Bonfire night itself was usually a disappointment with the bigger boys assuming command although they had contributed very little to wood collecting. Parents brought squibs (fireworks), but demanded rights of supervision. Firemen invariably turned up saying the fire was a danger to an overhead power line and extinguished it. In spite of this the next bonfire day would be approached with equal enthusiasm and commitment for the pleasure lay within the ritual.

Confrontation played a large part with Society childhood but it was mainly a method of self-assertion and establishing position within the group. Seldom did it develop into actual violence. There was even a convention called 'the gully' which allowed status to be established without having to resort to a 'square go'. When there was a dispute between two apparent equals, the one who considered himself dominant would offer the 'gully' by placing his left hand on the other's right shoulder and saying 'there's the gully', the right hand was then placed on the other's left shoulder with the words 'there's the knife', this was finished by saying 'I can do ye a' yer life' followed by a light slap on the left cheek. There was no great disgrace in accepting 'the gully' and it certainly did not last a lifetime as the words would suggest but only carried over until the other felt confident enough to make a reciprocal challenge. Confrontations that looked as though they could become serious were quickly nipped in the bud by the ever watchful eyes and interventions of adults.

OWEN F. HAND

A Danish Analogue to 'Wandering Willie's Tale'

The origin of 'Wandering Willie's Tale' in *Redgauntlet* is debatable. Was it based upon an oral story known to Scott in his youth, as his notes to the 1832 edition of *Redgauntlet* claim? Or upon a literary version in Joseph Train's *Strains of the Mountain Muse* (Train 1814, 191–5), a book which he certainly knew? If the latter, was Train himself drawing on a story 'current in Nithsdale', as Alexander Fergusson thought? (Fergusson 1886, 216–17).

Without venturing to express an opinion on the Scottish aspects of this question, I would like to draw attention to a Danish analogue which I recently came upon by accident. It was collected by the indefatigable Evald Tang Kristensen, and appeared in the massive 'New Series' of his *Danske Sagn*, in the fifth volume, posthumously published in 1934. The exact date of collection is not given, but most of the material for this

'New Series' was gathered between 1900 (date of completion of the 'First Series') and 1927, when publication of the 'New Series' began. Kristensen was one of the most rigorous folklorists of his time in his concentration on direct fieldwork and in amassing numerous variants, presented in bare simplicity, without commentary or theorising.

The story to which I refer is no. 544 in Vol. V of *Danske Sagn: Ny Række* (1934), 200–201. It has no title, for Kristensen only numbered his items. I would translate it as follows:

> There was a farmer who lived down on the most westerly farm of Møllerup, and he had to go over to Trøjborg to pay his tax to the squire. Now when he gets there, the squire is desperately ill. Well now, there's some sort of sheriff there who takes the money, and he promises that the receipt will come sure enough, as soon as the squire gets better. But he died not long after, and no receipt ever arrived.
>
> So then, the squire's son comes home (he had been on a long journey) and takes over the estate, and he looks through the account books. Whatever was not down as having been paid already was called in for payment.
>
> One fine day, the farmer at Møllerup gets a stern letter saying would he be so good as to pay his tax by such and such date. So off he goes to Trøjborg, and he says that he'd paid such and such a sum, but never had had a receipt, because the old squire had been sick. That was a pack of nonsense, said the squire's son, and he wanted to have the money.
>
> 'All the same, I won't pay this bill,' says the farmer, very angrily. 'And even if I have to fetch that receipt from your father in Hell, even so, I'll get it, that's sure!'
>
> 'You should be careful what you say,' says the young squire.
>
> 'No, I won't, and I wish you good day!'
>
> So he sets out for home — and he's none too happy, for it's no easy matter to go to Hell, or so he certainly supposed. The upshot was that he saddled his horse and rode off wherever luck might lead him. He let the horse choose its own path, for he did not even know just what he was looking for.
>
> Now as he's riding along, up comes a man and says to him, 'You're looking very gloomy, I think. What exactly are you looking for?'
>
> 'Yes, I could do with some help, I can tell you!'
>
> The man says that yes, he could certainly help him, and so the farmer tells him the whole story.
>
> 'Well now,' says this man, 'you must just ride on, and you'll come to a gateway all blazing with fire, and there you must tether your horse and go in. They will come and offer you a chair, but you must take care never to sit down, and never to accept anything to eat, but simply demand your receipt. If you do this, you'll get to see the squire, sure enough.'
>
> So on he rides, and comes to the gateway, and tethers his horse, and goes in.
>
> They invite him to sit down.

'No, I want my receipt.'

So the squire sets to and writes it out, and he takes it and puts it in his pocket. But after that he remembers nothing more.

In the morning he is woken by his horse neighing, and when he looks around he sees that he is lying in the churchyard on the old squire's grave, and the horse is tethered nearby, where he had tethered it himself. Now for the first time he remembers his adventure, and he feels right down to the bottom of his pocket — and the receipt really is there.

He stables his horse, and then goes off to see the young squire. Here is the receipt, he tells him, and if he would look at the handwriting he would recognise it.

The squire's son had to admit that yes, it was quite correct — 'But where did you get it?'

'Well, I have to tell you that I fetched it from Hell, just as I said I would.'

'Phew!' says the squire's son. 'If you promise me never to tell a living soul about my father, your farm at Møllerup will be free from all taxes and dues to Trøjborg in perpetuity.'

And that's how it was settled, and since then that farm has never paid any tax to Trøjborg.

But the affair was probably *not* kept secret, otherwise I wouldn't have been able to tell this story, would I!

In theory, there are two ways one could account for the obvious similarity between this oral Danish narrative and Scott's story. One is that Scott was indeed (directly or through Joseph Train's work) using a traditional story to which Denmark supplies an analogue; the other, that the popularity of Scott's novels on the Continent led someone to borrow the plot of 'Wandering Willie's Tale', simplify it, and retell it in oral style with local place-names. This person would not necessarily be Kristensen's informant; it could have been someone earlier in the nineteenth century.

The chief differences between the Danish tale and Scott's are, roughly, these: the *dramatis personae* are fewer; there is no narrator; there are no allusions to historical personages, and the squire is anonymous; there is no monkey; the hero is not a musician; the scene in Hell is less vivid and menacing; it is implied that the missing money had been stolen by the sheriff. On the assumption that the story has been borrowed from Scott's novel into Denmark, it is easy to see why allusions to Scottish history should be dropped, and why a dishonest sheriff would be both more credible and more relevant than an uncanny monkey; however, since Danish legends are rich in sinister motifs concerning the Devil and damned ghosts, I find it hard to imagine why a Dane who had read Scott's description of Wandering Willie's visit to Hell should water it down to something so tame. Nor do I see why he would drop the motif of music; a fiddler could quite well take the role in Denmark that a piper does in Scotland. If there was borrowing in this direction, the borrower did not make full artistic use of the material.

If, on the other hand, Scott was elaborating upon an oral tale corresponding to content to this Danish one, it is easy to see why he should give it a more complex and 'literary' frame, and relate it to historical persons. And of course we have Scott's own comment in 1832 to suggest that this was precisely what he had done.

Dr Alan Bruford kindly drew my attention (pers. com. Oct. 1994) to a group of Scottish tales published in *Tocher* 25:30–32 and 33:188–195, and in *Scottish Studies* 7:106–114 and 16:1–2. In these, someone goes to Hell in order to get back a contract for his soul which he had pledged to the Devil; on his return, he brings news that a place in Hell is waiting for a wizard (priest, robber) who had told him how to get there, thus bringing that person to repentance. Dr Bruford suggested that the rent-receipt story could have originated, probably in Scotland, as a Protestant parody of this older Catholic *exemplum* known from Scandinavian, Celtic and Slavonic countries.

So, although the finding of a single foreign analogue may not constitute proof that what we may perhaps term 'The Receipt from Hell' is an International Migratory Legend, I believe that it points strongly in that direction. Perhaps one day further analogues will be found to clinch the matter.

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JACQUELINE SIMPSON

The Regimental Wearing of the Highland Dress, 1798

Lord Elgin kindly sent me in April 1991 a copy of the text of a letter dated 26th December 1798, of much interest regarding the attitudes of soldiers to the wearing of Highland dress. It is reproduced here, with Lord Elgin's permission. Clearly, after wearing the dress for three years, the men had become much attached to it, though this feeling does not appear to have been shared by some of the officers.