andrew Herron. Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh 1974. Pp. 209. £2.25.

Poems by Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson, edited by Alexander Manson Kinghorn and Alexander Law. Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh and London 1974. Pp. 225. £3.75.

Studies in the History of Dalriada by John Bannerman. Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh 1974. Pp. 178. £3.50.

Onoma. Bibliographical and Information Bulletin vol. XVII (1972/73), published with the assistance of the Belgian Government. International Centre of Onomastics, Leuven, Belgium. Pp. viii+477. 700B.fr.

The Scottish Tradition. Essays in honour of Ronald Gordon Cant, edited by Geoffrey Barrow. St Andrews University Publications no. LX, Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh 1974. Pp. 267. £5.

Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology vol. II, no. 1. Institute of Ethnomusicology, University of California, Los Angeles 1974. Pp. 175 (+ illus.).

Liosta Focal As Ros Muc le T. S. Ó Máille. Irish University Press, Baile Átha Cliath, Eire 1974. Pp. 253.

Breacadh le T. S. Ó Máille. Irish University Press, Baile Átha Cliath, Eire 1973. Pp. 146.

Old Galloway by Ian Donnachie & Innes MacLeod. David & Charles, Newton Abbot 1974. Pp. 168 (+ illus.). £3.50.

Thomas Carlyle by Ian Campbell. Hamish Hamilton, London 1974. Pp. 210+8 plates. £4.25.

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(Titles of contributions appear in bold type, and names of contributors in small capitals)