VII

The Movement in the Eighties
To ensure the success and permanence of the revival of early literature it was necessary for the editors not to design their publications exclusively for scholars. Eighteenth century research men, even as much as those today, liked to parade their learning in the market place, and, as often as is the case today, their works turned out to be so many slender pegs for vast accumulations of impressive footnotes, intended as much to mortify their rivals as to provide information. The primary need of the movement, greater even than the need for learned works and histories, was for texts that would be understandable to the general public. This was the need which was most slowly and imperfectly satisfied. It seemed too difficult for editors to print texts without meddling with them, and to give necessary and helpful notes instead of flashy irrelevancies. After the publication of the Reliques there was room for other collections giving older pieces than Percy had dared to include, and combining David Herd's fidelity to texts with Percy's ability to catch the popular ear. Unfortunately, each of the two most prominent editors of early poetry in the last two decades
of the century failed to unite those qualities which would have been of greatest service to their cause. Both John Pinkerton and Joseph Ritson did yeoman service in connection with the revival; to omit their work would be to tell less than half the story. But they were embarrassing advocates for any cause, most of all for early literature, which badly needed champions of different calibre. As if to illustrate Johnson's description, these two antiquaries were two of the most rugged beings ever connected with literature. In a century of fierce literary quarrels the egotistical invectives of Ritson and Pinkerton were outstanding in violence of language and slenderness of cause.

Unlike that of most antiquaries of the time, Pinkerton's career was wholly that of a man of letters, principally because he had independent means. He was one of the numerous tribe of Scottish expatriates living in London, although much of his writing was concerned with Scottish history and literature. Like the youthful Scott, Pinkerton had early fed his mind on the heady delights of antiquarian literature, particularly the Reliques and Ossian. His first poetic attempts, though poor in themselves, reveal the influence of his reading. His volume of poems, Rimes, published in 1781, included several in praise of the
valour of the early Britons, one in which Ossian was exalted over Homer, six odes translated "from the provenzal," the originals of which he had found in St. Palaye's Histoire Littéraire des Troubadours, and an "adaptation" from the Norse, the Death Song of Pruda. The whole book was obviously influenced by Pinkerton's study of early literature and history.

Pinkerton was still a boy when he first conceived the idea for his collection of Scottish Tragic Ballads. In February, 1778, when he was barely 20 years old, he had evidently submitted his manuscript to Dodsley, the publisher, for the latter wrote to him that even though his versions were more correct and perfect than those of earlier collections, he doubted that the public demand would warrant publication, especially as the collection was confined to Scottish pieces only. Pinkerton then sought the advice and assistance of Percy and Dr. James Beattie, the author of The Minstrel. We

\[\text{Pinkerton: Rimes. London, 1781}

His study of Middle English had apparently not been very deep. A poem entitled To an Antiquary began:

"Right ler nit Clerk, styl mought thy reverend lore
To Fame's quaint house conducken thee aright;
Ne fire ne worm invade the Gothique store
Ne gleim of genie the loved darkness light,
Mought som of future daies in pleasant storie
Thy high attempts relate and ceaseless glorie."

\[\text{Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I. 5}

ed. Turner. 1830\]
have not Pinkerton's letter to Percy, but it is evident that he had offered his poems for inclusion in another edition of the *Reliques*. Percy replied that though he considered the second part of Hardyknute inferior to the first part, he would insert that and the other pieces when he published the legendary fourth volume. Beattie advised Pinkerton not to publish the poems, as "all the Scotch poems of merit I have seen are already in print". But Pinkerton was not easily discouraged. Percy, after he was made a Dean, wrote that since he had no longer the time to relish "pleasures of this kind" he would advise Pinkerton to print "your second part of Hardyknute, with such other poems as have occurred to you of that kind, in a little elegant miscellany of your own". He hoped his son might later add the fourth volume to the *Reliques*; in which case the younger Percy would, of course, be glad to use Pinkerton's material with due acknowledgement. In March 1780, Percy wrote again and suggested Dodsley as a publisher, and further: "I shall be in town about the middle of April ... I shall then be ready to deliver up your manuscript, and shall be very willing to correct the Press".

Like Herd and Wotherspoon before him, Pinkerton

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() Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I.7
() ibid. I. 12-16
seems to have tired of waiting for Percy's promised favours, and the following January informed him that he would superintend the publication himself, and had come to an agreement with Nichols, whom Percy had also recommended. Percy was "extremely glad" and would "be happy to observe the progress of the press", and "obey any commands of yours respecting it". Finally Pinkerton's work went through the press, and the volume was sent to Percy, who characteristically kept it for months and then returned it with no comments except the usual excuses of his pressing and important business. Thus the volume *Scottish Tragic Ballads* came into the world with the knowledge and approval of Percy, but without the slightest real assistance from him.

To his collection Pinkerton prefixed two dissertations, *On the Oral Tradition of Poetry*, and *On the Tragic Ballad*. The first consisted of a discussion of ballad characteristics, rhyme, alliteration, and refrain, which account for preservation of the ballads by oral tradition. The *Essay on the Tragic Ballad* was a short discussion of the reason why tragedy was affecting and contained edifying, and high praise for the tragic power of the "new" ballads in his collection. Both essays were marred by an unnecessary display of erudition, full as they were of

*Hardyknute, an Heroic Ballad*, now first published complete: with the other more approved Scottish Ballads, and some not hitherto made public, in the Tragic Style. To which are prefixed two dissertations: I. *On the Oral Tradition of Poetry*; II. *On the Tragic Ballad*. London, 1781. (The running title was *Scottish Tragic Ballads*)
allusions to works in obscure languages. Here, however, for the first time in any collection since Percy's the editor introduced his material with a discussion of its history and of the conditions under which it was written. The defect of the essays lies in the fact that they were obviously written to illustrate Pinkerton rather than his subject, and were therefore hardly calculated to attract the general reader.

There was very little new in the volume that was not the work of the poet Pinkerton rather than the collector. Child Maurice, Edom o'Gordon, and The Child of Elle, while The Earl of Murray and The Gypsy Laddie were evidently taken, with some alterations, from Ramsay. Of these borrowings he said they were now "given much more correct". The new pieces were written by himself. It may be that since his manuscript had been seen by Dodsley, Nichols, Beattie, and above all, by Perdy, with not one suspecting his forgery, Pinkerton felt safe from detection and was emboldened to sing high praises of his own work. In the preface he said:

"Most of the compositions now offered to the public, have already received approbation. The mutilated fragment of Hardyknute formerly in print, was admired and celebrated by the best critics. As it is now, I am inclined to think, given in its original perfection, it is certainly the most noble production in this style that has ever appeared in the world. The manners and character are strongly marked and well preserved;
the incidents deeply interesting; and the catastrophe new and affecting. I am indebted for most of the stanzas, now recovered, to the memory of a lady in Lanarkshire.

This enthusiasm loses its effect when it is realized that all except the "mutilated fragment" was Pinkerton's own work. Of his other imitations he wrote:

"...a few are now first published from tradition. The Editor imagined they possessed some small beauties, else they would not have been added to this Selection. Their seeming antiquity was only regarded as it enhanced their real graces..."

Probably the most amazing aspect of this forgery was the cool audacity of the 23 year old editor, who must have been impatient to learn of the success of his hoax. The first notice, in the Gentleman's Magazine for June, 1781, was a brief half-column, giving a short description of the work, but expressing no opinion as to its merits. The Critical Review for September of that year was non-committal but friendly: "...to the admirers of ancient Scottish poetry, this little volume will afford considerable amusement". There was no hint that possibly the contents were not what they purported to be. An unfriendly but, by no means unmasking review was not to come until April of the following year in the Monthly Review. The reviewer's attitude was bad tempered, though not ruthless. He scoffed at Pinkerton's display of erudition in the introductory essays, which, he said, proved practically
nothing. He further expressed doubt as to the antiquity of either part of Hardyknute, basing his suspicion on the fact that the first part was now thought to be a modern imitation by competent judges, and the second part "given here, is evidently the production of a very inferior hand".

Better informed criticism was to come privately from another source. Early in 1783 Pinkerton sent a copy of the work to Lord Hailes, who criticized it in some detail, pointing out that the song "I wish I were where Helen Æyes" was all modern but the first line. Pinkerton's retort to that was: "Had your Lordship said the first three lines, you would have been right", but he did not frankly admit the rest of the song was his own. To judge from Pinkerton's answer, for we have not Hailes' letter, Hailes also expressed the opinion that the second part of Hardyknute was certainly modern because it showed such ignorance of medieval castles and customs, Whereupon Pinkerton replied:

"Permit me to inform your lordship that some of the first antiquaries in England are of a different opinion, and have asserted the antiquity of the whole poem as published by me, from the vast knowledge of feudal times that appears in it. I can safely say, for my own part, that I have studied the feudal manners and those of chivalry as much as any man in Europe, and can perceive no anacronism in the poem".
A few lines later, while discussing the same topic the young man further rebuked the scholarly Hailes by adding:

"Before I conclude this point, I must likewise observe that the study of antiquity is the most uncertain in the world, and that those most versant in it are least apt to pronounce rashly ..."

The whole of Pinkerton's long letter is in the same vein of supercilious resentment that Lord Hailes should criticize the work other than favourably, and there was no hint of gratitude for the painstaking criticism of the elder and greater scholar.

Private criticism of this sort was not going to prevent the editor from continuing his hoax, particularly since the work sold readily, and the edition was soon exhausted. In December of 1782 Pinkerton was arranging with Nichols for the publication of a second edition, to which was to be added a second volume containing comic ballads. The second edition duly came out the following year, with the title changed to Select Scotish Ballads. The one in Scotish was one of Pinkerton's mild attempts at reform in spelling, which began when he entitled his first book of poems Rimes. His work in this matter never became so radical as Ritson's deliberately eccentric orthography. The first volume of the new edition corresponded

"Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I. 36ff."
to the 1781 volume except for a few changes in the notes, mostly taken from the works of Lord Hailes, and the addition of a few more tragic ballads and four "romanzes" translated from the Spanish. The two dissertations at the beginning of the volume were unchanged, while in the second volume was added a Dissertation on Comic Ballads, which had the usual enthusiastic praise for Pinkerton's own work. The essay was in the same vein as his earlier ones, and he further tried to lead the reader from the possibility of suspecting any forgery on his part by attacking the editorial dishonesty of Ramsay and his collaborators. He wished they had "rather used their endeavours to recover and preserve the real ancient ballads, than to compose new ones". This from Pinkerton! The revised notes to the first volume contain more than one instance of Pinkerton's unblushing audacity. In the notes to Hardyknute he scoffed at the idea that Lady Wardlaw was the author of the poem, and after some discussion assigned it to the end of the fifteenth century, though he admitted that "many strokes have been bestowed by modern hands". He went on to tell of his correspondence with Lord Hailes: "Lord Hales [sic] has a copy of the original edition of Hardyknute, with manuscript alterations in the handwriting of Dr. John Clerk, Physician at Edinburgh". From

Select Scotish Ballads. II.173
Pinkerton's notes the reader was led to believe that Lord Hailes was confident that the poem was genuine. Hailes pointed this out in a letter to Pinkerton, but no public nor private apology came from the younger editor.

The additional volume contained a few old ballads and some poems that could hardly fall into that category. Pinkerton included, with acknowledgement, *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, and *The Gaberlunzie Man*, published by John Callander the year before. From Lord Hailes' collection he took four of Dunbar's and three of Alexander Scott's poems. He also printed Henryson's *Robene and Makyne*, and *Peblis to the Play*, ascribed to James V. The latter had been sent to him together with the notes to the poem by Bishop Percy, who had got it, notes and all, from George Paton in 1772.

In a brief review the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1783 merely described volume II and spoke of the high quality of one or two poems, but did not pretend to do more than notice the book. The *Critical Review* was still friendly, with the critic commenting on "the superior correctness with which the songs are published by this editor". The *Monthly Review* treated the new volumes with

@Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I. 104
@Letters from Bishop Percy etc. to George Paton. p.19
@Critical Review. August, 1783. p.129-30
@Monthly Review. September, 1784. p.226-7
little more cordiality than it had given the first edition, but expressed no further suspicions of the editor's dishonesty. The first part of the review is important for the light it throws on the attitude of the critics who were grudgingly beginning to accept the revival of the old ballads:

"A judicious selection of Ballads is capable of furnishing an interesting picture of national manners. Though little to be relied on when personal characters are concerned, the general character of the times, and the opinions that prevail are frequently represented in them with greater fidelity than in more laboured compositions. But it is not on this account merely that they are valuable: collectively considered they form no incompetent chart of the intellectual, as well as civil progress of society, and its gradual advance from rudeness to refinement. Of the class alluded to there are several in this volume of considerable merit. It contains, however, many that might have peacefully slept in oblivion without injury to the Scottish Muse".

More than three years had passed since the publication of Scottish Tragic Ballads, but there was still no public exposure of Pinkerton's forgery. It was to come with accumulated vigour and fire in November, 1784 in a communication to the Gentleman's Magazine signed Anti-Scot, the pseudonym of none other than Joseph Ritson. Pinkerton could have dreaded no exposers more merciless, nor better equipped to show up his forgery. The tone of the communication was so snarling and vicious that the editor of the magazine seemed to feel compelled to apologize before and after the

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letter, as well as to insert notes defending Pinkerton. The editor said that he was confident that Pinkerton would excuse the insertion of "so singular a literary curiosity, and complete specimen of modern criticism". According to Nichols, the introduction and notes signed Edit. were probably written by Pinkerton; "with whose concurrence the letter appeared in the Magazine". Pinkerton, faced with the unavoidable publication of the letter, tried to defend himself as well as he could in the notes but he fought back on only the minor points. Ritson's big point, that some of the poems were written by Pinkerton himself, was left untouched.

The letter opened with a venomous attack on Scotland and her literary figures:

"The distinguished honour which your native country has acquired by literary imposition upon her neighbors renders a junction with those illustrious worthies, William Lauder, Archibald Bower, and James Macpherson, no small compliment to the ingenious Mr. Pinkerton ... Your success has, doubtless, fully gratified your expectations; and the dexterity of the pick-pocket may vie with the impudence of the highwayman".

Ritson ridiculed Pinkerton's early original work, sneered at his two "learned Wartonian dissertations", and then passed to the contents of the collection. Hardyknute, part II, he summarily dismissed as an obvious and contemptible forgery by Pinkerton. "The eight following pieces, being
chiefly transcribed from Percy, though not a whit less suspicious on that account, I shall not attend to. I want to prove your forgery not his! He baldly asserted that the ballads which Pinkerton had published for the first time "from tradition" were forgeries. With usual Ritsonian forthrightness the letter ended: "I should not doubt of being able to add considerable to this little specimen of your vulgar knowledge, had you not, by omitting the necessary references, taken every possible precaution to prevent a discovery of your mistakes. You will ... in a little time hear from me again". Pinkerton was left with little, if any possible defense. His exposure, though delayed, was sudden and complete. There was nothing left for him to do but to ignore the charge as blandly as possible, and wait for a chance to repay Ritson in kind.

Joseph Ritson had many traits of character similar to those of Pinkerton. Both were hypochondriacs and unhealthily egotistical, with many more enemies than friends. But Ritson, with all his extravagant statements, was a more intelligent man than his fellow antiquarian; he rarely made himself ridiculous, a trap into which Pinkerton's windy blusterings often betrayed him. The tragedy of Ritson is that he never had an opponent worthy of his steel, and blows worthy of being delivered against the gods themselves.
fell on such harmless well-meaning fellows as Warton and Percy. The insanity which finally overcame Ritson a few months before his death was never far from him all his life, but many of his eccentricities were much saner than the common sense of his contemporaries. He skilfully combined his profession of law with his avocation, by delving into legal antiquities in addition to his literary studies. His almost story-book zeal for learning can best be illustrated by his walking to Edinburgh when he was 21 years old, where he spent so much of his little capital on books that he was unable to pay for his lodging. It was on this trip that he acquired his lifelong prejudice against the Scots. In 1775 Ritson settled in London, and from then on his career as a literary antiquarian was prolific and important. His peculiar and savage method of criticism had for its first major object Warton's three volumes of the History of English Poetry. In that pamphlet he always seized any opportunity to get in a thrust at Percy, to whom he always referred as "Dr.(now Bp.) Percy", ostentatiously doubting the existence of the folio manuscript, and asserting, as though it were news, that Percy had adulterated his texts. The following year, 1783, he devoted his talents to Steevens' edition of Shakespeare. The new spirit the Ritson brought to the study of literary antiquity was a
spirit of fanatical insistence on the exact and unadulterated texts of early poetry. It was part of his passion for accuracy in even the most trivial points. The vitriolic personal abuse which he heaped on those who, like Percy and Pinkerton, sinned against his pedantic principles has rarely been matched in English criticism. In his own work he never relaxed the standards he set for other editors.

A year before his attack on Pinkerton, Ritson had published in three volumes A Select Collection of English Songs, etc. A great deal of the space in the preface to this collection was taken up with his praise of the accuracy, good taste, and general excellence of his own collection, and its superiority to those of other men. He lauded himself for having excluded songs which contained the "most distant allusion ... [which] would have tinged the cheek of Delicacy, or offended the purity of the chastest ear". His Historical Essay on English Song, which prefaced the collection, treated the history of national song in Greece, Rome, Provence, Spain, Scandinavia, and Britain. His general method of approach was not very different from that of Pinkerton on similar subjects. Though he took pains to deny and ridicule Percy's theories about the Minstrels, his references to the Bishop in the essay are patronizing rather than savage. His most bitter attack on the man whom he later chose to call the "lying

A Select Collection of English Songs, with their Original Airs, and an Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song. London, 1783
priest", was contained in a footnote. Beginning with relative mildness, Ritson said that in making his own selection he had to get at some of Percy's originals, and he found that in the *Reliques* "not one has, upon examination, been found to be followed with either fidelity or correctness". After this bald statement of fact, devastating in itself, the footnote worked up to Ritson's concluding sentence:

"Forgery and imposition of every kind, ought to be universally execrated, and never more than when they are employed by persons high in rank or character, and those very circumstances are made use of to sanctify the deceit".

Ritson had declared war on Percy, and it was to be a long and bitter siege.

Ritson's collection was arranged in classes according to the subjects of the songs. The first volume was devoted to his *Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song*, and a collection of Love Songs, none earlier than Marlowe, most of them by Elizabethan and more modern authors. Volume two included Drinking Songs and Old Ballads, for which he was conventionally apologetic, saying in the preface that they "would by no means assimilate or mix with the more polished contents of the preceding divisions". The ascetic antiquary rejoiced that few drinking songs were to be found. The third volume contained the music for the songs. Only incidentally did this collection revive pre-Shakespearian
poetry; the great bulk of the pieces included were of a later date. Nothing was printed in the collection for the first time; with an ingenuity worthy of a better cause Ritson said that he "could not, consistently with all his respect for the public, obtrude upon them a single line, which had not already been stamped with their approbation, or on the merits of which they had not had an opportunity to decide". The reviewers gave Ritson just and favourable treatment. The Monthly Review considered the collection the best yet published. The Gentleman's Magazine highly commended the work for its accuracy and genuine erudition, calling it "a classical repository of English song".

Ritson was now fairly in the field and had begun his long quarrel with Percy and Pinkerton. The latter was evidently still smarting from Ritson's attack when a few months later he published his long-contemplated Letters of Literature, under the pen name of Robert Heron. These essays revealed Pinkerton's genuinely active and acquisitive literary intelligence. He showed a breadth and catholicity of interest, but a shallow background of reading and a cheap, notoriety-seeking cynicism. The most interesting essay to us was the one entitled On Literary Forgery. It is an astonishing yet amusing piece of effrontery, evidently written to prepare

@ Monthly Review. September, 1783
@ Gentleman's Magazine. June, 1784
the way for Pinkerton's later public confession and to make a virtue of his sin. The most remarkable passage must be quoted; a paraphrase would utterly lose the flavour.

"On different late occasions the subject of literary forgery hath been mentioned, without any enquiry ever being made into its propriety, or impropriety. Some wise writers have pronounced it, ridiculously enough, to partake of the crime of penal forgery; and have said that he who would publish a new production as ancient would forge an obligation. Others with great justice assert that nothing can be more innocent; that the fiction of ascribing a piece to antiquity, which in fact does not belong to it, can in no sort be more improper than the fiction of a poem or a novel; that in both the delight of the reader is the only intention.

"Indeed those innocents who call such forgeries criminal forget that they are blaspheming their savior and their religion; for the whole parables of Jesus Christ, that are narrated with circumstances that most strongly imply them to be true, yet are allowed fictitious, fall under this head. ...Perhaps in fact nothing can be more heroic and generous in literary affairs than a writer ascribing to antiquity his own production; and thus sacrificing his own fame to give higher satisfaction to the public. It certainly partakes of that nobility of soul, which is content with its own suffrage; and ranks the author among those who Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame."

Pinkerton's real confession came later the same year, 1785, in his third collection, *Ancient Scotish Poems*, in two volumes. He placed his confession and apology in an inconspicuous place, in his discussion of the poetry of Sir

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(1) Pinkerton: Letters of Literature. p.383
(2) Though dated 1786, the volumes were really issued in 1785. In accordance with publishers' custom at that time, when books were not ready until November, the imprint contained the date of the year following.
(3) Pinkerton: Ancient Scotish Poems. I.cxxvi-cxxx1
John Bruce. For explanation of his deception he pleaded his youth. The second part of *Hardyknute* he admitted to be entirely his own, and went on "since the editor of these volumes is in the confessional", to enumerate eight other poems in the first volume that were wholly or almost wholly written by him, and no fewer than nine in the second volume, namely, all those which he said "have not appeared in print". The confession was full and frank, but it had been forced from him. Fortunately, he did not claim that he was demonstrating nobility of soul or that he was sacrificing his own fame to give higher satisfaction to the public.

Pinkerton atoned in part for his previous sins by the editorial honesty of the new collection, which contained no forgeries. Falls from grace occurred when the editor's scholarship rather than his honesty was at fault. Of the one hundred poems which Pinkerton printed here from the Maitland manuscript, the most important were Gavin Douglas's *King Hart*, and twenty-one poems by Dunbar, all of which he printed for the first time. He gave four of Alexander Montgomerie's poems, and Roull's *The Cursing of Sir Joine Rowles Upon the Stelaris of his Fowlis*, and Quintyn Shaw's *Advye of to a Courtier*. The space given over to twenty-five poems of Sir Richard Maitland might better have been used for earlier and more important work, of which there
was plenty available. Pinkerton did not neglect to strike the conventional pose for all editors of early literature, saying: "The editor has in no instance sacrificed the character of a man of taste to that of an antiquary; as of all characters he should least choose that of a hoarder of ancient dirt". No detail was lacking from the formula:

"... the editor hopes that this collection, which to him has afforded an amusement and relaxation from more important study, will also afford some amusement to the public; if simple and genuine poetry, may please a refined people, or if plain sense may hope to be read in this age of sentimental suicide".

The Maitland manuscript, from which the poems were published, had been called to Pinkerton's attention by Percy. It was extracts from this same manuscript which Percy ten years before had offered to loan to David Herd after the cream had been skimmed for an additional volume of the Reliques, but, as usual with Percy, the promise was conveniently forgotten. The story of the origin of this manuscript is almost as romantic as that of the Bannatyne. It consists of two volumes, a folio and a quarto, left by Sir Richard Maitland (1496-1566) a prominent official in the service of James V. About 1560 Maitland became blind, but by the aid of his daughter was enabled to devote himself to literature. The poems of Maitland himself form a large part of the collec-

@ Pinkerton: Ancient Scotish Poems. I.xv
@ Ibid. I.xvi
tion, with the rest given over to the work of older Scottish poets and poems of unknown authorship. The manuscript remained in the collector's family until it was presented to Samuel Pepys, through whose will it passed, together with the rest of his library, to Magdalene College, Cambridge.

Ritson, as well as Percy, had examined the manuscript before Pinkerton. On August 6, 1734, Ritson spoke of having seen it recently, but made no comment to indicate that he understood its significance. Although Pinkerton said that "the reader may depend upon finding thro'-out a literal transcript of the MS. ... as far as human fallibility would permit", Ritson was not being merely vindictive when he assailed the accuracy of Pinkerton's work. In a marginal note beside Pinkerton's statement of his editorial honesty David Macpherson, later the editor of Wyntoun's Chronicle wrote: "Mr. Ritson who has compared P's edition with the mss. tells a very different story. In particular he says that when a passage uncommonly difficult has occurred, Mr. P. has got over the difficulty by omitting it ..." Prof. Cragie, in his edition of the manuscript for the Scottish Text Society, bears out Ritson's opinion of Pinkerton's editorial laxity.

The introductory essays in the first volume of Ancient Scotish Poems are characteristic of Pinkerton in

ed. Nicolæ. 1833

Ritson: Letters. I. 56
National Library of Scotland. MS. 337-40. I. xvi
Op. Cit. II. 30
violently assertions and in their parade of the author's learning. The first dissertation, an Essay on the Origin of Scotish Song, which Pinkerton, in a letter to Lord Buchan the following April, said cost him a half year's toil, was mostly discussion on ethnology, a subject in which there was a great deal of interest at this time. The value of his pronouncements on poetry is nullified by the wildness of his exaggerations, as, for example, when he said that not one Scots poet had imitated Chaucer "or is the least indebted to him". In his first collection, Scottish Tragic Ballads, Pinkerton had asserted his belief in the genuine antiquity of the Ossianic fragments; he now completely reversed his decision, although he condoned the deception, for, "to ascribe poetry or romance to any age, though written by ourselves, is innocent deceit". Sir Walter Scott gave Robert Jamieson the credit for first showing the close relationship between the British and Scandinavian ballads, but Pinkerton certainly had more than an inkling of the truth when he said, "From the stormy heaths of Scandinavia seem also to have been transplanted several of these wild flowers which adorn the compositions of the old Scotish minstrels". The whole essay was full of the anti-Celt prejudice for which Pinkerton is famous.

© Border Minstrelsy. ed. Henderson, 1902. I.48-49
The second essay was a List of Scotish Poets from Thomas Lermont to Fergusson, given with as much biographical and critical information as was available. The list was chronologically arranged, and, as the first production of its kind, was valuable to students of the subject. The usual qualifications must be made, as Pinkerton's own criticism was marred by his dogmatic assertions, as when he said that Dunbar surpasses Chaucer in humour, poetry, and knowledge of life.

The reviews were, on the whole, very favourable, but no more so than those of his far less deserving earlier work. The Gentleman's Magazine characterized the editor rather inclusively as a man of "genius, eccentricity, learning, impiety, and fastidiousness". It rejoiced that Pinkerton admitted the authorship of the second part of Hardyknute, "which alone would give him an eminent station among the poets of his native country"—a criticism which suggests another reason for Pinkerton's full confession and for his quiet acceptance of Ritson's accusations. The Critical Review printed the whole of Pinkerton's confession, but agreed to accept the present work at face value, though "the former dupe sees fallacy in every countenance; and will naturally believe that he who could once impose on the public may do

\(^\text{\textit{Gentleman's Magazine. February, 1786}}\)

\(^\text{\textit{Critical Review. March, 1786}}\)
it again. The review scoffed at the whole tribe of collectors of old poetry, except Ramsay, Percy, and Lord Hailes.

Pinkerton was doing just the sort of work that needed to be done, but he was doing it badly. His blundering dishonesty in his first edition could only breed suspicion and distrust not only for his own later work, but for the work of other antiquaries. A public which had been duped by Macpherson, by Chatterton, and now by Pinkerton would only receive new work of the same kind with a critically questioning attitude. That these forgeries were not more powerful drags on the movement indicated that palming off contemporary works as ancient was not considered a heinous offense, and that the general public was as yet comparatively indifferent as to whether it received genuinely ancient texts or modern imitations. Not yet versed in early literature, it was insensitive to radical differences in thought and texture.

\textsuperscript{1} All men were not so generous, for Chambers, in his Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen (1835) was undoubtedly expressing not merely his own personal opinion when he took it for granted that there was no such thing as the Maitland manuscript and wrote: "Pinkerton maintained that he had found the manuscript in the Pepysian Library at Cambridge, and in his correspondence he sometimes alludes to the deceit with admirable coolness. The forgery was one of the most audacious recorded in the annals of transcribing. Time, place, and circumstances were all minutely stated -- there was no mystery".
In the meantime the Reliques had lost none of its popularity and influence. In 1775, ten years after the first edition, Percy issued the third edition with a few unimportant revisions. The success of Percy's work stimulated Thomas Evans, a bookseller and publisher in the Strand, to capitalize for himself the continued interest in the old ballads. In 1777, two years after Percy's third edition, he issued Old Ballads, in two volumes. The collection, as he stated in his preface, was designed to supplement the work of Percy, "the taste of the times and the curiosity of the present age" demanding that these poems "should no longer be left subject of accident and chance, to perish in oblivion". As a bookseller Evans was surely aware of what sort of publication would sell well, and it is significant that he edited the songs at all, even though his preface did include the usual note: "A polished age will make allowances for the rude productions of their ancestors, who, if they did not dazzle the imagination, commonly interest the heart".

The collection was supplementary to the Reliques only in that it included no ballads that Percy had chosen for his work. Evans did not introduce his material with dissertations, nor did he illustrate it with copious notes.

Old Ballads, historical and narrative, with some of modern date; now first collected and printed from rare copies. With Notes. London, 1777. 2 vols.
What notes there were, were scarce and non-informing. The contents of the first volume and part of the second were arranged in an attempted chronological order, covering the period from King Arthur to King George III. The last part of the second volume was filled out with modern imitations. None of the old pieces was printed for the first time. Most of the authentic ballads he included were taken from the 1723-25 Collection (a) where Percy had been before him; in other words Evans gathered up Percy's discards from the older work. Consequently, his genuine old ballads were second-rate in quality, with the exception of some of the Robin Hood ballads, of which there were 27 in the first volume. For these he was probably indebted to some one or more of the Robin Hood garlands that were becoming popular. In the same year that Evans' first edition appeared, a collection of Robin Hood ballads was published in Glasgow. It contained 24 ballads, all included by Evans in his Old Ballads, in nearly the same order, but with a few textual differences. The next year a similar collection was brought out containing the same 27 songs given by Evans in the same order. It was

(a) The adventures of Robert Earl of Huntingdon vulgarly called Robin Hood. Being a compleat history of all his merry adventures and valiant battles ... Glasgow, 1777.

(b) The Songs of Robin Hood, containing the history of all the merry exploits done by him and his men. To which is prefixed a Preface, giving a ... full and perfect account of him, etc. London, 1778

(c) Cf. p.444
probably from a brother collection or a common original of these two collections that Evans took his Robin Hood material. What Evans did for his work was to cull what he could from the older Collection, take over into his work a popular collection of Robin Hood ballads, and add a few modern imitations. It was straight hack work, but it sold well.

A second edition of the Old Ballads was published in four volumes in 1784. The first two volumes of the edition were duplicates of the first edition. The other two volumes were cluttered with imitation ballads by Shenstone, Goldsmith, and minor eighteenth century writers. They include Percy's own poem, The Hermit of Warkworth, two of Gray's Welsh odes, the ubiquitous Death of Ragner Lodbrock, and several translations from the French. A large number of the pieces in the last two volumes were not acknowledged as modern, but were clumsy imitations, probably the work of Evans' friend William Julius Mickle. Evans' work showed no scholarly care and little literary taste. It was evidently thrown together to appeal to the book-buying public, which had not yet learned to prefer the genuine ballad to the modern imitation, nor, in fact, to distinguish between them. Its appetite for the

*One of them, Cumnor Hall, was the germ of Kenilworth*
new food was growing and it could be served poor quality, by a bookseller sensitive to the changing taste, with little demur.

The Critical Review considered Old Ballads a valuable supplement to Percy's collection. "The pieces contained in miscellanies of this kind are to be regarded as repositories of transient manners, fugitive customs, and obsolete language. Beheld in that point of view they have a decided value." The critic said not a word about the literary value of the material. The Monthly Review, while taking essentially the same attitude, was a little more unpleasant. It admitted that to the historians and "to the curious in antique composition" the collection was of value, but "literary forgeries being now become so fashionable, it is somewhat difficult to ascertain what is really original". It went on to say that it had detected spurious poems in the collection, but cautiously mentioned none by name. For a final display of ungraciousness, the reviewer said:"The modern ballads are added, no doubt, as Swift says, "to swell the Volume's price a shilling". Pinkerton's comment on the work was characteristically abusive: "For a complete instance of the lust

(Critical Review. April, 1777
Monthly Review. July, 1777
Pinkerton: Ancient Scotish Poems. I.xv
of publishing any poetry that looks old, the reader is referred to a mass in Four Volumes, published by Evans, called Old Ballads, and fraught with the merest trash that ever disgraced the press. The reader, however, must beware of pronouncing the old part of these volumes, such as the stall ballads of Robin Hood etc. the most pitiful stuff in the world; for if he does, he will find himself mistaken on perusing the modern pieces in that dunghill”. Pinkerton at this time was very friendly with Percy, and as the Hermit of Warkworth, the "poem in so many fits", as Johnson called it, was included in the dunghill, Pinkerton had perforce to add: "The Hermit of Warkworth is an exception; but it shines like a lamp in a sepulchre."

The immediate followers of Percy unhappily lacked his genius for educating and at the same time conforming to popular taste. With all his shortcomings Percy was a more skilful editor than his successors, who failed to lay to heart the reasons for the success of the Reliques. The collections of Lord Hailes and David Herd, though edited with more faithful accuracy, lacked the necessary notes and introductory material. Pinkerton's forgeries and headstrong statements lost him the respect of his readers. The immediate interest in Ritson's publications, for his own generation, lay not so much in the older poetry
he collected as in his vindictive prefaces and notes. The movement that Percy had launched so ably badly needed his further services once more to put it in the right channel by editing another collection of the older poets, or at least by adding the long-discussed fourth volume to the Reliques. Freed from Shenstone's influence and held in check by fears of Ritson's eagle eye, he might have rescued early poetry from its two foes, the incompetent pot-boiling editors and the contentious academicians. Percy made some revisions for the second and third editions of the Reliques. He published anonymously in 1771, The Hermit of Warkworth, a long ballad imitation, but the Reliques was the only publication of its kind that Percy edited, despite his never failing interest in the subject up to the time of his death, 46 years after the Reliques was first published.

The unfinished works of Percy shed an interesting light on the man and his age. Percy never lost his passion for most proper respectability, but beneath it he had a quick and apparently insatiably interest in the by-paths of literature, particularly in the poetry of scarcely known peoples. Writing to Evan Evans, the Welsh antiquary, in 1762 he told him of his Chinese novel, and continued:
"Besides these I have procured a MS. translation of the celebrated Tograi Carmen from the Arabic: and have set a friend to translate Solomon's Song afresh from the Hebrew, chiefly with a view to the poetry; this also is printing off & will soon be published in a shilling pamphlet. Then I have myself gleaned up specimens of East Indian Poetry, Peruvian Poetry, Lapland Poetry, Greenland Poetry, and inclosed I send you one specimen of Saxon Poetry ."

There, surely, was material for a collection that would feed the growing Romantic sentiment.

Shenstone was aware of Percy's unorthodox interests and apparently was anxious lest Percy give them too free rein in the Reliques. Again and again he thought it necessary to warn Percy not to make the collection too large, and to be sure of the quality of the inclusions. A little more than a year before Shenstone died Percy wrote to him:

"... to oblige you I have stipulated with the Bookseller only to print two Vols., provided the materials for a third are not quite as good as those of the two first, which are to be printed out of the very cream and quintessence of our Collections. And to prevent ever degrading the work by additional volumes etc. we have made an express article, that if we sh'd at length find very excellent material for a 3rd vol. no inducement is to give birth to a fourth". 7

Materials for the third volume were easily forthcoming, and the idea of a fourth volume remained a more or less

nebulous project for the next thirty years. In the summer of 1775 he wrote to Paton, "I hope now, in the course of next winter, to prepare a 4th volume of the Reliques for the press..." In Percy's correspondence with Pinkerton the fourth volume or "some supplemental volumes" of the Reliques were often mentioned. In 1778 he wrote to Pinkerton that he would insert Hardyknute, part II, "whenever I give an additional volume". After 1782, however, all mention of additional volumes indicated that they were to come in the indefinite future as the work of Percy's son or nephew. The fourth edition of the Reliques, ostensibly edited by the Bishop's nephew, appeared in 1794, but it contained no more early poetry than had the third edition.

But Percy had far more ambitious schemes which never achieved fruition. In 1765, the year of the Reliques, he interleaved a copy of Langbaine's An Account of the English Dramatic Poets, and secured a loan of Oldys' copy of Langbaine from Dr. Birch. He fully annotated his own copy with his own comments and with a transcription of all of Oldys' notes, carefully distinguishing the latter by a large 0 after the note. Percy put a great deal of labo--

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(5) Letters of Bishop Percy etc to George Paton. p.57
(6) Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I.6
ious work into the book, making it, except for an introduction, all ready for a new edition; but the work was never published. The same may be said for a copy of Winstanley's *The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets*, which Percy also annotated.

Percy's schemes for future publications of ancient poetry were not confined to a fourth volume of the *Reliques*; he planned for an entirely new collection. Lord Hailes' publication from the Bannatyne MS. aroused his curiosity, and he was eager to see what Hailes had omitted. Through George Paton he finally secured a loan of the manuscript from the Advocates' Library in June 1773. He continually put off returning it, and did not finally send it back until July, 1775. He had earlier confided his plans to Hailes:

"I shall now inform you, Sir, on what account I am thus importunately troublesome. Since the Publication of my *Reliques* etc, a great Number of Ancient Poems, both printed and Manuscript have fallen in my way; and I have been strongly importuned to print some of them.- I am inclined to comply, and print three such volumes as the former; but not as a Continuation of that Work by any means; but to be a New distinct Independent Publication, under this Title *Ancient English and Scottish Poems, chiefly of the more popular cast* accompanied with some few modern pieces. 3 vol. 12 mo.

The Selection will take in poems of a more elevated

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6) Percy's annotated copy of Langbaine is in the Edinburgh University Library. Laing Mss. II.647
7) Letters from Bishop Percy et al to George Paton. p.23
8) Ibid. p.56
kind that the last; on grave, sublime, and moral subjects; not wholly excluding some Few Songs or Historical Ballads of Superior Merit which have come to my hands, since the former work was finally closed. Each volume is intended to contain a Series of Poems from the earliest times down to the Present, in the manner of the former Publication viz. The Reliques etc. - No Pieces shall be admitted that have been rendered common in former miscellanies; but either Poems extracted from ancient MSS. or from such printed books as are not very common.

To each volume shall be prefixed an Essay:
At present I have thought of the following Subjects for such Essays (1) On the Origin and Spirit of Chivalry. (2) On the State of Manners on the Borders of the two Nations & the happy Effects of the Union with respect to the National Security etc. (3) On the Effect of the Ancient English Longbow, etc. - Favour me with your opinion on these Subjects particularly the second. ... Will you allow me to solicit your generous Contributions for both the Poetical and Prosaic Parts of the Work"."

Six years later he wrote to Pinkerton that "the contents of these [the projected volumes] have long since been collected and arranged; and I flatter myself, in point of merit, are no whit inferior to what the public accepted with so much indulgence in the three former volumes"

The idea of another publication supplementary to the Reliques was no mere afterthought inspired by the popularity of the famous collection. Even before the Reliques was published, Percy was planning to use in a subsequent book the pieces of early poetry which he himself


Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I.10
admired but which were of necessity barred from the Reliques because of the hazardous nature of such an undertaking. It is not difficult to see where Percy's heart lay. In a letter to Lord Hailes as early as 1763 Percy said that if the Reliques was successful he might publish the more ancient and longer poems

"... that are much more valuable as well upon account of their poetical merit, as the curious picture they give us of ancient manners. ... Tho' full of wild romantic feats of Chivalry [they] frequently display great descriptive and inventive powers in the bards who composed them ... The antiquaries who have republished the productions of our old English poets, have generally been men totally void of all taste and feeling, and therefore have always fastidiously rejected these old poetical Romances, because founded on fictitious subjects: While they have been careful to grub up every petty fragment of Robert of Gloucester, Gower, Lydgate, Harding, and other wretched Rhymists of that stamp, whose merit was to obscure and deform true history". 

Percy's scheme for a second collection was ambitious and commendable. Had he carried it into effect he would have anticipated much of the work of Pinkerton and Ritson, and his labours would have been far better adapted than were theirs to appeal to the general reader. Another publication on the same lines as the Reliques coming from Percy in the late seventies or eighties, would have been more effective than all the collections that were actually published.

during those years. The collection would have consisted of authentic texts of the old poets represented in the Bannatyne and Maitland manuscripts, together with several miscellaneous pieces left over from the Reliques or collected since, all illustrated with essays which only Percy could compose in the right vein.

That his editorial standards would have been stricter than those applied in the Reliques is indicated by his work on Ramsay's Evergreen. Late in 1772 Lord Hailes sent Percy his copy of the Evergreen in which Hailes had made a few textual notes. This book is now preserved in the National Library of Scotland. Percy took the book and collated it with the Bannatyne and his copies from the Maitland manuscript. He made no corrections of the poems which Hailes had republished in 1770. Others, which he evidently thought of using, twenty in all, are littered with interlinear and marginal corrections. Nothing escaped him. Variations in spelling, and even differences in punctuation he noted carefully. These twenty poems were all worked over with Ritsonian care, evidently with a view to publication, but they, no more than Percy's other pieces, or the edition of Langbaine, ever saw the press. The plans which might have resulted in more fruitful and influential

© National Library of Scotland. Ms. 494-495
work than the Reliques came to naught.

Percy's lack of productivity, when at the same time he was evidently eager to produce and had all his materials ready, cannot be attributed to his fear of Ritson. Ritson's attacks on Percy's integrity did not begin until he published his Observations on Warton's History in 1782. There, and in his English Songs published the next year, they are not prominent. In the Observations he attacked Percy through his attack on Warton; in English Songs his slur on Percy's honesty is confined to a footnote. It was not for another ten years that his railing was to assume torrential proportions. The fear of Ritson may have been a minor contributing cause to Percy's silence, though he denied it vigorously:

"...the personal abuse of poor mad Ritson was the highest honour he could do me, and I can only regret that it deprived us of the ingenious labours of 'honest Tom Warton'. I assure you it would have had no such influence on me."

The real explanation of Percy's missing publications lies in his fear of a more inarticulate but far more powerful censure, that of a punctilious generation that would not condone a ballad-monger in a Bishop. In 1778 Percy became Dean of Carlisle and in 1782 Bishop of Dromore. After each promotion his letters took on a different tone

when they referred to the Reliques or to future work of a similar kind. Despite the fact that it was customary for a man high in the church to be closely connected with literature, Percy's case had no precedent. Ballads and older literature were not literature; they were not respectable. The editorship of such works was incompatible with the dignity of a high position in the church. Writing to Pinkerton immediately after he became Dean, Percy said, referring to his interest in early literature:

"But the truth is, I have not so much leisure and perhaps not quite so keen an appetite for amusements of this kind as when I was younger. It is near twenty years since I first began to form the preceding collection. I only considered these things as pardonable, at best, among the levities (I had almost said follies) of my youth. However, I must confess that I have always had a relish for the poetic effusions (even the most sportive and unelaborate) of our ancestors. I have commonly taken up these trifles, as other men have done cards, to unbend and amuse the mind when fatigued with graver studies, till they have insensibly grown into a regular series ready for the press."

After he became Bishop, Percy was even sensitive to the thought that his youth had been so frivolously mis-spent away from "severer studies". Very humanly, he delighted

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Even before the publication of the Reliques Percy was apprehensive as to his reputation. In response to his appeals for reassurance, Shenstone wrote, "...I never mention you as such [editor of ballads] without throwing in other matters to prevent this passing for your chef d'oeuvre." Shenstone to Percy. Nov.15, 1762. Brit. Mus. Mss. 28221, f.101.

Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I.10
in receiving the credit that was due him, but wished the editor of the Reliques to be completely dissociated from the Bishop of Dromore. Less than a year after his promotion to the Bishopric he wrote to Pinkerton:

"If you think it necessary to mention in print, that you received this old piece [Peblis to the Play] from me, I will beg you only to quote me by the name of Dr. Percy, or rather the Editor of the Reliques of Ancient Poetry, in 3 vols.; omitting Rev., much more all mention of my present title, &c."(1)

Even to Dodsley with whom he had bargained for and arranged the first edition Percy could assume a pontifical aloofness when the Reliques was under discussion. "Be assured", he wrote to his publisher in 1785, "it is a matter of perfect indifference to me, whether the Reliques of Anc't Poetry be ever republished or not. I should be perfectly content to have them forgot among the other Levities --& Vanities of my Youth: & indeed from your former Letter, I had so concluded that was their fate that I have never thought of them since..."(2) Twenty years later, even though literary fashions had changed and Percy was being honoured as the first great editor of older poetry, he wrote to Dr. Robert Anderson respecting an ode eulogising the

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(1) Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I.31
Reliques: "I would wish to have my present situation included in a parenthesis thus (now Lord Bishop etc.) lest it should be thought that the Reliques were my episcopal employment."

Not Ritson, but his own sense of what was fitting and proper, or rather, what the world would consider fitting and proper, accounts for Percy's sterility. When Scott was collecting materials for the Border Minstrelsy he complained to Ellis: "One of my best reciters has turned religious in his later days, and finds out that the old songs are unlawful." Percy's case was not quite parallel. He had no inner conviction that the old songs were vulgar or unfit for revival in his own time, but he recognized that to the cultured man of his age they were still associated with the simple minded lower classes. Percy himself was not entirely free from the same sentiment. As years and dignity came to him, his attitude towards the material that had made him famous took on a patronizing air. He became less and less the young man fired with the romance of strange literature, and more and more the respectable Dean and Bishop whose exotic literary taste was not again to be shown to the public. Percy was molded by his age, which he allowed to silence him.

Percy did not intend that his labours should never

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"Percy to Anderson. Jan, 31, 1804. National Library of Scotland. Ms. 22.3.11. f. 68
@ Letters of Sir Walter Scott. ed. Grierson. I. 112"
see publication. He held his material in abeyance for his only son and was going to use it to start him on a literary career, but the son died in 1783. His next choice was his nephew, another Thomas Percy, whose name was given as the editor of the fourth edition of the Reliques in 1794, but by then the Bishop was receiving the torrents of Ritson's abuse, and would not risk another publication, even under the cloak of his nephew's name. When his nephew died in 1808 there died also all hope of a new and greater Reliques.

It is easy to despise Percy's cowardice and snobbery because it is easy to underestimate the force which held him back. Dr. Johnson's breezy, masculine contempt for ballad literature is well known, and perhaps overstressed. More powerful opposition was less articulate. It was to be found in the gentlemen of the time who prided themselves on their elegance and correct taste, and who did not welcome even the subtle suggestion that the literature they despised as barbarous and not socially correct could have admirable qualities that were missing in contemporary literature. This view, which one senses in so much of the correspondence and minor criticism of the time was made articulate at least once, by a typical complacent representative of the old guard. The Rev. Vicesimus Knox, in his essay On the Prevailing Taste for Old English Poets (1779) showed the attitude
which balked Percy and against which the methods of Ritson and Pinkerton were wholly inappropriate and ineffective.

"The antiquarian spirit, which was once confined to inquiries concerning the manners, the buildings, the records, and the coins of the ages that preceded us, has now extended itself to those popular compositions which have gradually sunk into oblivion through the decay of language and the prevalence of a correct and polished taste. Books printed in black letter are sought for by the English antiquary with the same avidity with which he peruses a monumental inscription, or treasures up a Saxon piece of money. The popular ballad composed by some illiterate minstrel, and which has been handed down by tradition for several centuries, is rescued from the hands of the vulgar to obtain a place in the collection of the man of taste. Verses which, a few years past, were thought worthy of the attention of children only, or of the lowest and rudest orders, are now admired for that artless simplicity which once obtained the name of coarseness and vulgarity."

The old poetry might be good enough for people who

"considered the mere ability to read as a very high attainment. It has had its day, and the antiquarian must not despise us, if we cannot peruse it with patience. He who delights in such reading as is never read, may derive some pleasure from the singularity of his taste; but he ought still to respect the judgment of mankind, which has consigned to oblivion the works which he admires. While he pores unmolested on Gower, Chaucer, Lydgate, and Occleve, let him not censure our obstinacy in adhering to Homer, Virgil, Milton, and Pope."

With a particularly magnanimous gesture he granted the antiquarians their right to live:

"Whether the antiquarian taste in poetry is reasonable or unreasonable, it affords an elegant and pleasing amusement to those who
possess it. Mistakes in matters of mere
taste and literature are harmless in their
consequences to society. They have no direct
tendency to hurt any interest, or corrupt
any morals. While, therefore, they are not
likely to become general, they must not be
attacked with virulence.\(^9\)

Knox was the spokesman for the old school, whose sentiments
we have encountered so often in periodical reviews of anti-
quarian literature. The power of the conservative element
in themselves and in the age was shown by Percy and by
other collectors and editors who constantly found it neces-
sary to apologize for their work. The man of taste as
literary critic during the later eighteenth century was
still steeped in Virgil and Horace, Dryden and Pope. Percy
had within him the power and ability to act as a militant
champion of the new taste, but he was too much the man of
his age, the enemy of his own cause. He missed thereby an
opportunity of making himself a much greater power in the
shaping of English literature.

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\(^{9}\) Vicesimus Knox: Essays moral and Literary. I.290-296
The scene now shifts back to Edinburgh, where with more popular support behind it, the movement grew with less interruption. In Scotland the language of the Scottish poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was much closer to the modern dialect than was Middle English to modern English. Modern editions of the older poets could be read by the people of Scotland without the aid of glossaries and elaborate notes. Blind Harry, Barbour, James I, and other well known poets, when revived could still be read as living literature, and not merely as historical relics of a dead past. Consequently, the movement in Scotland had a broader base on interest; unfortunately this advantage did not make for scrupulous and skilful editing.

One of the most important discoveries arising from the interest in early literature in Scotland was the bringing to light of the most famous of Middle Scots poems, the Kingis Quhair, now generally regarded as the work of James I. The credit for rediscovering the poem has gone to William Tytler, well known for his elaborate apology for Mary, Queen of Scots, which he published in 1759. In his researches into Scottish history Tytler had often come upon references to a poem of King James I. Joannes Major mentioned it in his History of Scotland; Dempster, in his
Historia Ecclesiastica spoke of a poem written by James "Super Uxore futura". The reference which set Tytler on the trail was found in Bishop Tanner's Bibliotheca Britannica-Hibernica, from which it appeared that Tanner had both seen and read the poem, for he quoted the first line, and said that it was among the Selden manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. With this definite hint to go on, Tytler's curiosity was excited, and he made several fruitless searches for the poem. Tytler would have been spared much labour had he looked into Thomas Warton's History of English Poetry. Warton discussed the poem briefly, quoted the first two stanzas, and gave the exact reference to the manuscript. Warton had found it in 1762 while searching for material for Percy's Reliques; he offered it to Percy, who rejected it because of its length.

To Warton and not to Tytler should go the credit for rediscovering the Kingis Quhair for the eighteenth century, though Tytler, of course, was the first to publish the text.

Either Tytler's own searches were desultory, or he realized that his methods were not effective, for he wrote in his preface that after his own efforts had failed, he applied to "an ingenious young gentleman, a student at

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\(^{a}\) Warton: History of English Poetry. II.125
Oxford, ... [who] undertook the task, and found the MS. accordingly. From a very accurate copy made by him, the present publication is given."

The "present publication" was Poetical Remains of James the First, King of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1783, which contained a short dissertation on the life and writings of James I, the text of the Kingis Quhail and Christ's Kirk on the Green, and a dissertation on the Scottish music. The last essay had little connection with the other contents of the book. The preceding year Tytler had read it to the Society of Antiquaries at Edinburgh, and evidently took this opportunity to publish it. According to Professor Skeat the transcript of the Kingis Quhail made by the "ingenious young gentleman" was by no means accurate, although the several editors of the poem who came after Tytler merely reprinted his faulty text. A correct text taken from the original manuscript was not achieved until about 100 years later.

The other poem included by Tytler, Christ's Kirk on the Green, was the most frequently reprinted of the early Scots poems at this time. The authorship of the poem was undetermined and was alternately laid at the door of either James I or James V. If it was attributed in one collection to one James, the next collection would almost

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\(^{6}\) The Kingis Quair ... edited by Rev. W.W. Skeat. Edinburgh and London, 1884
surely give it to the other. Ramsay gave it to James I, as did Percy in the second edition of the Reliques, but in the third edition the poem was given to James V, in accordance with Tanner's opinion. Lord Hailes preferred James V, as did Callander. Tytler tried to answer Hailes' arguments and even use them to show James I's authorship. Pinkerton in his Select Scotish Ballads followed Percy's change of mind, and consequently the poem went back to James V, but in Ancient Scotish Poems Pinkerton changed his mind and was in James I's camp.

The identity of the "ingenious young man, a student at Oxford", who really first transcribed the Kingis Quhair is unknown. In 1776 Tytler's son, Alexander Tytler, married one Anne Fraser. At a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland on July 29, 1783 the only person elected to correspondent membership was "Hugh Fraser, Esq. Undergraduate at Balliol College, Oxford." Tytler was then a Vice-President of the Society. In seeking aid in his search for the poem Tytler probably turned to Fraser, possibly a relative of his son's wife, who was a student at Oxford. As an appropriate reward for his service Tytler would use his influence to have him elected to the Society of Antiquaries. There must have been some definite reason why a

Percy did not give the poem but mentioned it in his headnote to The Gaberlunzieman. The reference did not appear in the first edition.
youth, still an undergraduate, should have been elected to the Society. The time of the election coincides nicely with the theory that it was as a reward for his service to Tytler.

A publication which was of no importance to the main movement, but which was indicative of the growing popularity of the work of the old "makaris" came from George Caw, a printer and bookseller of Hawick, who said in his preface to the Poetical Museum that "a wish to suit the taste of a pretty numerous subscription hath always directed the editor in selecting; and he has had the happiness to receive their almost universal approbation." It is significant in illustrating the steady climb of older literature to popularity that so many, roughly one third, of the poems in the collection were old. The modern poems Caw included were "selected from periodical publications; and the more ancient from the best collections of Scottish and English poetry." Caw did no actual collecting himself; his reprints of early poetry merely gave wider circulation to poems already printed within the past few years. The collections he mostly drew on were Ramsay's Evergreen, Percy's Reliques, and Pinkerton's Scottish Tragic Ballads, the last most frequently quoted from, and praised highly. Caw printed the

"George Caw: The Poetical Museum. Containing songs and poems on almost every subject. Mostly from periodical publications. Hawick, 1784"
whole of Hardyknute and spoke of its "incomparable beauties ... for which we are indebted to the judicious compiler of the Scottish Tragic Ballads, who hath the honour of snatch- ing this valuable remains from the jaws of oblivion, and transmitting to posterity the first complete copy."

The older poetry contained in Caw's collection, in fact in most of the collections of this period with the obvious exceptions of Lord Hailes' work, Tytler's edition of James' poems, and Pinkerton's Ancient Scotish Poems, was almost invariably popular poetry. The works of Dunbar, Henryson, Lindsay, and other recognized older poets was sparsely represented, although such poems as Henryson's Roben and Makyne, Christ's Kirk on the Green and Peblis to the Play, the last two variously attributed to James I or James V, were in most of the anthologies. There was no sharp distinction generally made between the two types; for the readers of the day the one common link of age flattened out all variations in genus or merit. Popular ballads and formal literature of a high order were indiscriminately mixed together and used to leaven anthologies of poetry consisting mostly of more modern publications, as in Ritson's English Songs, in Caw's miscellany, and later in Johnson's Musical Museum.

The Ossianic controversy still raged in Scotland
and England throughout the later part of the century, with men continually sending impassioned communications to the periodicals on the subject. Few numbers of the Gentleman's Magazine or Critical Review were published that did not have an article on the subject or some reference to it; a Mr. Shaw and a Mr. Clark were particularly active, bombarding each other with personal abuse while discussing the subject. While the controversy was still raging with more heat than light, Thomas F. Hill, the linguist and scholar, made a personal tour of Scotland in 1780 to collect as many remains of genuine Erse songs as then survived. He published several of the poems he found, together with an account of how he acquired them, in a series of articles in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1783. The poems were given both in the original and in translation, elaborately embellished with notes. Some watcher of the skies that year must have been startled at the strange and prophetic sight of these crude, vivid rags of poems appearing amid the dainty neatness of contemporary magazine literature. In the previous year Hill had published a judicious criticism of Ossian in the same magazine.

The conclusions to which Hill came are practically the same as those reached by modern critics, with the advan-

*Gentleman's Magazine: Vol. 53. pp. 140; 398; 489; 590; 662;*
tage of perspective. He found that in the Highlands there were preserved songs relating to Fingal and his heroes, but that the versions published by Macpherson and later by Smith retained of those songs merely some of the names and incidents. Hill decided that the bulk of Ossian was the work of its editor, but that the germ or suggestion for the work was certainly in the old Highland songs. He also declared that the home of this practically mythical Ossian was Ireland, rather than Scotland.

Two years later, in 1785, Hill's contributions to the Gentleman's Magazine were collected and privately printed under the title Ancient Erse Poems, collected among the Scottish Highlands, in order to illustrate the Ossian of Mr. Macpherson. The articles in the magazine were undoubtedly of value in clarifying somewhat the fog of the Ossianic controversy, but the privately printed collection had too limited a circulation to have extended the influence of the periodical articles. Nichols says: "This interesting pamphlet, consisting of thirty-four closely written pages, was not intended for sale; but printed solely for presents to the ingenious compiler's friends."

Hill's work was followed by that of Matthew Young, the brilliant Irish scholar and still another Bishop, who

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in 1784, made a tour of the Scottish Highlands to collect old poetry. One wonders if, at this period, a Highlander did not immediately begin to rack his memory - or his imagination - for old songs whenever he saw a stranger approaching. On April 17, 1786 Young read before the Royal Irish Academy a paper on ancient Gaelic poetry. The paper was published the following year together with a number of Gaelic poems Young had collected and translated into English prose, under the title of Antient Gaelic Poems, respecting the Race of the Fians, collected in the Highlands of Scotland in the year 1784. Young criticized Macpherson for the freedom with which he used his material, but praised Hill for his accurate and careful work. As in the case of Hill, Young's work attracted little attention. The work of both had little influence in bringing the controversy down to facts.

In his editing of the Reliques, Percy was a man of letters rather than a mere collector; and he used his talent to give a new, though some would say artificial, life to old poetry. The men who immediately followed Percy were essentially collectors and editors, rather than men of letters. Nevertheless, the evolution of an editorial conscience in

©Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy. 1787. I.43-119
regard to ballads had not progressed so quickly that there was no room for a man who would follow in the steps of Percy in regarding the old poems as the germs of new creations rather than as relics to be carefully preserved in their original state. At this time the only way to make early literature vivid for the average reader was through a policy such as Percy's. The man for the task came in Robert Burns, and the old songs were again quickened, for the breath of genius had blown on them.

Had Ramsay, Percy, and the collectors of folk poetry not preceded him, the poetry of Burns would have been little different. He was the unquenchable voice of the Scottish genius for folk song. The work of the men of whom Percy was the great representative may have given Burns a greater confidence in the dignity and value of his medium, but his chief debt to them lay not in their effect on his own poetic sensitiveness, but in their creation of a public prepared to welcome such poetry as that of Burns. Percy's reworking of the old songs was that of a sympathetic student; he entered into their spirit as well as he could, but they were not a part of him. With Burns, however, the old songs were an inheritance; he was steeped in them, and in him the genius of the old anonymous "makaris" found full and natural expression. Goethe skilfully analyzed the great-
ness of Burns when he wrote:

"Now, take up Burns. How is he great, except through the circumstance that the whole songs of his predecessors lived in the mouths of the people,—that they were, so to speak, sung at his cradle; that as a boy, he grew up amongst them, and the high excellence of those models so pervaded him, that he had therein a living basis on which he could proceed further? Again, why is he great, but from this, that his own songs at once found susceptible ears amongst his compatriots; that, sung by reapers and sheaf-binders, they at once greeted him in the field; and that his boon companions sung them to welcome him in the ale-house?"

It was not only the reapers and sheaf-binders and boon companions of the ale-house who greeted Burns. He was welcomed by the literati of Edinburgh. This reception was made easier because the broad dialect used by Burns had never lost its hold in Scotland even among the more cultured classes, for the city dwellers of Scotland still enjoyed in an objective way the folk songs which lived in the memory of the peasants. Henry Mackenzie was but repeating a conventional fiction when in his famous Lounger review he deemed it necessary to add a glossary to the "Address to a Mouse", saying that "even in Scotland the provincial dialect which Ramsay and he used is now read with difficulty."

The Mirror and the Lounger, those polished and Addisonian publications, were reflections of the cultured Scot aping the cultured Englishman with his Rambler and Idler. The same

London, 1850

@Eckermann: Conversations of Goethe. Vol. I. 409-10
dialect had been used by such members of the upper classes as Lady Grisell Bäillie for the poem which Burns loved so well, "Werne my heart licht, I wad dee." In this dialect, about 1760 Jane Elliot wrote *Flowers of the Forest*, which "gradually found its way into every drawing room, and was played at every concert." The dialect was not "read with difficulty" even by the men about town, but it was probably true that some of the more snobbish were a little ashamed of the homely speech. More than counterbalancing this feeling, and giving the medium and language of Burns a critical respectability was the fact that songs like those of Burns had been printed, praised, and discussed in Bishop Percy's *Reliques*, and by the collectors who followed Percy - David Herd, Lord Hailes, and John Pinkerton. Except for the *Reliques*, collections containing Scottish poetry had not been literary sensations; they were not even very popular, but they had served to prepare the public for the man who was to take as his natural medium the same rugged sentimental song which the Scot had loved and sung for generations.

Burns' contribution to the revival of older songs came as the result of his meeting with James Johnson, a music seller and engraver in Edinburgh, who was undertaking

as a patriotic enterprise to gather all the songs of Scotland in one general collection. Johnson was patronized by several of the Edinburgh men of letters, including William Tytler, editor of the *Kingis Quhair*, but it was Burns who was responsible for the fullness of the collection. Burns contributed but two songs to the first volume, published in 1787, but thereafter he collected and wrote a great many songs himself and induced other people to do likewise to augment the collection. The second volume of the *Museum* was published in 1788, the third in 1790, and the fourth in 1792, each part containing 100 songs. Although much of the fifth volume was furnished by Burns, it was not completed until 1797, the year after the poet died.

In a letter to Tytler, Burns expressed his veneration for the old popular songs:

"Inclosed I have sent you a sample of the old pieces that are still to be found among our peasantry in the West. I had once a great many of such fragments; and some of them more entire; but as I had no idea that anybody cared for them I have forgotten them. I invariably hold it sacrilege to add anything of my own to help out with the shattered wrecks of these venerable old compositions: but they have many various readings ..."

In practice Burns did help out, acknowledging his methods freely. By doing so he gave colour, power, and life to many

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a "shattered wreck". Sometimes he would add stanzas to an old song; sometimes he would take only the first, or first few lines, and completely rewrite the rest of the song; and often he would merely tone up here and there the cruder productions of popular origin. Johnson himself was not a discriminating and careful editor. He took what was handy and did not question overmuch. His first volume, for example, contained Percy's original poem "O Nancy wilt thou go with me?" which was made Scottish to fit the collection, the first line becoming "Oh, Nannie will ye gang wi' me?". The great importance of the work in literary history is the influence it had on the productivity of Burns. It was the medium into which Burns poured his genius and enthusiasm. It has practically no direct connection with the revival of early literature, as very little of its contents can be considered really old; what there is of early poetry is so touched up as to be indistinguishable from the modern pieces.

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In Scotland the literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries could not only be revived by the scholar, but was popular enough to enable a commercial publisher to consider the works of the old poets as profitable financial risks. Consequently, there were several editions of the early Scots poets published, not by scholars and individual editors, but by the enterprise of publishers. These editions were usually mere reprints of available texts, generally put together without the aid of any editor other than the compositor. Sir David Lyndsay had always had a strong hold on the affections of the Scottish people, and such publishers would naturally turn to him for material for a popular book. Editions of his poems were comparatively frequent in the first part of the eighteenth century, all of them but reprints of the Charteris edition of 1582, with such "improvements" as the current editor desired. The last of these came in 1777, when in one small volume was issued The Works of the Worthy and Famous Knight, Sir David Lindsay ... The volume had neither preface nor a glossary. But Lyndsay is an exception; it cannot be said that he was ever forgotten, and consequently ever revived. He was not so early as the others and his work had permeated into national thought.

As publishers of early Scottish literature the
Morisons of Perth aimed not at an exclusive audience of antiquaries and scholars but at the general public. With the Earl of Buchan as godfather, the Morisons planned a series of publications of Scottish poetry, the "first uniform edition of Scottish poets". The series was inaugurated in 1786 by the publication of The Works of James I, King of Scotland, containing the King's Quair, Christis Kirk of the Greene, and Peblis to the Play. The text and notes for the King's Quair and the text of Christis Kirk on the Greene were taken from Tytler's 1783 edition. Peblis to the Play, the editor wrote, "was discovered by Dr. Percy, and published in ... Select Scotish Ballads, (by Mr. Pinkerton) anno 1783", from whence the text was taken. The book also contained the Gaberlunzie Man and the Jollie Beggar, "two ancient Scotch poems commonly ascribed to King James V."

What critical apparatus the edition contained was taken bodily from older publications. The volume marked no advance in scholarship whatsoever; it contained nothing which had not appeared a few years before. It did, however, bring together for the first time the works, real or suppositious, of James.

The following year appeared the second of the Morison series, an edition of the Select Works of Gawin

6 Percy was not the discoverer of the poem. George Paton sent both the text of the poem and the notes to Percy who in turn sent them to Pinkerton for publication in Select Scottish Ballads.
Douglass, Bishop of Dunkeld, with a life of the author
by the Rev. James Scott, President of the Literary and
Antiquarian Society at Perth, and author of the History
of Perth. Scott, however, does not seem to have had any
further share in editing the work. The following year he
wrote to the Earl of Buchan:

"I have used the freedom to present you with
a copy of the Life I have written of Gawin
Douglas. I delivered the M.S. to the Society
here about the Beginning of last Winter.
Morison got it soon after, but I now see I
was too negligent in examining how the print-
ing was going on. The Copy I have sent you I
have rectified in some Places with my Pen."

From the 1579 Charteris edition of Douglas the Morisons
inaccurately reprinted The Palace of Honour, and the
prologues to the fourth, seventh, eighth, twelfth, and
thirteenth books of the Aeneid, and for some reason added
an anonymous satire from Pinkerton's Ancient Scottish Poems.
The edition had nothing to recommend it.

An equally shoddy job came the following year,
1788, in the edition of Dunbar. Here the source was Lord
Hailes' Ancient Scottish Poems, taken from the Bannatyne


In the two copies I have examined in the National Library
of Scotland, the Life of Gavin Douglas is bound up with
the Select Poems of William Dunbar, while the Life was
omitted from the edition of Douglas

Scott to Buchan. June 2, 1788. University of Edinburgh
Library. Laing MSS. II.209
manuscript. The publishers included all but three of the selections from Dunbar given by Hailes, and added no others.

The Earl of Buchan was particularly anxious that Blind Harry's Wallace should be re-edited for modern readers, and he induced the Morisons to undertake the publication by having the manuscript in the Advocates' Library transcribed for them. So The Metrical History of Sir William Wallace ... carefully transcribed from the MS. copy of that Work, in the Advocates' Library, under the Eye of the Earl of Buchan ... was published in 1790, with notes by the Rev. James Scott. This book was the only contribution of original work which the Morison series gave to the movement. Among the subscribers' names published in the volume was that of Mr. Robert Burns, Ellisland. Burns, when he received his copy, was a kind critic. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, dated 6th December, 1790, he wrote: "There is a fine copy of Blind Harry's history of Wallace, printed at Perth, from a Manuscript of great antiquity in the Advocates' Library; ...If I thought you had not seen it, I would send it you. It is the most elegant piece of work that ever came from any Printing-press in Great Britain." Burns' reference was more complimentary

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[a] Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I. 246
[c] Robert Burns and Mrs Dunlop. ed. Wallace, 1895. p. 294
than the edition deserved, but it was to such an audience, unscholarly but appreciative, that these publications were addressed. Joseph Ritson was not impressed. In the preface to his *Scotish Songs* he spoke of the Morison's editions in his usual manner, managing to damn William Tytler in the same breadth:

"It is much to be regretted ... that this gentleman [Mr. Tytler] should have been under the necessity of printing the King's Quair from a pretended transcript, attempted by some illiterate schoolboy, and abounding, in almost every line, with the most senseless and extravagant blunders; all of which have been religiously preserved in a subsequent edition, printed at Perth, where some great antiquaries seem to think they do much honour to their native country, in publishing not only what they do not themselves understand, but what their corruptions render unintelligible to others. The editor of Blind Harry is ... excessively ignorant...""

Ritson's blanket condemnation probably included a more ambitious work of the Morisons. In the same year with the *Wallace* they published in four volumes *A Select Collection of Favorite Scotish Ballads*, a typical Morison production. The contents of the four volumes were compounded from Percy, Hailes, Herd, and Pinkerton. The first volume contained nothing but extracts from Percy and Pinkerton. It opened with Hardyknute, parts I and II - a procedure typical of the contents of the rest of the

6Ritson: Scotish Songs. I.111
collection. The four volumes contained not a single ballad which had not previously appeared in some late eighteenth century collection. Only volume I had notes appended, and these were frankly lifted from Pinkerton's *Select Scotish Ballads*.

The Morison editions were parisitical. Though the publishers were able to avail themselves of the labour of the Rev. James Scott and the Earl of Buchan, men who were supposedly desirous of scholarly editions, they themselves were content to reprint whatever editions had been recently issued, regardless of their worth. That there was a sufficient demand among the general public to pay for the publication of these editions, less than twenty years after Lord Hailes' edition from the Bannatyne manuscript, indicates that in Scotland early literature, not so distant as it was to the Englishman, and appealing to national feeling, was not revived merely to be embalmed in learned dissertations and counter dissertations but was given an actual new life among the people.
VIII

The Movement in the Nineties. Part I.
Joseph Ritson in London now re-entered the field of literary antiquarianism with a rapid succession of publications. In 1791 appeared *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*, a small volume containing only seven pieces, each prefaced with a note to prove its age and authenticity. Despite the inferior originals from which he had to work, he was meticulously careful to give his sources and to note any changes he made in the text. In the short preface Ritson was disarmingly mild, going so far as to introduce the collection with the traditional apology. Even such a doughty champion as Ritson felt compelled to advance special claims for his *Pieces*, apart from their age and whatever intrinsic merit they might possess. He urged that the old bards had a claim on posterity for protection. It might be true, he said, that "their compositions will have but few charms in the critical eye of a cultivated age", but without such bardic efforts, humble as they were, cultivation and refinement would never have come into being, and barbarism and ignorance would have been eternal.

The pieces were: *The King and the Barker*, another version of which had been given by Percy under the title of *King Edward* and the *Tanner of Tamworth*, *Adam Bell*, *The Life and Death of Tom Thumb*, *The Friar and the Boye*, *How a Merchandye Dyd His Wyfe Betray*, *How the Wise Man Taught His Son*, and *The Lovers' Quarrel*. 
He went on to inquire into the origins of bardic poetry, and in a moment of softening towards his old enemy, casually referred the reader to "Dr. Percy's very ingenious and elegant Essay on the Ancient English Minstrels". His only reproof was most gentle. In the preface to The King and the Barker he spoke of it as the original of "King Edward the fourth and the Tanner of Tamworth, reprinted by Dr. Percy, who ought, perhaps, to have informed his readers that the old copies contain a great many stanzas which he has, not injudiciously, suppressed." In 1789 Percy encouraged J.C. Walker, the Irish antiquary and a friend of both Percy and Ritson, to try to convince Ritson that the folio manuscript did exist, and to try to soften Ritson's crusading spirit against Percy. Walker succeeded, at least temporarily, and Ritson at the time he was editing the Pieces, was still glowing with unaccustomed magnanimity. It did not last long, for the next year he was ridiculing this same "ingenious and elegant" essay with all the resources of a copious and forthright vocabulary.

Ritson's amiability spread to the Gentleman's Magazine, which was fulsome in its praise. "The taste of the present age ... has been very partial to publications

(a) Ritson: Pieces ... p.58
(b) Nichols: Illustrations. VII.710-12
(c) Gentleman's Magazine. June, 1791. p.561
like the present", the reviewer remarked, and although he condemned the forgers, he praised Ritson's work and hoped for its success. The Monthly Review, while it was in no way scathing, hit Ritson's most tender spot, his missionary zeal for accurate texts: "In reprinting such an author as Shakespeare, it is no doubt an object to retain the original reading, whenever it can be ascertained; because the chance is, that such reading, when understood, will always be preferable to the imaginary emendations of his early editors: but, in a two-penny ballad, with no Rowley for its author, the chance will always be that Dr. Percy's reading is preferable to the true one, and should therefore remain undisturbed." To a man of Ritson's convictions, the reviewer's openly expressed opinion that whatever Percy chose to write was preferable to the words of the original poet, must have seemed a justifiable provocation for even Ritson's future conduct. Ritson could have dispelled this attitude with greater effectiveness had he striven against, not Percy himself, as he did, but against the forces which shaped Percy's editorial methods and made them popular.

This time it was left for the Critical Review to strike the note of savageness which always accompanied

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(1) Monthly Review. May, 1793. p. 72-77
Ritson's publications, whether on the part of Ritson himself or his critics. The reviewer was evidently not untouched by personal animus and may very possibly have been Pinkerton himself. Pinkerton's connection with this periodical is vague, but it is certain that he was writing for it in the last decade of the century. In a letter to George Paton early in 1795 Ritson wrote: "Our friend Pinkerton, I am told, to complete the infamy of his character, has turned critical reviewer, a situation, of course, which admits neither truth nor honesty. He will therefore have the pleasure of thundering his own damnation upon the heads of others, among whom, I suppose, he will take care not to forget [me]." We know at least that Pinkerton was writing for the Critical Review in 1795 when he reviewed Ritson's *Scottish Songs*, and also in 1802 when he reviewed Leyden's edition of the *Complaynt of Scotland*.

Whatever the authorship, the review was unnecessarily violent. The critic spoke of Ritson's previous attacks on Warton and Percy, and said:

"The petulance of the critic has by degrees evaporated in the insipidity of the editor. If we accept William of Cloudesley, already published by Dr. Percy, and which our present editor has exerted all due pains to cloath again in uncouth dullness, there is not one piece in this collection which a man of taste

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*In some copies of Leyden's edition (1801) the review is bound up with the work (Appendix p. 6-7) and attributed to Pinkerton.*
or sense would not be ashamed to publish, or even to say that he had read; so puerile, so childish are these old Rhymes ... It is impossible to retain any degree of gravity when we are told that the refuse of a stall is to be published, 'unmixed with baser matter' ... It is with pain we observe that this collection of trash is printed in a superior style ..."

Such criticism would, of course, have no effect on Ritson's productivity, for he could always be counted on to return fire with fire. The following year he published Ancient Songs, his most valuable work up to this time. Here, as in his previous collection, Ritson took pains to inform the reader of the exact source of his songs. He began his collection with the old English song *Sumer is icumen in*, and continued it chronologically to the seventeenth century, including, as did his 1783 collection, *English Songs*, pieces from Marlowe, Shakespeare, Suckling, and less established writers, together with several old ballads. The songs were exclusively English, as Ritson intended to edit a separate work on Scottish songs. His devotion to the idea that modern texts should follow the

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1. The work had been in the press since 1787, but it was not published until 1792. The title page was originally stamped 1790.
3. The songs were divided into five classes. Class I from the reign of Henry II to Richard II; Class II from Henry IV to Henry VI; class III from Edward IV to Henry VIII; class IV from Edward VI to Queen Elizabeth; and class V from James I to James VI.
oldest original manuscript so far as possible led him to print the earliest pieces in Anglo-Saxon characters, and the Middle English pieces in their original orthography. As he explained in the Advertisement:

"The Reader must not expect to find, among the pieces here preserved, either the interesting fable, or the romantic wildness of a late elegant publication [Percy's Reliques]. But, in whatever light they may exhibit the lyric powers of our ancient Bards, they will at least have the recommendation of evident and indisputable authenticity: The sources from which they have been derived will be faithfully referred to, and are, in general, public and accessible."

There were eighty-eight poems in the collection, nearly half of them printed for the first time. Ritson, as his head notes indicate, had dug them out from what old manuscripts he had been able to acquire and from various libraries. "With respect to the collection now produced", he wrote, "there is scarce a public library which had not been explored, in order to furnish materials for it."

The pieces which were printed here for the first time were all genuinely old, and Ritson did a real service in unearthing them. Unfortunately he made no compromise with the reading public, to whom the ancient pieces appeared as if written in a completely foreign language. The two introductory dissertations were not for the general reader but for the scholar. The quotations from old works, the
elaborate foot-notes, the whole general apparatus of learned scholarship could appeal only to a select and learned few, the very audience, for which the songs had not been originally written. The natural audience for such a collection was thus alienated at the outset. This was a fault more or less prominent in all Ritson's work in early literature. The pieces he chose to revive and edit were, with the exception of the edition of Laurence Minot and possibly the Metrical Romances, all calculated to appeal to general readers rather than to scholars. His two collections of English songs, the edition of Scottish songs, the ancient popular poetry, Robin Hood Ballads, the garlands, and the chronologically arranged anthology, all were of literature which had been written with the people in mind. Ritson himself often reiterated the fact that he cast his books on the mercy of popular judgment rather than on that of the professional critics, but that was because he was always given short shrift by the Reviews. The people were rarely more gently than the critics, for Ritson invariably edited his texts, down to the lowest Robin Hood ditty, as if their sole readers were to be meticulous scholars. In Percy, the quality of editorial diplomacy, not necessarily dishonesty, was prominent to such a degree as it was lacking in Ritson. In his Reliques Percy satisfied both the scholar
and the man who wanted merely amusement, without sacrificing the interests of one to the other, while not once did Ritson succeed in reconciling the two.

Ritson followed the plan of Percy and Pinkerton in prefixing introductory dissertations, and he included two in the present collection: Observation of the Ancient English Minstrels, and Dissertation on the Songs, Musick, and Instrumental Performance of the Ancient English. In the first, which Ritson devoted wholly to a refutation of Percy's theories, he had a violent revulsion from his mild and even kindly treatment of Percy the previous year, and now returned to the fray with added fierceness and keener weapons. In his Essay on the Ancient Minstrels Percy had contended that the old minstrels "united the arts of poetry and music and sung verses to the harp of their own composing." Ritson, on the other hand, had maintained that the minstrels were low in the social scale, and did not compose, but merely recited the works of others. Ritson brought up authority after authority to show the inaccuracy of Percy's statement, and after each point he scornfully quoted Percy's ill-starred sentence.

(1) As Ancient Songs was in press in 1787, the essay was probably written before his temporary rapprochement with Percy in 1789, but Ritson might easily have cancelled the insults before the work was finally issued. Apparently he had no desire to do so.

(2) Historical Essay on the Progress of National Song. In English Songs, 1783. p.1111
Ritson did not stop with a renewal of his challenge of Percy's view of the minstrels, but went into a detailed discussion of the ever juicy topic of Percy's faithlessness to his sources. He took up some of the ballads one by one and quoted the evasions to which Percy had been driven in order not to tell downright lies. Percy had said that he supplied several stanzas to Sir Cauline; Ritson's comment was, "They who could supply so many of the stanzas might without any great difficulty have supplied the whole." As ye Came from the Holy Land, Percy said, had been corrected by Shenstone from an ancient manuscript, which drew from Ritson the dubious compliment, "Mr. Shenstone was a very pretty poet." Ritson quoted from the Reliques, "It cannot be denied, but that a great part of The Birth of St. George is modern", to which Ritson added, "But it can be safely be denied, that the least part of it is ancient."

One procedure of Percy's drew approval from Ritson. For the Gentle Herdsman Percy had printed his emendations in italics. Ritson commented: "This is a measure to which there can be no objection, than that it is confined to 'this one ballad'." An illuminating observation.

\(^{4}\) Ritson: Ancient Songs. p.xx
\(^{5}\) ibid. p.xx
\(^{6}\) ibid. p.xxii

\(^{4}\) Reliques. 1765. I.35
\(^{5}\) ibid. II.185
\(^{6}\) ibid. III.216
\(^{8}\) ibid. II.72
Ritson had apparently no inherent objection to emendations so long as they were fully acknowledged. In his last publication before his death, *Ancient Engleish Metrical Romancees*, published in 1802, Ritson expressed the same attitude: "To correct the obvious errors of an illiterate transcribeer, to supply irremediable defects, and to make sense of nonsense, are certainly duties of an editor of ancient poetry; provided he act with integrity and publicity..." There was nothing fanatic or ridiculously extreme about such a stand; the violence with which he fought his cause nullified its reasonableness.

Ritson had previously doubted, in his own inimitably irritating manner, the very existence of the Percy folio. When he wrote his first dissertation he was still unconvinced:

"This MS. is doubtless the most singular thing of the kind that was ever known to exist. How such a multifarious collection could possibly have been formed so late as the year 1650, of compositions from the ages prior to Chaucer, most, if not all of which had never been printed, is scarcely to be conceived by those versed with ancient MSS., a similar instance perhaps not to be found in any library, public or private. This MS., to increase its singularity, no other writer has ever pretended to have seen. The late Mr. Tyrwhitt, an excellent judge and diligent peruser of old compositions, and an intimate friend of the owner, never saw it. ...

* Ritson: *Ancient Engleish Metrical Romancees*. I.cix
* Observations on *History of English Poetry*(1782) p.11; and in Remarks on *Shakespeare* (1783) p.167
And it is remarkable, that scarcely anything is published from it, not being to be found elsewhere, without our being told of the defects and mutilation of the MS."

More detailed and scathing attacks on Percy came in the head notes to poems which had previously appeared in the Reliques. There the "licentiousness and corruption" of the good Bishop were gloatingly emphasized.

In their discussions of Ancient Songs both the Monthly Review and the Critical Review showed that their previous unfavourable remarks on Ritson's work were not wholly personal, but had been inspired by an honest disagreement with Ritson's attitude towards his material and his treatment of it. The racy flavour of Ritson's Phillipic against Percy proved to be much stronger than the less imperative charms of his ancient songs, with the result that the attention of both reviews was concentrated on that part of the book in which Ritson attacked Percy, while the main contents of the book was almost completely ignored. The Monthly Review in a long intelligent summary defended Percy against Ritson's attack: "...strict truth never was and never will be the poet's care, and therefore since historical ballads cannot, as historical documents, be of any importance, why should not their value as poetry

\(^{(a)}\) Ritson: Ancient Songs. p.xix
\(^{(a)}\) Monthly Review. February, 1793. pp.178-182
be enhanced by lopping their tedious, and retouching their feeble passages?" The general attitude of the Critical Review towards both Ritson and Percy was superciliously critical. While it deplored the attack on Percy, it tacitly yielded to Ritson his main point:

"It were, however, to be wished that Dr. Percy had, in the pieces which he has confessedly amended and supplied, pointed out the exact original state of each production; otherwise a modern invention may be quoted as ancient authority, in matters relating to costume and manners."

Had Ritson taken such a calm and detached attitude, he might have succeeded more quickly in reforming the editorial standards of his time.

Percy must often have squirmed inwardly, but he never publicly replied to any of Ritson's strictures; perhaps he thought that silence would best express a pontifical scorn, or perhaps he felt that he had little ammunition for argument. Ritson was not denied all satisfaction, however, for the fourth edition of the Reliques, published in 1794, had significant revisions. The fourth edition was ostensibly edited by the Bishop's nephew, Thomas Percy, Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, but he probably did little more than subscribe his name to the work. For some time Percy maintained that he himself did no work on the edition, but neither Ritson nor other men
believed him, and Percy's letter to the British Critic, January, 1805, a rather cowardly defense of himself after Ritson's death, was virtually a tacit admission that he himself was the editor.

In the Advertizement Percy tried to cover his embarrassed retreat:

"These volumes are now restored to the public with such corrections and improvements as have occurred since the former impression; and the text in particular hath been emended in many passages by recurring to the old copies. The instances being frequently trivial, are not always noted in the margin; but the alterations hath never been made without good reason; and especially in such pieces as were extracted from the folio manuscript so often mentioned in the following pages, where any variation occurs from the former impression, it will be understood to have been given on the authority of that MS."

And into the preface, otherwise only slightly revised, he inserted his excuse for the freedom with which he had treated his material.

"For these old popular rhimes being many of them copied only from illiterate transcripts, of the imperfect recitation of itinerant ballad-singers, have, as might be expected, been handed down to us with less care than any other writings in the world. And the old copies, whether MS. or printed, were often so defective or corrupted, that a scrupulous adherence to their wretched readings would only have exhibited unintelligible nonsense, or such poor meagre stuff as neither came from the Bard nor was worthy of the press; when, by a few slight corrections or additions, a most beautiful or interesting sense hath started forth, and this so naturally and

\(^{\text{3}}\text{British Critic. January, 1805. pp.98-99}\)
easily, that the Editor could seldom prevail on himself to indulge the vanity of making a formal claim to the improvement; but he must plead guilty to the charge of concealing his own share in the amendments under some such general title as a "Modern Copy", or the like."

Percy's excuse for his failure to acknowledge his textual additions on the grounds of modesty stands on a level with Pinkerton's claim for a noble disregard of fame because of his forgeries, which he ranked in motive with the parables of the New Testament.

In what must have seemed to Percy a magnificent gesture of faith in his own methods and a confident appeal to the literary taste of his time, he included in the appendix the folio fragment of The Marriage of Sir Gawaine, which in previous editions he had admitted had received "large supplements"... not here particularly pointed out, because the Fragment itself will sometime or other be given to the public." In the headnote to the fragment he said that it was "here literally, and exactly printed from the Editor's folio MS. with all its defects, inaccuracies, and errata; that such austere Antiquaries as complain that the ancient copies have not always been rigidly adhered to may see how unfit for publication many of the pieces would have been if all the blunders, corruptions, and nonsense

(6) Reliques: ed. Wheatley, 1886. p.11
(8) Reliques: 1st. ed. III.11. In his Ancient Songs Ritson had quoted this promise, saying, "This was said above twenty years ago." (Ancient Songs. p.xxi)
of illiterate Reciters and Transcribers had been superstitiously retained without some attempt to correct and amend them. If Percy thought that such a confession would satisfy Ritson, he was to be sadly disillusioned.

Many of the other ballads, Adam Bell, and Edom o' Gordon, for example, were altered to readings more closely resembling the original. In addition, Percy amended his notes to many of the poems. In the first edition he had said that The Heir of Linne was "given from a copy in the editor's folio manuscript"; in the fourth edition the ballad "is found" in the folio manuscript. The phrase "some breaches and defects" he changed to "breaches and defects"; "a few supplemental stanzas" became simply "supplemental stanzas"; and for this particular ballad he further admitted in the fourth edition that "the conclusion of the story was suggested by a modern ballad on a similar subject." He altered the title of the first essay from "...the Ancient English Minstrels" to "... the Ancient Minstrels in England". Also - again conforming to Ritson's criticisms - he changed his definition of minstrel in the first sentence from "an order of men in the Middle Ages, who united the arts of Poetry and Music, and sung verses to the harp of their own composing" to "an order

(a) Reliques. ed. Wheatley. 1866. II. 323-30
(b) Reliques. 1st ed. I.xv
of men in the Middle Ages, who subsisted by the arts of
Poetry and Music and sung to the harp verses composed by
themselves or others." Percy had been defeated on his
theory of the minstrels, and though he yielded tacitly
it was to remain a sore subject with him. In the review
of Ritson's Ancient Songs in the Critical Review for
November, 1792, the critic dismissed both Percy's and
Ritson's view of the minstrels. The contents of this
anonymous review, and its insolent and superior manner,
stamp it as the work of one man - Pinkerton. As for
Percy's contention that the minstrels "united the arts of
Music and Poetry", he remarked, "Common sense would lead
us to doubt if such discordant qualities were ever united
in one man in one country ... Dr. Percy has blended together
the talents of professions perfectly distinct; ... the name
of minstrel was never applied to a bard, maker, or poet,
before the doctor used it in this sense ... Dr. Percy has
confounded orders totally distinct; has used the word
minstrel in a sense completely new and improper." (a)

Percy probably suspected or discovered that the
author of this anonymous attack was the two-faced Pinkerton,
for in August, 1794 he sent to Pinkerton a proposed footnote
to his Essay on the Ancient Minstrels, which was to answer

(a) Reliques. ed. Wheatley. 1836. I.345
(b) Critical Review. November, 1792. pp. 283-293
the reviewer's objections. Pinkerton replied and, following closely the ideas and even phrasing of the original review, declared himself convinced that "minstrels only implied musician, and was never used for a bard, maker, or poet." To cap the climax, he casually referred the Bishop to Ritson's work for further proof. Percy did not include the note in the fourth edition of the Reliques, nor did he again write to the traitor who had dared to argue the cause of their common enemy.

In his next publication, The English Anthology, Ritson answered the critics of the Reviews in his own manner. They had damned his Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry; worse, they had laughed at it, and in 1792 both periodicals had ridiculed his savage attack on Malone's edition of Shakespeare. Ritson's incipient madness was now for the first time causing him grave trouble, and his snarling attack of the critics in the preface showed his judgment and taste were rapidly becoming warped by his passions:

"Nor will any person be found to rescue such such things [ancient poetry] from oblivion, while the attempt exposes him to the malignant and ruffian-like attacks of some hackney scribbler or personal enemy, through the medium of one or the other of two periodical publications, in which the most illiberal

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Nichols: Illustrations. VIII.147-50

The first volume was published in 1793, before volumes II and III, which appeared in 1794, were printed. Ritson said that the compilation had been made many years before. (The English Anthology. I.vi)
abuse is vented under colour of impartial criticism, and both the literary and moral character of every man who wishes to make his peculiar studies contribute to the information or amusement of society are at the mercy of a conceited pedant, or dark and cowardly assassin. The editor, at the same time, by no means, flatters himself, that either the omission of what is obscure and unintelligible, or the insertion of everything elegant and refined, will be sufficient to protect these volumes from the rancorous malice and envenomed slander of the reviewing critic. He appeals, however, from the partial censures of a mercenary and malevolent individual, to the judgment and candour of a generous and discerning public, whose approbation is proposed as the sole reward of his disinterested labours."

Complaints in such a strain came ill from the most savage critic of them all. The brief preface was otherwise comparatively colourless, but the old familiar apologetic note was present, with the old familiar phrases. Ritson said that he did not include more early poems because "...no composition of a moderate length is to be found, prior to the year 1500, which would be thought to deserve a place in these volumes; the nicety of the present age being ill disposed to make the necessary allowances for the uncouth diction and homely sentiments of former times."

The collection was unreasonably divided into four parts, each part arranged in a very rough chronological order. The first and largest section filled volume I and

(1) Ritson: The English Anthology. p.v-vi
(2) ibid. p.v.
most of the second volume, and consisted of poems ranging from Wyatt and Surrey to Ritson's own time. Although the works of living poets were excluded from this part, by far the majority of the pieces were eighteenth century. Part II, embracing the work of female poets, covered only thirty-six pages and contained nothing of interest to us. The third part consisted of "poems by uncertain authors". Early poetry in this section included the Not-browne Mayde from Capell's Prolusions, and Harpalus' Complaint from Surrey's Songs and Sonettes. The fourth section, labelled Extracts, contained, besides later poems, the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, taken from Tyrwhitt's edition; passus VI of Piers Plowman; Sackvilles's Induction, which Capell had previously printed; and Book two, Canto six, of the Fairy Queen. The collection ended with a supplement of poems by living writers, which surprisingly included Gentle River, Gentle River translated by Percy from the Spanish, and given in the Reliques. There was very little early poetry in the work, beyond the extracts in the third volume. Altogether the collection was not a workmanlike job, and deserved the reception it was given: neglect on the part of the public and condemnation from the critics.

The Reviews did not attack Ritson on his own plane of personal abuse but rather condemned his selection. Both

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(1) "It excited very little, if any attention." Hazelwood: Life of Ritson. p.18.
(2) Both the Not-browne Mayde and Harpalus' Complaint had appeared in the Reliques, taken from the same sources.
the Monthly Review and the Critical Review maintained that the purpose of an anthology should be to preserve the good poems of the minor poets which might be in danger of perishing, and not, as Ritson had done, to give examples of the greater poets whom students "choose to peruse and possess wholly". The Critical Review picked faults and flaws wherever it could, summing up its opinion by saying that the publication was "one of the most injudicious specimens of book making which we were ever constrained to peruse."

While he was busy with more major publications Ritson found time while on visits to his home in Northumberland to publish several "Garlands" of songs about his home county. They were mere pamphlets, but one of them must be noticed here. In 1793 he published at Newcastle The Northumberland Garland; or, Newcastle Nightingale: a matchless collection of famous songs, which contained sixteen songs, including a few old ballads, one the oldest known version of The Hunting of the Cheviot, and another an old version of The Battle of Otterburn.

In March 1794 Ritson published his much delayed Scotch Songs, which had long been promised. The work was

formed on the same general plan as the earlier collection, English Songs. The pieces were divided into four classes: I. Love; II. Comic; III. Historical, Political, and Martial; IV. Romantic and Legendary, or Ballads. Whenever he could find the old music for the songs, Ritson printed it, as he reiterated that the verse and music of Scottish songs should be inseparable. He also included a valuable glossary of over twenty six pages. In 1792, two years before the publication, Ritson applied to George Paton for help. He himself had worked in the Advocates' Library, and said in a letter to Paton that he possessed "every volume of Scottish poetry, ancient or modern, hitherto printed", but

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(c) The Caledonian Muse, which Ritson intended as an anthology of Scottish poetry from the beginning through Burns, and to which he referred in his preface to English Songs, was a different work. It was apparently tentatively compiled in 1785, but the publication was delayed - once by fire, and once by Ritson's death. It finally appeared in 1829, edited by Joseph Frank, Ritson's faithful nephew.

(a) Scottish Songs. p.i. The same idea had been thoroughly discussed by William Tytler in his Dissertation on Scottish Music. Tytler's essay which he read before the Scottish Society of Antiquaries was incorporated in his Poetical Remains of James the First and later printed in the Transactions of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries. Ritson condemned Tytler as an editor and disputed many of his assertions, but quoted his praise of Scottish song with unqualified approval.

(b) Letters of Ritson. I. 220. The one anthology of Scottish poetry which Ritson could not find was A Choice Collection of Scots Poems Ancient and Modern. Printed by Walter Ruddiman. Edinburgh, 1776. (Ritson's Letters. II. 215) Nor have I been able to locate a copy of this work, which seems to have been unnoticed at its publication and to have had no influence on later editors.
it was to Paton he turned to collate some work with original manuscripts and to fill in the gaps in his glossary. Needless to say, Paton was as obliging as ever.

To the collection Ritson prefaced an **Historical Essay on Scotch Song** in which he allowed his anti-Scottish prejudice full play: "The history of Scotch poetry exhibits a series of fraud, forgery, and imposture, practised with impunity and success." He proposed that the new Royal Society of Scotland should investigate the question: "Why the Scotch literati should be more particularly addicted to literary imposition than those of any other country". And a little later: "The forgeries of Hector Boethius, David Chalmers, George Buchanan, Thomas Dempster, Sir John Bruce, William Lauder, Archibald Bower, James Macpherson, and John Pinkerton, stamps a disgrace upon the national character which ages of exceptionless integrity will be required to remove." Pinkerton he considered "the most infamous and despicable of these imposters", and went on to say that his "groundless assertion, absurd prejudice, scurrilous language, and diabolical malignity" lead one to think he is of a "medial race between devil and man". Ritson once more attacked Pinkerton’s early forgeries,

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(a) Ritson: Scottish Songs. p.67  
(b) ibid. p.59  
(c) ibid. p.60  
(d) ibid. p.72
besides alleging that Pinkerton saw before its publication, his letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine* exposing the forgeries in *Select Scotish Ballads*, and was allowed to write the evasive footnotes printed with the letter - an assertion which was probably true.

The collection seems to have been undertaken with the primary purpose of showing the Scottish editors how their work should have been done. Very few of the songs Ritson included were published here for the first time. For each of the pieces Ritson gave his source in the preface; the acknowledgments show that he relied almost entirely on earlier collections. Forty-six of the songs were taken from David Herd's collection, of which he said: "though not so judiciously selected or arranged as it might have been, and containing many confessedly English songs, a few suppositious ballads, and several pieces unworthy of preservation, we are certainly indebted for a number on excellent and genuine compositions, never before printed, as the editor of the present collection is bound in gratitude to acknowledge." Forty-two of his pieces had been given by Ramsay, but Ritson carefully pointed out Ramsay's inaccuracies and his own fidelity to the originals, as he did with six songs that were in the *Reliques*. Fourteen of the pieces were in Johnson's

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(1) See p.267 for a discussion of this letter.
(2) Ancient and Modern Scots Songs, Heroic Ballads, etc. Herd also gave Paton his manuscript collection to send to Ritson. (Ritson's Letters to George Paton. p.19)
(3) Ritson: Scottish Songs. p.71
Scotts Musical Museum. The remainder were from miscellaneous sources, among them Evans' *Old Ballads*, and Watson's *A Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems* ..., Edinburgh, 1706-11. Lord Hailes' work was pointedly unrepresented; Ritson remarked: "Three songs were originally printed from Lord Hailes' publication, which turning out, upon a collation with the MS., far from accurate, the leaves were cancelled." The song collectors by this time were working in a well-tilled field.

Pinkerton seized one more opportunity to score on his old enemy. For nearly eleven years he had waited without being quite able to treat Ritson as Ritson had treated him in the *Anti-Scot* letter. Pinkerton at last had his chance, and he made the most of it in an anonymous notice in the *Critical Review*. The tone of Pinkerton's review was bitter and personal, but the substance was more an apology for John Pinkerton than an exposure of Joseph Ritson. He succeeded in pointing out a few venial errors in Ritson's work, but his only effective attack was against Ritson's pedantic insistence on having untampered texts for the old ballads. "What must be the quality of mind", asked Pinkerton, "which can descant with such dignity on a ballad? To us, who are accustomed to treat trifles..."
as trifles, it recalls the remembrance of a venerable old man who once appeared at a fair, shaking a child's rattle, and gravely stroking his beard at every pause"; and later: "Our editor has spared no pains to reject any improvement, and to restore them to error and imperfection." His own forgeries Pinkerton again dismissed as "youthful". On the whole, there was more bark than bite to the article. There is a striking similarity in style, thought, and argument between this review, which is known to be Pinkerton's, and the anonymous review of Ritson's Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry mentioned above, which I conjectured might have been written by Pinkerton. If the two reviews were not written by the same man, the writer of the second review had carefully consulted the earlier article for ammunition. From the evidence of style I also believe Pinkerton wrote the Critical Review notices of Ritson's English Anthology and, of course, Ancient Songs. Ritson had known what was coming when he published Scotish Songs, for in the preface he said that he left the fate of his book "to the candour of the intelligent reader, and the malice of the Critical Review."

The British Critic, whose editor, Robert Nares, was a friend and correspondent of Bishop Percy, devoted

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Cf. p. 336

Ritson: Scotish Songs. I.iv

British Critic. May, 1795. pp. 450-502
thirteen pages to a skilfully irritating review of *Scottish Songs*. At the very outset the critic stroked the fur the wrong way by insisting on referring to the book as *Scottish* rather than *Scottish*, even when quoting the title. He mentioned Ritson's industry, but the rest of the review was devoted to quoting excerpts from Ritson's abuse of Pinkerton, and to a discussion and condemnation of Ritson's editorial policy. The reviewer said: "We should be glad to commend the diligence of his laborious researches in tracing the origin of *Scottish Songs*, and for the recovery of every minute fragment which seems to relate to his subject, if we could at the same time give equal praise to his candour, or his taste", and went on to say that in the prefatory essay Ritson even outstripped his opponent, Pinkerton, "in such gross abuse and personal insult as perhaps was never before exhibited in print."

The most important and most cutting part of the review was where Bishop Percy was by implication given highest praise for his editorial emendations and Ritson was commiserated for his inability, through lack of the necessary genius, to follow in the Bishop's footsteps. Ritson's policy of absolute faithfulness to the most authentic text, regardless of its comparative literary value was heavily condemned. "The value of a collection such as
this must chiefly depend on the taste and judgement of the editor, in selecting the most beautiful and poetical songs, and in exhibiting them to the public with the greatest advantage. In making such a selection any other standard but that of intrinsic excellence and genuine poetical merit, is totally inapplicable." The best pieces were "seldom found fit for the press; and require, therefore, a nice taste and delicate discernment, to emend what is faulty, to restore what is corrupted, and to supply what is wanting. In short, out of a mass of nonsense and corruption, with some delicate strokes that still remain of original excellence, to extract and recover a beautiful composition, should be the constant aim of an editor who is fit for publications of this kind."

Ritson should admire those who have the talent to be able to do this, but instead he "seems to regard every corrupted or vulgar copy, which happens to fall into his hands, with all the reverence of an autograph, and he treats with the grossest abuse any ingenious person, who has endeavoured to render it worth preserving... an affected anxiety to retain or notice every minute particle of the old blundering readings, is perfectly ridiculous, and only deserves the palm from Midas." Ritson insulted "those who have, by their ingenious labours, attracted
the public favour to this species of publication." The minuteness of Ritson's judgment "might have made him a useful copyist and painful editor of legal forms or ancient records, where minute diligence and laboured drudgery, are of real value ... rather than a publisher of elegant poetry".

The year 1795 saw two more works published by Ritson, the first an important contribution to the recovery of ancient poetry, an edition of the poems of Laurence Minot. The poems of Minot had been discovered by Tyrwhitt while he was working on his edition of the Canterbury Tales. Some former possessor of the manuscript in which the poems are contained wrote his name, Richard Chawser on one of the leaves. The compiler of the Cotton catalogue evidently mistook this signature for the more famous Chaucer and described the volume: "Chaucer. Exemplar emendate scriptum". In the course of his investigations of Chaucer material, Tyrwhitt consulted the manuscript and thereby discovered an early English poet who had been completely forgotten. But for Tyrwhitt he is likely to have remained forgotten for several more years. Tyrwhitt

*Cf. p.356* for the British Critic review of Ritson's Robin Hood, which is in the same vein.

*Poems on interesting events in the reign of King Edward III. written Anno MCCCCLII, by Laurence Minot. With a preface, dissertations, notes, and a glossary. London, 1795*
passed on his find to Warton in time for him to mention Minot in a footnote in his third volume, and to quote sixteen stanzas from his poetry.

In his preface Ritson gave full credit to Tyrwhitt for discovering the poems, and characteristically damned Warton's inaccurate printing of the extracts. Ritson edited the poems, as he said, with "scrupulous fidelity from the only manuscript copy of them known to exist." Later editors have admitted his claim. His notes, Ritson acknowledged, were derived from an old English translation of Froissart, and from the Chronicles of Fabian, Holinshed, and Stow. For the general information necessary for the reader to understand and appreciate Minot's poetry Ritson included two introductory dissertations: (1) On the Scotish Wars of King Edward III, and (2) On the Title of King Edward III to the Crown of France.

In editing Minot's poetry Ritson was working in a field which could give him the best opportunity to air his peculiar talents. His text was excellent; only a few minor changes have since been made by later editors. Unfortunately Ritson's critical power was not equal to his

editorial honesty. The praise he gave to Minot was unquestionably fulsome: "In point of ease, harmony, and variety of versification, as well as general perspicuity, Laurence Minot is, perhaps, equal if not superior, to any English poet before the sixteenth, or even, with very few exceptions, before the seventeenth century."

The reviewers were not enthusiastic, and inclined to treat the book as just another resurrection of boring ancient poetry which it would have been far better to leave in undisturbed peace. The Critical Review told the story of the discovery of the manuscript, but made no specific comments on the book, beyond that the notes seemed unreasonably extended, and that the poems gave "those pictures of ancient times and manners, from which early writers derive their greatest value." The Monthly Review commended the reprinting and consequent preservation of this ancient literature, and considered Ritson's task well done, as well as patriotic, but the reviewer had decidedly adverse opinions as to the literary value of much of early poetry. "...those verses which precede the reign of Elizabeth are mostly so inept, as not to reward the professed gleaner even with a grain: they seem

(1) Critical Review. May, 1798. p.107-8
(2) Monthly Review. December, 1796. p.464
collections of school exercises of the wits of Gotham.
The rhimes of our antient makers, like toads discovered
in a leaden coffin, would excite universal disgust, were
it not for the miracle of their preservation. The patience
of Grisilde may be admired in poring through the Tales
of Chaucer: but it were a penance, even for monkish
idleness, to toil through the burdensome volumes of his
contemporaries." Such judgments condemn the writers but
they also indicate the lack of diplomatic skill which
Ritson and other editors showed in introducing old poetry
to the public. Prefaces were used either to make extrava-
gant claims for the merits of early poetry or to make
equally extravagant apologies for reprinting it. The public
was torn between the two extremes, which were often indulged
in by the same editor, sometimes even in a single preface.
The British Critic ridiculed Ritson's spelling affecta-
tions but called the book on the whole "a very elegant
present to the public." The reviewer was not enthusiastic
about the literary merits of Minot, but was sufficiently
affected by the contemporary revival of ancient poetry
to say that "the reader of taste, as well as the antiquary
will be glad they are preserved."

With the exception of the older Scottish poets, works devoted to single authors, such as Ritson's edition of Minot, were rare. One other writer was represented by a thin selection the following year. In 1796 George Mason, a miscellaneous writer, published Poems by Thomas Hoccleve, never before printed; selected from the MS. in the possession of George Mason. The year before, Mason had purchased at an auction a manuscript which contained seventeen poems, all by Occleve. He chose to print but six: Le Male Regle; Ballades; to my Maister H. Somer ...; Au Roy; A de B, & C de D &c.; and an untitled poem sent to Richard, Duke of York, father of Edward IV. Mason was not a learned man and he frankly relied on Warton for his prefatory discussion of Occleve, but tried to give his author a little more praise, or perhaps a little less dispraise. He drew freely on Tyrwhitt's Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer for his analysis of Occleve's style. Mason himself furnished little that was new.

The editorial integrity and excellence of Poems by Thomas Hoccleve, never before printed; selected from the MS. in the possession of George Mason. With a preface, notes, and glossary. London, 1796.
Mason's work was praised by Ritson. The reviewers were less kind. The *Monthly Review* said that there was some value in the modern editions of Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare, though Spenser still awaited a learned editor, but to reprint "the stupid stanzas of Thomas Hoccleve"—! There was no excuse for "such trash". The *Critical Review* also condemned the book because of the low literary value of Oocleve's poems: "In bringing them before the notice of the public, the editor is sensible that he dissents from respectable authority in these matters; for Mr. Warton has condemned the poems as showing 'a total want of invention and fancy'." The reviewer went on to say: "To many everything is attractive that smells of antiquity" and after condemning the lack of "wit and spirit" in the poems, closed bluntly: "With the antiquaries, therefore, we shall leave him."

Ritson's second publication in 1795 was a two volume collection of material concerning Robin Hood, the chief hero of English popular poetry. Songs and ballads about his exploits had found their way into many of the anthologies, particularly Thomas Evans' *Old Ballads*. Broad-
sides and chapbooks innumerable had spread prose and poetic material concerning Robin Hood throughout the country. Robin Hood Garlands were very popular. The British Museum catalogue lists sixteen of them as appearing in the eighteenth century, the vast majority in the later part. One edition of Robin Hood's Garland appeared in 1779; another probably in 1780; four are listed as appearing probably in 1790, and one in 1792. The Adventures of Robert, Earl of Huntington, vulgarly called Robin Hood was published in 1777, and The Songs of Robin Hood in 1778. It is evident, then, that Ritson was no pioneer in the field; his task was to collect all the material available rather than to do any original research.

Ritson's attitude towards his material was wholly scholarly; he approached the problem of Robin Hood with all the high seriousness of an editor of the Hamlet text. The dissertation, The Life of Robin Hood, occupied eleven pages, while the notes to the dissertation filled 105 pages. Ritson had laboured and brought every possible fact for an exhaustive survey, with true Ritsonian care declining responsibility for the authenticity of questionable details. In all, the collection included thirty-three Robin Hood songs, five in the first volume and twenty-eight

Cf. p. 282
in the second. The first volume contained the rarer and less well known poems; the second, the common popular ballads.

Of these thirty-three ballads, twenty-six had appeared previously and in the same order in Evans' collection, but the textual similarity between Evans and Ritson is not so striking as that between Ritson and the 1778 collection of Robin Hood ballads mentioned above. For his second volume Ritson added two pieces and dropped one from the 1778 collection. The texts of the two sets of ballads differ but slightly, with long blocks of material identical. A few words vary, and there are some unimportant changes in spelling and punctuation. Ritson did not acknowledge any assistance from these earlier copies. Instead, he gave a definite black-letter or manuscript source for each of the ballads. Undoubtedly he did check his material with the oldest copies he could find, but his only contribution to the amount of readily available material was seven additional ballads. F.J. Child could add only five more to Ritson's total, and one of these was Robin Hood and the Prince of Arragon, which was in Evans and other collections, but which Ritson had rejected. The introductions, in which Ritson collected all the popular information about the hero, was the valuable part of the work.
What notice the book attracted was mostly directed to the pains with which the editor had gathered the minutest scraps of material. Francis Douce spoke of the work as "so ably and ingeniously treated, that every scrap that relates to him [Robin Hood] is so minutely developed that it will be long before any novelty shall be discovered of sufficient importance to deserve attention." The Critical Review was cordial on the whole, discussing the character of Robin Hood, whom it thought Ritson rated too highly. It praised the format of the work, and concluded: "We are glad to observe that the work has little of that coarseness and asperity which disgrace some of the publications of this editor."

In a seven page review the British Critic followed the same line of condemnation with which it had discussed Ritson's Scottish Songs. The review derided the futility of the editor's textual scrupulousness and again, by way of implication, commended the Percy way of editing ancient literature by "refining" and "correcting";

The critic spoke of Ritson's immense care, but said that "after all his labours, the story remains just where the

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Douce: Illustrations of Shakespeare, 1807. II.449
Critical Review. June, 1798. p.228-9
British Critic. January, 1797. p.16-22
popular tradition, as known to every schoolboy, has brought it." The first volume was allowed to pass without censure, but in the second volume "the editor has given us these popular songs, in no better, if so good a state, as that in which they may be found in any vulgar copy of Robin Hood's Garland ...as he has printed them they contain wretched corruptions, are almost unreadable, and could not possibly have been so written by their authors.

It is no excuse that he found these corruptions in the black letter copies in A a Wood's collection, or in the British Museum, etc., for nonsense, or such stuff as, common sense must suggest, couldn't possibly come from the original writer, ought to be rejected and any probably conjecture proposed in its stead." The reviewer suggested that Ritson should have called in the aid of some person "more qualified by nature for emendatory criticism", as what was needed was "such a collection of them [the ballads] as, by collating the old copies, and by ingenious conjectural emendations where necessary, would have left them in such a state that they could be read with pleasure, and admitted on the shelves of an elegant library." Then, the unkindest cut of all, the reviewer said that Ritson should have done for Robin Hood ballads
"something like what was done for the ballads of Fair Rosamund, and the Abbot of Canterbury, in the Reliques of Ancient Poetry." The critic recommended that the second volume should at once be cancelled or consigned to the vulgar walls, as only a new edition of Robin Hood's Garland and thus leave the way open "for some more sagacious critic to give us these popular songs in a better form, so that they may remain a standard edition."

Scott, with his usual acumen, saw more clearly than any other person the sort of man and the sort of editor Ritson was. With all his vital enthusiasm for romantic antiquity, Scott could not quite enjoy the dark burrowings into minute detail which satisfied the methodical soul of Ritson. His remarks on Robin Hood might be applied with equal truth to all Ritson's work:

"This work is a notable illustration of the excellencies and defects of Mr. Ritson's system. It is almost impossible to conceive so much zeal, research, and industry bestowed on a subject of antiquity. There scarcely occurs a word or phrase relating to Robin Hood, whether in history of poetry, in law books, in ancient proverbs, or common parlance, but is here collected and explained. At the same time, the extreme fidelity of the editor seems to be driven to excess when we find him pertinaciously retaining all the numerous and gross errors which repeated recitations have introduced into the text, and regarding it as a sacred duty to prefer the worst to the better readings, as if their inferiority were a security for their being genuine. In
short, when Ritson copied from rare books, or ancient manuscripts, there could not be a more accurate editor; when taking his authority from oral tradition, and judging between two recited copies, he was apt to consider the worst as most genuine, as if a poem was not more likely to be deteriorated than improved by passing through the mouths of many reciters. In the Ballads of Robin Hood, this superstitious scrupulosity was especially to be regretted, as it tended to enlarge the collection with a great number of doggerel compositions, which are all copies of each other ...

The publication of Robin Hood marked the end of five years of productivity from Ritson; for the next seven he was silent. Pinkerton contributed his last work to the revival in 1792. The fourth edition of the Reliques in 1794, without the long contemplated fourth volume, marked the end of Percy's active connection with the revival of early literature. The old leaders were dropping out, and the movement was not to get its second wind until Scott and the men about him crowned the efforts of the pioneers.

In the early years of the last decade of the century John Pinkerton was winding up his work in the recovery of ancient poetry. He had planned ambitiously, but one by one his projects were dropped. His correspondence with the Earl of Buchan and others shows that he

proposed extensive editorial labours which would have restored a great part of early Scottish literature. He planned to edit the seven "classic" poets of Scotland in the order of their merit, viz: Dunbar, Drummond, Douglas, James I, Barbour, Lyndsay, and Blind Harry. They were not to be complete and definitive editions. From Douglas he would omit the translation of the Aeneid, though he would include the prologues. Dunbar was to be edited without his "trash", and Lyndsay's Dialog was to be left out. Most of these projects he allowed to slip into other hands. The Morisons of Perth, supplied with material by the Earl of Buchan, and with some aid from the Rev. James Scott, attempted several of the tasks, though inadequately qualified. The editing of Wyntoun's Chronicle, which Pinkerton had also planned, was done by another Scot, David Macpherson.

Pinkerton's sole accomplishment of his ambitious programme was "the first genuine edition" of Barbour's Bruce, which he published in 1790. When he was planning the work he was in constant correspondence with the Earl of Buchan. On July 30, 1787 he informed Buchan that the arrangements were settled by which the Morisons

(a) Cf. p. 398.
(b) Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I. 157
were to publish the Bruce, for which he, Pinkerton, was to give a Preface, Life of the Author, Notes, and a Glossary. He was most anxious to have the manuscript in the Advocates' Library copied literatim, and hoped that Buchan would induce Lord Hailes to collate the transcript with the original. Buchan secured a Mr. Jamieson to copy the manuscript, and in October of the same year forwarded the complete transcript to Pinkerton, attesting himself to its correctness. In the meantime, Pinkerton had quarrelled with the Morisons about the financial arrangements for the edition, and when the work finally came out in 1790, it was published in London.

Pinkerton's preface characteristically contained high praise of the poem he was editing. He preferred it "to the early exertions of even the Italian Muse, to the melancholy sublimity of Dante, and the amorous quaintness of Petrarca." The life of the poet which he had included

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National Library of Scotland. Historical MS. 63 (19.2.2)

Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I.173. Certainly not Robert Jamieson, and it it very unlikely that it was Dr. John Jamieson.

"I, David Stuart, Earl of Buchan, have compared this transcript of the MS. dated 1489 in the Lawyers' Library at Edinburgh with the original, and find it to be a true copy, having corrected such errors as I have been able to discover, in the course of a very minute investigation and comparison: (signed) 'Buchan'. September 27, 1787. Pinkerton's Bruce. p.vii

Pinkerton: The Bruce. p.x"
in the List of Scotish Poets in Ancient Scotish Poems was incorporated into the sketch he gave here, but was supplemented by the passages from Wyntoun's Chronicle which referred to the Bruce. He arbitrarily divided the poem into twenty books, in order to cut up the long work of 12,000 verses. Otherwise he professed not to have altered the text at all, which was probably the truth. Skeat, who edited the poem in 1870, grudgingly praised Pinkerton's edition, though he pointed out many errors, such as the omission of an occasional line and the frequent misreading or misprinting of words, due, he says, to Pinkerton's ignorance of Middle-English grammar. Such errors, it seems as likely, came from the copy attested to by the Earl of Buchan.

Financially, Pinkerton's Bruce was a complete failure. It cost Nicol, the publisher, 120 pounds to publish it and it sold only to the amount of 20 pounds. This loss discouraged Nicol, and he confided to Thomas Park that the public taste was not yet sufficiently enlarged to warrant the continued publication of old poetry. Park disagreed and wrote, "... yet I still think it [public taste] every day expanding - and I have some suspicion that if the Bruce was more generally displayed to the

\( ^{(*)} \) National Library of Scotland. MS. 22.4.10. f.133
public notice, than it appears to have been, that its sale would have been far more extensive. "Park's diagnosis seems nearer to the truth. Either because of the personal dislike which Pinkerton everywhere enkindled or because they considered the work unimportant, the periodicals ignored the edition. The Monthly Review might as well have omitted any mention of the work, as it withheld its sparing and tepid commendation until the December 1794 issue. The reviewer commented on the number of recent editions of "ancient original writers" and mildly commend-ed the work as useful "even where the works themselves are not distinguished by very superior literary merit." 

Pinkerton's last work in the recovery of older Scottish poetry came two years later in 1792 with the publication of Scotish Poems. The first of the three volumes included: The Tales of the Priests of Peebles, ascribed to Lady Culros; Gawin Douglas's The Palice of Honour, the manuscript of which he got from Percy; and History of Squire Meldrum. Volume II comprised eight Interludes of David Lindsay, which had been sent to Pinkerton by George Paton. The third volume began with Philotus, from Garrick's collection, and ascribed by Pink-
erton to James VI. The remainder of the third volume was given over to a miscellany of older poetry, including two of Dunbar's, two minor poems of Henryson, and two metrical romances, all from the Chepman and Myllar collection; Sir Richard Holland's *The Howlat*; and Sir Gawan and Galaron of Galloway, attributed to Clerk of Trenant, mentioned in Dunbar's *Lament for the Makaris*.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January 1793 appeared a communication from Joseph Ritson, in which he accused Pinkerton of having obtained the manuscript of Sir Gawan and Galaron of Galloway, for which Pinkerton had given no source, "surreptitiously" and under false pretenses. The manuscript of the poem was in the possession of Ritson, who had refused to lend it to a "learned friend" of Pinkerton's because he intended publishing it himself. Apparently, on the condition that it would not be published, Ritson finally let the "learned friend" have a copy of the manuscript, whereupon Pinkerton had obtained it and published the romance "inaccurately". Pinkerton did not reply to the accusation. The whole book

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Gentleman's Magazine. August, 1832, p. 124

(1) Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar were owners of Edinburgh's first printing press, established in 1507. They were granted the exclusive right of printing under royal patent, and their first book appeared in 1508. The collection which Pinkerton used was also printed in 1508, discovered in 1785, and three years later presented to the Advocates' Library.

(2) Gentleman's Magazine, January, 1793
was a rather slovenly piece of editing. The extracts from Lindsay were especially poor; although Pinkerton said that his version of Squyer Meldrum was from the 1594 edition, it has been shown to be merely a hodgepodge of shreds and patches from modern editions, with emendations by Pinkerton.

The Reviews received the work more cordially than they had Pinkerton's previous effort. The Critical Review was especially favourable; possibly Pinkerton wrote the notice himself. The Monthly Review still remembered Pinkerton's early deceptions, and would not commit itself as to the text and authenticity of the poems, remarking that "the praise for solicitous care and precision remains for those to bestow, who have had the opportunity of collating his publication with the original pieces."

With the publication of Scotish Poems we take our leave of Pinkerton the editor. It would be difficult

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(1) There is a copy of Scotish Poems in the National Library of Scotland with marginal and interlinear notes by David Laing. These notes are textual, showing the carelessness and inaccuracy of Pinkerton, especially in Lyndsay's eight interludes. Laing made no comment on the edition as a whole. He supplied the lines which Pinkerton's judgment caused him to supplant with asterisks.

(2) Poetical Works of Sir David Lyndsay. ed. Chalmers, 1886. p.78

(3) Critical Review. Sept, 1793. pp.172-76 75-85

(4) Monthly Review, June, 1793. p.172-76
to speak of him in more derogatory terms than did his contemporaries. Robert Jamieson considered him beneath contempt and discussion; Lord Hailes finally refused further correspondence with him; George Paton and David Herd, as patient and gentle men as could be found, Pinkerton himself denounced for adversely criticizing his work. The Earl of Buchan was finally disgusted with him. Even Percy, whose strong bond with Pinkerton was their common fear of Ritson, broke with him for good in 1794. Before Pinkerton had reached middle life he had made hosts of enemies and estranged almost all his friends.

George Chalmers, writing to Archibald Constable on October 27, 1803 to deny that he was the author of Vindication of the Celts, a work written in answer to Pinkerton's Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths, 1787, said:

"If I had written on that subject, I would have beaten Pinkerton's brains out in half the space. Pinkerton's Goths is a tissue of interpolations and falsehood, fiction and impertinence ... I am glad I had enough influence with Dr. Jamieson to get him to collate Barbour with the MS. in the Advocates' Library, where he found what I told him was true, namely, that there is some falsehood in every line. The same is true of every other book of Pinkerton's ..."

(1) Jamieson: Popular Ballads and Songs, 1806. I.xvi
(2) Hailes to Buchan. 10 May, 1791. Edinburgh University Library. Laing MSS. II.209.
(3) Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I.137
(4) Nichols: Illustrations. VII.150
(5) Constable and his Literary Correspondents. I.411
Thomas Constable said of him:

"The true Ishmael among archaeologists of that day was John Pinkerton, who seldom praises others, and of whom no one seems to have a good word to say. Neither shall I enter on his defense ... Mr. Pinkerton was notorious as well for suppression as misquotation of authorities, for suppressio veri and suggestio falsi ... Sir Walter Scott said of him that he understood in an extensive sense Horace's maxim quid-libet audendi." (8)

Constable exaggerated when he said that no one had a good word for Pinkerton. Joseph Cooper Walker, the Irish antiquary, spoke of his works as "inestimable to the lovers of historic truth", and of his deep and extensive erudition, assiduous research. Horace Walpole, who knew him passing well, spoke of his understanding as "one of the strongest, most manly, and clearest he ever knew" (9), but later he too became offended. The great Edward Gibbon said that "the best judges had acknowledged his merit, and that his rising fame would not fail gradually to extinguish the early prejudices and personal animosities which he had perhaps been too careless of provoking". But those were exceptional statements, and all made in the early part of Pinkerton's life, by people whose dealings with him were in no way frequent or intimate.

(8) Constable and his Literary Correspondents. I.504
(9) Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I.ix
(9) ibid. I.ix
Pinkerton's unscrupulousness, his arrogance, conceit, complete lack of decency, and worst of all, his fundamental dishonesty, as shown in his relations with Ritson, Lord Hailes, and later, William Anderson and others, gained him the condemnation of his own generation and prevented later writers from seeing what might really be of value in his work. There is nowhere an adequate account of him or his works, while the sketch in Chambers' Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen is libellous.

Pinkerton's work on early Scottish poetry was but a part of his productive antiquarian labour. His most permanently valuable work was as an historian. His History of Scotland from the Accession of the House of Stuart to that of Mary, with Appendices of Original Documents (London, 1797), which he considered "the greatest labour of his life" is still valuable. Other historical and ethnological works including History of Scotland preceding the Reign of Malcolm III, or 1056 (1790), and Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths ... (1787) were chiefly mediums through which he could express his bitter anti-Celt prejudices. His miscellaneous works include An Essay on Medals (2vols., 1784), a subject which long interested him, and works on Geography and travel. He
was a deeply learned man, but lacked the poise and largeness of mind to control his prejudices.

Instead of being hated and despised, Pinkerton might have been the outstanding leader of his generation in literary antiquarianism. A man of great industry and learning, he might have built for himself a lasting reputation as a scholar. In spite of the general animosity he evoked, other men of his generation could not help being influenced by his labours. Tytler, Thomas Evans, George Caw, and later editors frankly acknowledged indebtedness to his work. The Earl of Buchan and the Morisons were certainly stimulated by him before the inevitable quarrel. The learned John Leyden, who had reason to be vindictive towards Pinkerton, after recounting his faults, remarked:

"Yet with all these defects, and a most insolent, intolerant and pedantic style, who is there that would deny to Mr. Pinkerton the praise of extensive information, of indefatigable research, of wide erudition, and acuteness of observation?"

Pinkerton was not a faithful editor, an impartial scholar, nor did he have any of the more fundamental instincts of a gentleman. He must stand condemned. Even Scott, overflowing as he was with the milk of human kindness, did not attempt to vindicate him, but merely tried to find an excuse for him. Speaking of Ritson and Pinkerton he wrote:

© Cf. p. 413 f.
(a) Scots Magazine. July, 1802
"His [Ritson's] violence though often to be regretted, was always sincere and unaffected; while that of Pinkerton was suspected by some of his friends to be in a great measure assumed, for the sake of attracting attention. Certain it is that the latter antiquary laid aside much of his virulence displayed in his earlier publications, as he fell into the vale of years.

The sun set heavily on both - for Joseph Ritson's whimsicalities terminated in mental alienation; and the career of Pinkerton, which in its commencement attracted the notice of Gibbon, who desired to adopt him as an associate in the proposed task of editing the British historians, ended in exile, in obscurity, and we fear in indigence. His studious and laborious disposition deserves praise; and the defects we have had to notice with pain, arose in youth from the arrogance of inexperience, and in his later years from mortification at the failure of a long series of literary attempts - some of which merited another fate."

Pinkerton himself, in a frank moment recognized the justice of the treatment he had been accorded. In 1800 he wrote to Malcolm Laing:

"As, from a constitutional irritability of nerve, I have in my earlier productions shown much controversial asperity, it would be ridiculous in me to complain when I am paid in my own coin. Were I revising my books, I should dash out all such passages, which I never see without disgust. I can only say they are the products of infirmity, and not of malice."

(1) Quarterly Review. vol. 41. p.136-37
(2) Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. II.176
It was not a promise of immediate reform, however, as Pinkerton's review of Leyden's edition of *The Complaynt of Scotland* two years later proved. His "constitutional irritability of nerve" - to use his own mild phrasing - had ruined what might have been a brilliant career.

\(^\circ\) Cf. p. 414
IX

The Movement in the Nineties. Part. II.
The eighteenth century audience for the revived work of the early writers did not look upon it so much as literature, part of the history of the imagination and ideas of the race, as illustrations of political history, of manners, or of customs. The publication of the Paston Letters by Sir Joseph Fenn in 1787-89 was purely from the historical motive, as a means of filling in a gap in the knowledge of earlier times. Information and understanding of the past was admittedly vague, and a timid compiler of older works could with that excuse justify their republication apart from their intrinsic worth. It was the excuse offered by F.G. Waldron when in 1792 he gathered together in one book, The Literary Museum a series of tracts he had published separately in 1789. "Should the Matter of some of these elder pieces", he explained in the preface, "be found unworthy of regard, the antique words, phrases, and mere orthography, may assist the critical reader of Shakespeare, and other early writers; whose language has become obsolete, whose

The Literary Museum; or, Ancient and Modern Repository. Comprising Scarce and Curious Tracts, Poetry, Biography and Criticism. (edited by Francis Godolphin Waldron) London, 1792
text has been depraved, and whose allusions are forgotten; in ascertaining meanings, correcting errors, and illustrating obscurities.

The volume contained a very miscellaneous collection, with no connection other than their age. Among others were included the dedication and preface to "De Preclaris Mulieribus ... Translated from Bocasse ... by Henry Parcase, Knight, Lord Morley"; "A Delicate Diet, for daintie mouthde Droonkardes ... By George Gascoyne ... 1576"; "Onne mie Maister Lydgate, his travellynge ymto Fraunce." The editor did not vouch for the authenticity of the poem on Lydgate and said: "Whether this poem was written by a Rowley, or a Chatterton, I will not presume to say..." That it was by a Chatterton, most of the reviewers detected at once. The remaining pieces in the collection all date from the late sixteenth century onward, with even some contemporary work.

The constant digging by the eighteenth century scholars was bringing to light more and more of the early literature. Warton had shown the general lines of the pattern that literature followed. After him fragment after fragment of the pattern was revealed in more detail, but the century was not prepared for anything like a final assemblage of the bits of knowledge available. After Warton no similar
history of English literature was written until the following century. Robert Alves undertook a more ambitious task. In 1796 appeared his posthumous work *Sketches of a History of Literature* .... As an influence on the revival of early English literature it scarcely deserves mention. In one volume Alves compressed a superficial summary of the history of the literature of the world from the earliest Oriental writers to those of modern Europe. Of the early English writers he mentioned Alfred the Great, Richard I, and included a few brief and conventional remarks on Chaucer. That was all. The work illustrated the eighteenth century predilection for the assemblage of facts, but it added little to what was already known, and attracted almost no attention.

The real supplement to Warton's work came in the historical anthologies of English poetry. Although the eighteenth century was rife with the Beauties-of-Shakespeare, Gems-from-Pope sort of collection, the more elaborate historical compilations were slow in coming, and did not appear until the last third of the century.

*Sketches of a History of Literature:* containing Lives and Characters of the most eminent Writers in different Languages, ancient and modern, and Critical Remarks on their works. Together with several Literary Essays. The Whole designed as a Directory, to guide the Judgment and form the Taste in reading the best Authors. By the late Robert Alves, A.M. To which is prefixed a short Biographical Account of the Author. Edinburgh, 1796.
These huge multi-volume collections, often with prefaces and critical apparatus, had more in common with histories of literature than with the feminine Beauties and Gems which were published mostly as parlour ornaments. Anthologies of English poetry arranged in chronological order, often with some pretense of including the complete works of all the important poets, were a simultaneous growth with the interest in the history of literature.

The first really ambitious anthology of English poetry was Blair's edition of *The British Poets*, the first volume of which was published in 1773. The collection began with Milton, and did not always include the complete works of the poets. Blair's edition began too late for our notice; its only importance to us lies in the stimulation it gave to later anthologists who could afford to be bolder and include earlier poets.

In 1777 John Bell, a pugnacious and resourceful bookseller, began to issue the one hundred and nine volumes of his anthology of *English Poetry*. The collection was published in neat miniature volumes "calculated for a lady's

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pocket", though perhaps in trying to gain the feminine market, Bell was in danger of losing the more remunerative masculine market, for Dilly, writing to Boswell, called it a "little trifling edition" and implied that the size of the type made the work unreadable. Chaucer is the only pre-Shakespearian poet included in the collection, although the early seventeenth century is well represented. In his treatment of Chaucer, Bell did little original editing, for he used Tyrwhitt's text for the Canterbury Tales and Urry's text for the rest of the poems. Bell was not a man to be hindered by scrupulous ideas of literary property, and his free use of Tyrwhitt's work drove Tyrwhitt to write a protest, which he published in the Gentleman's Magazine. He contrived to condemn the edition subtly, by assuming that the publication was destined for the use of children, because of the smallness of the type, and the number of illustrations.

Bell's enterprise in printing his edition of the poets stimulated a powerful combine of forty London Booksellers to publish in rivalry with Bell's

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(1) Stanley Morison: John Bell, 1745-1831. Bookseller, Printer, Publisher ... Cambridge, 1930. p.25
(2) Boswell: Life of Johnson. ed. G.B.Hill. III.110
(3) Cf. p.22
(4) Gentleman's Magazine. June, 1783. p.461
anthology the collection for which Dr. Johnson wrote the 
Lives of the Poets. This edition went no further back than 
Cowley, and therefore does not concern us here.

Dr. Robert Anderson, a physician who had pre-
viously studied theology, and who finally abandoned medicine 
for literature, was editor of the Edinburgh Magazine from 
1784 to 1803. He kept up a correspondence with many of the 
literary scholars of the time, particularly Bishop Percy 
and Thomas Park. It was Anderson who discovered Thomas 
Campbell and introduced him to the literary circle of 
Edinburgh. When it was proposed by Mendell and Son, Edin-
burgh printers, to publish an edition of English poets, 
Anderson suggested that the selection include not only the 
poets in the Johnson collection, but poets anterior to the 
Caroline age. Although he had some difficulty in persuading 
the publisher to include any pre-Shakespearian poets, his 
idea was accepted. Anderson originally recommended the 
publishing of the complete works of Chaucer, Langland, 
Gower; the best parts of Lydgate, Barclay, Hawes, Skeltoë 
Surrey, Wyatt, Sackville, Sydney, Spenser, Marlowe, Davies,

\(^5\) The Works of the English Poets. With prefaces, biographical 
and critical, by S. Johnson. 68 vols. London, 1779-81
\(^6\) The Works of the British Poets. With Prefaces, biographical 
and Shakespeare as representative of the early poets, but after due consideration on the part of the publishers, the list was cut down to Chaucer, Surrey, Wyatt, Sackville, Spenser, Davies, and Shakespeare, "it being thought safer to allure curiosity into this unfrequented track of reading, by a republication of the works of those authors, who, though not either universally read or understood ... are notwithstanding familiar to us in conversation, and constantly appealed to in controversial points of poetical taste, than to run the risk of suppressing it totally, by a bulky republication of all or the better parts of the works of those unfortunate authors, who still remain unpopular, merely for the want of being read. The classical compositions of Barbour, James I, Henry the Minstrel, Dunbar, Douglas, and Lindsay, being written in the Scottish language, could not be received into an edition of English poetry."

Anderson's work was issued in 13 volumes, with a 14th appearing in 1807. It contained "the work of one hundred and fourteen authors ... forty-five are now, for the first time, received into an edition of English poetry." Before the work of each poet was included a short biographical sketch and critical comment, all but seven of which

(1) Anderson: British Poets. I.4
(2) ibid. I.5
were written by Anderson himself.

It is unfortunate that the publishers were not so liberal as the editor, and could not be persuaded to include the lesser writers of the Middle English period. Without them Anderson's work does not mark any sensational advance, as the new poets included were later men. For the literary antiquarian the chief, almost the sole, interest of his collection lay in the completeness of his Chaucer, the one early poet who, after Tyrwhitt's edition of the Canterbury Tales, stood least in need of editorial nursing for the time being. Anderson used the same Chaucer text as had Bell; Tyrwhitt for the Canterbury Tales and Urry for the rest. According to Anderson he was not responsible for editing the works of Chaucer. He wrote: "The recommendation of the proper editions of the works to be reprinted belonged to the editor; with the exception of the works of Chaucer, ... in which he had no concern."

Anderson's work was not considered as wholly satisfying the need for a well-executed and comprehensive edition of the English poets. In a letter to James Ballantyne, April 12, 1805, Scott wrote: "I have imagined a very superb work. What think you of a complete edition

(Anderson: British Poets. I.v.)

(2) Lockhart: Life of Scott. II.205
of British Poets, ancient and modern? Johnson's is imperfect and out of print; so is Bell's, which is a Lilliputian thing; and Anderson's the most complete in point of number, is most contemptible in execution both of the editor and the printer. There is a scheme for you! At least a hundred volumes, to be published at the rate of ten a year."

The collection was given a long favourable review, mostly summary of the preface, in the Monthly Review. The notice of Anderson's work in the Critical Review is more interesting and important to us than the work itself. During the preceding quarter century the Critical Review, though Pinkerton was on its staff, had been the least friendly in its reception of works pertaining to ancient literature. It had given grudging praise when it was impossible to condemn, but when opportunity offered, it had seldom hesitated to condemn this artificially revived pre-Shakespearian literature as uncouth and barbaric. In the notice of Anderson's work, however, the usual policy of the review was completely reversed, and it was now as ardent in its apologia for the older poetry as it had previously been scornful. "... the school of Pope has had

\(^7\) Critical Review. January, 1799. pp. 40-50
its day; a taste has been introduced for the rude but more vigorous effusions of our ancestors; and it is from comprising the early writers that the present collection derives its great and distinguished value."

The critic summarized capably the trend of English poetry from Chaucer to Pope. "The taste, however, which Pope introduced, was calculated rather to make mediocrity tolerable than to produce excellence. We were sinking to the tame and tiresome regularity of French poetry; the stream began to stagnate like a Dutch canal. Young, Thomson, and Akenside rose to excellence; but a sad rabble of versifiers appear in the collections of this period. The Wartons led us back to a better school. The pupils of that school are now candidates for fame; and it is for the next age to decide upon the present." Referring to Anderson's omission of the early poets whom he had first intended to include, the critic said: "... yet the latter [booksellers] would have greatly enhanced the value of their work, if they had comprised the most scarce and valuable of the authors whom they have omitted -- Langland, ...Marlow, and particularly Hawes... The list of modern poets is sufficiently extensive: we could willingly spared a volume of them to have made room for older
and better company." The whole article showed a consciousness of the great change which had occurred in the past few decades. Already the new order was so well established that a man could look back and see the scattered publications linking together and forming a meaningful whole.

With the about face of the Critical Review the opposition to the revived ancient poetry lost its staunchest advocate. Some of the flavour of the dying age was lost when a work on older literature could no longer count on being received with a disdainful jeer from the ranks of the Critical Review. The editors of older literature had won the day. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Scott had but to tread the path that had been cleared of obstacles for them. It was, as the reviewer hinted, an easy decision for the next age when it came to pronounce its verdict on the poetry of the preceding age. The few sentences quoted from the review show as clearly as anything could show, the importance of the pioneer work of the restorers of early literature in preparing the ground for the great surge of the Romantic movement.

Large omnibus anthologies like those of Bell and Anderson were infrequent and risky publications; there was only a limited market for them and that was soon
satisfied. Smaller collections covering shorter periods and selections of works were more common, and there was a steady output of anthologies restricted to older literature. Three of the collections of older poetry which appeared in the last five years of the century, though unimportant in themselves, must be mentioned: The Beauties of Ancient Poetry, published in London in 1794; Ballads & Songs, Scottish and Ancient Ballads, Songs and Poems, both published in Ludlow in 1799. The first was a compilation of pieces taken from Percy and later men, with the addition of a few songs from Shakespeare's plays. The second was made up mostly of material also taken from the Reliques, with some pieces from other collections. The third was a 93 page selection taken entirely from the Reliques, including even summaries of Percy's headnotes. None of the three included any fresh material. Their only importance is as an indication of the continued and growing popularity of the old ballads, particularly those refurbished by Percy. At the very end of the century Percy was still the guide and chief source of the amateur editor who was content to exploit what had been tested and proved popular rather than to venture into more ambitious and original work.
George Ellis' *Specimens of the Early English Poets*, published in 1790, could also be regarded as a minor and unimportant compilation were it not the forerunner of the greatly enlarged edition of the same work in 1801. Ellis was a man of various attainments. He was one of the chief contributors to the *Rolliad*, in which Pitt received his heavy satire. He was a close friend of Scott, and of most of the antiquaries of the day, even being on amiable terms with Ritson for a time.

The brief preface is the only part of the 1790 collection which holds any concern for us, beyond the fact that, at that time, a book could be published as a collection of "the early English Poets" and yet contain no pre-Elizabethan material. In the preface Ellis voiced the growing distaste of the eighteenth century for its own refined perfection of form. "The regularity and harmony of style, and the minute attention to the artifice of composition which were introduced by the authors of Queen Anne's reign, produced in the public such a delicacy and even fastidiousness of taste, as could not be gratified

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(c) Ellis: *Specimens of the Early English Poets*. London, 1790

(a) No such poem as the *Rolliad* was ever published. Some enemies of the current (Pitt) administration published mock criticism of this mythical poem in detached numbers in the morning papers, illustrating their criticisms by quotations, most of them in exceedingly bad couplet verse. After one or two spurious collections of the *Rolliad* papers had been published, the authentic collection was published in 1786. It was tremendously popular and went through 21 editions.
by the irregular compositions of our early poets, who therefore soon fell into disrepute, and were in a little time consigned to oblivion." From this oblivion Ellis chose to rescue some of the earlier poetry, but, as in Ritson's *English Anthology* three years later, his selections went no further back than Wyatt and Surrey. Later, in chronological order, he included selections from such "unfamiliar" poets as Shakespeare, Sir Philip Sydney, Marlowe; and for the seventeenth century, Carew, Lovelace, Suckling, Cowley, and Milton.

Ellis omitted poems of the ballad kind "because less connected with the history of our poetry than with that of our ancient manners and customs." Occasionally he introduced a poet by a short head note, but beyond this he was content to refer the reader to the collections of Percy, Pinkerton, or Headley for reference information concerning the poets of his collection. During the following decade Ellis was to be swept back with the tide beyond the Elizabethans to a real study of our early literature.

The collection was well received except for a minor relapse on the part of the *Monthly Review*. The critic

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said with the characteristic complacence of the period that "the modern reader, whose taste is refined by the works of Pope, and others of our later bards, will be apt to consider the merits of the present volume as consisting more in the extremely elegant way in which it is printed, than in the poetry."

Ellis' friendship with Gregory Lewis Way, a dilettante in literary antiquarianism, eventually led him to continue Way's work in French literature on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In 1796 Way published *Fabliaux or Tales, abridged from the French Manuscripts of the XIIth and XIIIth centuries by M. Le Grand, selected and translated into English Verse*. Le Grand's work, which contained several Arthurian legends and other tales which were common to both French and English, was published in three volumes in 1779, and reprinted in five volumes in 1781. Le Grand's preface contained a long discussion of the history, geographical distribution, and general nature of these tales. The


*Fabliaux ou contes du XIIème et du XIIIème siècle traduit ou extraits d'après divers manuscrits du temps; avec des notes historiques, et critique, et les imitations qui ont été faites de ces contes depuis leur origine jusqu'à nos jours. 3 tom. Paris, 1779*
first English translation appeared in 1786. The translator was faithful to Le Grand, merely adding an occasional illustrative note, and deleting, but giving a euphemistic precis, of several "indecent" passages. Another prose translation was published in 1789.

The tales which Way translated into English verse were: Aucassin and Nicolette, The Lay of the Little Bird, The Priest who had a Mother in spite of Himself, The Canoness and the Gray Nuns, The Order of Knighthood, The Gentle Bachelor, The Mantle Made Amiss, The Mule without a Bridle, The Knight and the Sword, The Vale of False Lovers, The Lay of Sir Lantaf, and The Lay of Sir Gruelan. These early romances were, as Way said in the preface, written in the language which, at the period of their composition, was common to both France and the literate part of England, and could properly be considered as connected with the literary histories of both countries. Warton had, of course, previously made the same point, and Le Grand had implied it. The work of Way and the translators of the Fabliaux into prose brought home the kinship of the of the French and English Romances. John Leyden observed:

(1) Tales of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries. From the French of Mr. Le Grand. 2 vols. London, 1786
(2) Norman Tales, translated from the French of M. Le Grand. London, 1789
"... it is a curious fact that the subjects of some of the popular stories which I have heard repeated in Scotland, do not differ essentially from those of some of the ancient Norman fabliaux presented to the public in elegant form by Le Grand. Thus when I first perused the fabliau of the Poor Scholar, the Three Thieves, and the Sexton of Cluni, I was surprised to recognize the popular stories which I had heard repeated in infancy, and which I had often repeated myself. ... Whether these be derived immediately from the French during their long uninterrupted intercourse with the Scottish nation, or whether both nations borrowed them from the Celtic, may admit of some doubt." 8)

Way died in 1799 before he was quite ready to publish the second volume. His friend George Ellis edited it and published it in 1800. The translations completed and put into English verse for the second volume comprise: The Lay of Gugemer, The Three Knights of the Smock, The Lady of Narcissus, The Lay of Aristotle, Hippocrattes, an extract, The Priest who ate Mulberries, The Land of Cokainge, The Norman Bachelor, Hueline and Eglantine, Griseldis, The Countess of Vergy, The Battle of Carnival and Lent, and the Road to Paradise, an extract. Ellis included in the appendix fragments of five more tales which Way had not completed, with analyses of the stories. He provided the whole with illustrative notes, which considerably enhanced the value of the work for students, though it was primarily

8) Leyden: (ed) Complaynt of Scotland. 1801. p.222
intended for the general reader. Both volumes received brief but favourable notice from the critics.

The second edition of Ellis' Specimens of the Early English Poets, published in 1801, was in reality an entirely new work. The first edition, as we have noted, was a one volume selection of the English poets from the time of Wyatt and Surrey, with negligible notes and prefatory matter. The new three volume edition profited by the labours of previous editors, and practically summed up the critical findings of the previous century. Ellis now cast aside timidity and moderation and gave over the entire first volume of more than 400 pages to a discussion and specimens of the works of the British poets from the early Saxon times to Stephen Hawes. Here at last was filled in the blank which Warton had left when he began his History of English Poetry with the eleventh century. Only a few selections were included; Ellis really used the volume for a history of early English language and poetry. Although the literary and historical value of the ancient writers was not neglected, Ellis gave his major emphasis to the linguistic aspect of his subject, "as it

(5) Specimens of the Early English Poets, to which is prefixed an historical sketch of the Rise and Progress of the English Poetry and Language. 3 vols. London, 1801.
was the principal object of this Miscellany, to collect such a series of early poetry as should exhibit specimens of our language through all its gradations ... to form a succinct and intelligible, if not a satisfactory, history of the formation and early progress of the English language." He discussed the history of the language and the fusion of the French and Anglo-Saxon elements. In a neat paragraph he disposed of Pinkerton's idea that the common language of England and Scotland was separately formed in the two countries.

Ellis devoted his first three chapters to a discussion of Anglo-Saxon poetry. For examples he quoted The Battle of Brunanburh and The Land of Cokaine from Hickes. The first had been literally translated for him into modern English as well as translated into Middle English by a boy at Eton. For the early Middle English period Ellis found illustrative specimens in Warton and in Ritson's Ancient Songs. All of them Ellis modernized. His treatment of this period was hesitant; he added nothing new, but conveniently summed up in a concise readable form the findings of previous scholars. From then on he was on surer ground. He discussed Anglo-Norman literature, the

\[^{6)}\text{Ellis: Specimens. 180M. III.399}\]
gradual fusion of the languages, and the coming of Chaucer, with his contemporaries and followers, including the Scottish Chaucerians. The second volume took the reader through the reign of Elizabeth, and the third through the reign of Charles II. The last two volumes were given over almost entirely to selections from the poets. The first volume was mainly a history of the literature of the early period and of the growth and development of the language.

Ellis made and acknowledged free use of the learning of his predecessors, particularly Mrs. Cooper, Percy, Warton, Tyrwhitt, and Pinkerton. He made himself thoroughly familiar with the work that had been done. For James I he relied on Tytler; for Wyntoun, on Macpherson; for Occleve, on both Warton and Mason. Thomas Park, the George Paton of the English antiquaries, did considerable work for him on this edition. The Specimens marked no great advance in the study of the early poets; it was rather a recapitulation in a single work of all the separate scraps written on the subject in the past century. Readers who did not want to go on long discursive rambles with Warton could find in Ellis a concise treatment of the

\[\textbf{Cf. p. 2989.}\]
Middle English period in addition to a discussion of Anglo-Saxon literature, the great gap in Warton. The pre-Elizabethan period of English literature at last found a faithful and competent interpreter to re-introduce it to the public. The reviews, particularly Scott's in the Edinburgh Review, praised the work justly. The reading public was as appreciative as the critics, for the work went into three editions in ten years.

The great advance in knowledge of early literature made during the last quarter of the century can be most vividly shown by a comparison of two editions of a work which first appeared in 1774. The second edition of William Mitford's Essay upon the Harmony of Language appeared in 1804, thirty years after the first edition. In illustration of his subject Mitford included in the first edition a section On the Origin and Progress of English Versification. He was not a deeply learned man, and such reference works as Hicke's Thesaurus were beyond him. He was, however, interested in the subject, and had obviously gone to some pains to discover information. In regard to

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(1) Scott: Works. Edinburgh, 1835. VII.1-15

(2) Mitford: An Essay Upon the Harmony of Language. Intended Principally to Illustrate That of the English Language. London, 1774


(4) pp. 157-174
the versification of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English poetry. Mitford had only the short history of the language prefixed to Johnson's Dictionary, and Percy's essays in the *Reliques*, particularly the essay on the metre of *Piers Plowman*. His only specimens of early poetry were those given by Johnson. His skeleton outline of English poetry gave brief mention of Gower and Chaucer as the joint fathers of modern English poetry, then skipped to Surrey. In the second edition of the work the same section was expanded from 17 to 51 pages. Where previously the author had difficulty in spreading out his small stock of knowledge, he now had an embarrassment of riches. The work of Tyrwhitt, Warton, and Ellis had discovered a new America for those who were interested in the topic. Mitford gladly culled from them all, and though he obviously knew nothing of Anglo-Saxon language, he bravely gave as much information of Anglo-Saxon poetry as he could collect. The discussion of Chaucer was much lengthened, thanks to Tyrwhitt. The history of versification was traced backward from Chaucer, ending with the Battle of Brunanburh as the earliest poem cited. Mitford regretted he could not go back so far as Caedmon. It is when we realize the difficulties of men in Mitford's position in 1774 that the full richness of the
work done in the last quarter of the century becomes apparent. Before that time a man whose work required some knowledge of early English literature had to go to original sources for any thorough information. After that, though a full history of early English literature was yet to come, the many anthologies and dissertations on the subject provided ample material for all but the specialist in the field.

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In Scotland the movement took on additional vigour as the century closed. Scottish popular ballads and early poets had almost all been presented to the public in new editions, but no general history of Scottish literature had been written. Warton, whose History of English Poetry included some Scottish material, felt the lack when he wrote:

"... a well executed history of Scotch poetry from the thirteenth century, would be a valuable accession to the general literary history of Britain. The subject is pregnant with much curious and instructive information, is highly deserving of a minute and regular research, has never yet been uniformly
examined in its full extent, and the materials are both accessible and ample. Even the bare lives of the vernacular poets of Scotland have never yet been written with tolerable care; and at present are only known from the meagre outlines of Dempster and Mackenzie."

Pinkerton, in his Ancient Scottish Poems, had given a chronological list of the Scottish poets with comments on their work, and there were several scattered dissertations on parts of the subject, but there was nothing in Scottish literature to correspond with Warton's work.

The first man to take Warton's hint and attempt an extended comprehensive history of Scottish poetry was Alexander Campbell, who published in 1798 An Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland ... consisting of 374 large quarto pages. Despite the richness of the early Scots poetry and the numerous modern editions of the old poets, Campbell gave only twenty pages to the Scottish poets before the seventeenth century. Campbell acknowledged in his preface that the history was written more or less in response to Warton's suggestion, and continued:

"The truth of these remarks the author of the following essays has endeavoured to illustrate. Yet, Scottish poetry forms but a part of his plan; for he has extended his range to the subject of metrical composition in general

(Warton: History of English Poetry. II.334-5
Campbell: An Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland from the beginning of the thirteenth Century down to the Present Time; together with a conversation on Scottish Song, ... To which are subjoined Songs of the Lowlands of Scotland, Carefully compared with the original editions ... Edinburgh, 1798)
as found north of the Tweed; and happy, in having performed the part of a faithful and diligent, if not a skilful pioneer, he relinquishes the field to anyone who may be inclined to follow his footsteps."

Had Ritson written his introduction to *Scottish Songs* a few years later, he would have undoubtedly included Campbell as one of the forgers and imposters who he thought had disgraced the name of Scotland. The work was completely useless from beginning to end. Campbell's brief and non-informing remarks on the earlier poets were even less complete than those in the *List of Scotish Poets* prefixed to Pinkerton's *Ancient Scotish Poems* twelve years before, while his deviations from Pinkerton were almost invariably inaccurate and misleading. The opening chapter of the book, *A Conversation of Scotish Song*, resolved itself into a defense of the authenticity of *Ossian* by strange and ludicrous reasoning. It is perhaps well that only ninety copies of this heavy book were printed. There was no call for another edition; in fact, as late as 1807, Campbell wrote to Constable entreat- ing him to exert his talents and influence in disposing of "the few remaining copies of that daft book, as you call my history of poetry." 

The particular tone of sadistic venom that charac-
terized the reviews of Pinkerton was very much in evidence

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This was done so that Campbell might include a discussion of *Ossian*.

(2) Constable and his Literary Correspondents. II.237
when the Critical Review noticed Campbell's work.
Undoubtedly the history was worthless, but Pinkerton's review, if we may assume it was Pinkerton's, was merciless. Campbell's substance, style, and grammar were lashed and exposed for eight pages. If a man could be snuffed out by an article, the article was at hand. The Monthly Review condemned the work as dull, and at such a late date in the revival could say that such songs as Campbell included might be amusing "in times of little refinement."

There was no cessation in the publication of anthologies and individual works of Scottish authors. The fifteenth century Chronicle of Andrew Wyntoun holds much interest for Scots. So far it had not been printed in a modern edition, although Pinkerton had at one time proposed editing it. After Pinkerton lost interest Lord Buchan suggested the task to David Macpherson, a friend and correspondent of Ritson, George Chalmers, and Constable. It was George Chalmers, however, who induced him to complete and publish the edition by promising to stand for

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8 Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I.248 ff.
9 National Library of Scotland. MS. 337
any loss; the work might incur.

De Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland, be Androw of Wyntoun\(^6\) was published in two volumes in 1795. Wyntoun, whose work was probably written about 1420-24, had, with the thoroughness of the early historians, begun his Chronicle with the creation. Macpherson omitted all the earlier Asiatic, Greek, and Roman history, except for such notices of Scotland or Britain which they contained, shortening the work thereby by about one-third. The rest of the Chronicle he edited faithfully from the various extant manuscripts. He had direct access to the Royal, the Cotton, and the Harleian manuscripts in the British Museum, and through a friend he obtained readings from two manuscripts in the Advocates' Library. The basis of his text was the Royal manuscript, from which Pinkerton had planned to edit it. Macpherson had the same editorial principles as his friend Ritson, though his task was really a test of scholarship rather than literary integrity. F.J. Amours, the latest editor of the Chronicle said: "Macpherson's edition is worth having, even now, for its accuracy, for its learned notes, and especially for its capital index of subjects." But excellence of editorship was no great

inducement to the buying public, for although only 275 copies were printed, there were still twenty-six unsold and on the editor's hands when he died twenty-one years later.

It is easy to understand how an edition of Wyntoun would be a financial failure. The marvel is not that such a work should fail, but that it could ever be published by private enterprise. It was not until the next century, when the publication of early literature was subsidized by the numerous societies formed for the purpose, that a great deal of material buried in manuscripts could be printed. The fact that such a work as Wyntoun's Cronykił could be published at all in the eighteenth century is due to the high quality of the reading audience. At that time there was no long list of libraries which could be relied on to swell the sales of any learned work. Publications of early literature had to rely for their success on the general reading public, made up for the most part of men interested in all kinds of knowledge, particularly if it was a little out of the way. It was natural, however, that under this system many reprints of early literature which had no popular interest should

(6) ibid. p. xlv
receive little support.

A publication of a different sort from the Wyntoun, an edition of Blind Harry's *Wallace*, translated into modern English, also failed for want of subscribers. The work was done by Anthony Macmillan, and the first volume of what was intended to be a four volume edition was published in 1799, containing a preface and the first book of the poem, which the editor had divided into eighteen books. The preface intimated that as soon as a sufficient number of people subscribed, the whole work would be published. No more volumes ever appeared.

Scotland, however, had a publisher who was willing to let his patriotism outweigh his otherwise keen business sense. Archibald Constable, ever faithful to his enthusiasm for the preservation of ancient literature of Scotland, had, under the instigation of George Paton, become interested in an ancient Scottish manuscript, the diary of Robert Binbel from 1532 until 1605, and wished to

(\*) *Wallace*, a Poem, in Eleven Books; Composed About The Year 1361. By Henry, A Blind Bard; And Now Translated into Modern English Poetry from the most Authentic and Correct Edition, by Anthony Macmillan. With a Dissertation on the nature and execution of the Poem; Notes Biographical, Genealogical, Geographical, Explanatory, and Critical; also Full Arguments to the different Books, now more equally divided into Eighteen; and an Appendix to each Book of authorities in Confirmation, with a translation, of such as are in Latin. In Four Volumes. Vol. I. Edinburgh, 1799.
publish it, together with other Scottish tracts. About this time, 1796, Constable became acquainted with John Graham Dalyell, later curator of the Advocates' Library, and commissioned him to edit the work, which was published in 1798 under the title *Fragments of Scottish History*. Dalyell published several manuscripts through Constable, mostly editions of rare manuscripts relating to Scottish history, with which Dalyell came in contact through his work in the Advocates' Library. The only work of his which need concern us was his *Scottish Poems of the Sixteenth Century*. (Edinburgh, 1801. 2 vols.)

Instead of notes, Dalyell included dissertations to supply the historical background of the poems he published. There was much criticism of the freely expressed opinions in these dissertations, for they attacked religion

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(1) Constable and his Literary Correspondents. I. 26
(2) The work contained:
   I. Desultory Reflections on the state of Ancient Scotland;
   II. Diary of Robert Birrel, from 1532 until 1605;
   III. Expedition into Scotland by the Earl of Hertford, 1544;
   IV. Expedition into Scotland by the Duke of Somerset, 1547.
(3) They were: Cursory Remarks on ane Booke of Godly and Spirituall Songs, for avoyding of Sinne and Harlotrie;
   II. Some Incidents in the Life of James Earl of Murray, Regent of Scotland;
   III. Biographical Sketches of Sir William Kircaldy of Grange, Governor of Edinburgh Castle;
and Mary Stuart, Scotland's two enthusiasms. Writing to Constable in 1801, Ritson, though no Scot, expressed his opinion of the work with characteristic vigour:

"I am sorry to say that I have looked over (for it is impossible that anyone should read) your publication of Scottish Poems of the Sixteenth Century with astonishment and disgust. To rake up the false, scandalous, and despicable libels against the most beautiful, amiable, and accomplished princess that ever existed, whose injurious treatment, misfortunes, persecution, imprisonment and barbarous murder, will be a lasting blot on the national character to the end of time, and which were, as they deserved, apparently devoted to everlasting oblivion and contempt, to stuff an almost entire volume with the uninteresting lives of such scoundrels as regent Murray and the Laird of Grange, to publish in short, such vile, stupid, and infamous stuff, which few can read, and none can approve, is a lamentable proof of a total want of taste and judgement, a disgrace to Scottish literature, degrades the reputation of the editor, and discredits your own. I must be free to tell you that I will not suffer such an infamous and detestable heap of trash to pollute and infect my shelves ..."

George Chalmers, also writing to Constable, on February 12, 1802, referred to D'Allyell's collection as "scandalous libels on Mary Stuart, which might have remained in obscurity wherein their demerit had consigned them." Despite the fact that Chalmers and Ritson had spent their lives in antiquarian pursuits, it is evident that not everything...
that was old could please them. Dalyell, once described as a "cankered carle, but not false hearted", but whose chief characteristic was a sublime conceit, highly resented the criticism the book had provoked. In a letter to Constable October 27, 1801, he attributed the objections to the "grossest ignorance or intentional perversion." He prided himself on his connections with noble families and declared: "I am a gentleman, and I will be treated as such; and if any person presumes to pervert my meaning in any way whatever, if his rank is not equal to mine, I will kick him; and if it is equal, I will shoot him." Dalyell was also very proud of his scholarship, and apprehensive of anyone who threatened to poach on his domains. In a letter dated October 3, 1801, he wrote: "I had a letter from him [Walter Scott] containing some hints concerning several of the unexplained words in the Scottish Poems, but I perceive that my friends are more easily satisfied with interpretations than I myself ... You need be under no apprehension of Mr. S. anticipating us, as his collection [Border Minstrelsy], as far as I can learn is very heterogeneous. Besides, he has examined nothing but the common histories for notes."

(1) Constable and his Literary Correspondents. I.481
(2) ibid. I.483
(3) ibid. I.483-4
Dalyell said in his preface that he consulted over 700 volumes of manuscripts in search of material for his collection. His picking was very slender, for from the 700 he selected but eight poems, which form less than one fourth of the work, and are placed in the last half of the second volume. The first part of this volume and the last of the first volume was devoted to reprinting *Ane Compendious Booke of Godly and Spirituall Songs*, collectit out of Sundrie partes of the Scripture; with sundrie of other Ballates changed out of Prophaine Songs, for avoyding of Sinne and Harlotrie; with augmentation of sundrie Gude and Godly Ballates, transcribed from George Paton's copy.

Thirty-five years previously Lord Hailes had made a selection from this book. Dalyell said that "it would be too hardy to make a selection" after so eminent an antiquarian as Hailes had made his choice, so he printed the collection entire.

The beginning of the first volume was given over to Dalyell's preliminary dissertations.

They were: Ane Tragedie in forme of ane diallog, betwixt Honour, Gude Fame, and the Author heirof, in ane trance, 1570; The Lamentation of Lady Scotland, compylit be hirself, speaking in maner of and epistle, 1572; The Testament and Tragedie of umquhile King Henry Stewart of Gude Memorie, 1567; Ane Declaration of the Lordis just Quarrell, 1567; Ballat, 1571; The Sege of the Castle of Edinburgh, 1573; The Legend of the Bishop of St. Andrews Lyfe, aallit Mr. Patrick Adamsone alias Consteans; The Battel of Bal-rinnes, fought in betwixt Archibald Earll of Argyll, against Francis Earll or Erroll, and George Earll of Huntlie, in anno 1594.

\(^1\) Cf. p. 122

\(^2\) Cf. p. 122
James Sibbald merits discussion here both for his own work and for his indirect influence on Sir Walter Scott. In 1779 he came to Edinburgh from his home in Roxburghshire and the following year purchased from Mrs. Yair the circulating library which her husband had purchased from Allan Ramsay, the first of its kind in Scotland. Sibbald did not confine his activities to this library but also became a bookseller and publisher. He was a friend of Burns, and in the Edinburgh Magazine for October, 1786, he wrote the first serious review of the new poet. The circulating library built up by Allan Ramsay and continued by Sibbald contained much material for the literary antiquarian. Scott, recalling his early reading and influences, wrote:

"I fastened like a tiger upon every collection of old Songs and romances which chance threw in my way, or which my scrutiny was able to discover on the dusty shelves of James Sibbald's circulating library in the Parliament Square. This collection, now dismantled and dispersed, contained at that time many rare and curious works, seldom found in such a collection. Mr. Sibbald, himself, a man of rough manners but of some taste and judgment, cultivated music and poetry, and in his shop I had a distant view of some literary characters ... here, too, I saw ... Robert Burns." 

Sibbald himself had antiquarian interests. In 1797 he published The Vocal Magazine, a selection of the

(c) Lockhart: Life of Scott. I.48
most esteemed English, Scots, and Irish airs, ancient and modern, adapted for the harpsichord or violin. In 1802 he printed for private circulation fifty copies of Sir David Lindsay's Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estaites. But his most important work, upon which he occupied himself for several years, was his Chronicle of Scottish Poetry in four volumes. The first three volumes of the work contained extracts from the Scottish poets up to James VI., while the fourth volume was devoted to a then valuable and much needed glossary of the Scottish language previous to 1600, containing over 6000 words. The glossary was preceded by a brief essay, Observations on the origin of the terms Picti, Caledonii, and Scotti, in which Sibbald espoused the Goth-Pik school of ethnologists and etymologists, whose high priest was Pinkerton.

Sibbald hoped "to present a more compleat collection of the antient miscellaneous poetry of Scotland than has hitherto appeared; and by arranging it chronologically ... to exhibit the progress of the Scottish language." Longer works he abridged, in order that he might include

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(i) Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estaites, by Sir David Lindsay. Edinburgh, 1802. (Private edition of 50 copies)

"not only all that was valuable in our miscellaneous poetry, but specimens of the larger works ..." Sibbald did very little original work, either in collecting or editing; the Chronicle was merely a super-collection of all the numerous separate editions of Scottish poetry which had been published in the previous half century. The contents of the three volumes of poetry were derived mainly from Lord Hailes' edition from the Bannatyne manuscript and Pinkerton's collection from the Maitland manuscript, as well as from the ever fruitful library of George Paton, obligations which Sibbald freely acknowledged. He also gave credit to other publications of Pinkerton "who has contributed in an eminent degree, to excite a spirit of research into the ancient monuments of Scottish literature; and whose name, as an historian, promises to descend to posterity with those of Hālāes and Robertson."

Except for some poems of Alexander Hume of Polwarth and some additional ones of James VI, Sibbald's anthology contained nothing that was not fairly common property by this time. Where he found these poems of Hume and the others he does not say, but it was probably Paton who put him on their track. The third volume contained

 Chronicle of Scottish Poetry. I.ix
 ibid. I.xiv
a selection of Gude and Godly Ballates, this too, undoubtedly taken from George Paton's precious copy, which had already been used twice, once by Lord Hailes in 1765, and once by Dalyell in 1801. Sibbald included a large part of the works of Sir David Lindsay, whose Satyre he published entire this same year in the small private edition of fifty copies. He supposedly printed the text of the Satyre from the Bannatyne manuscript, but according to David Laing, Lindsay's editor, he interpolated "large portions from the old printed text", and altered "the coarse, objectionable words and phrases which unfortunately disfigure this most remarkable production." (1)

Sibbald was neither a faithful nor an able editor; he did not hesitate to alter texts arbitrarily and to abridge poems with no indication that they were not complete. His treatment of the King's Quair was an example of his unreliability. The text was practically unchanged from that of Tytler, except that he omitted 37 of the 197 stanzas. The stanzas he gave were numbered consecutively so as to give the impression that the poem was complete. He remarked in his notes: "This is the first corrected copy ... no small pains have been taken to give

(1) The Poetical Works of Sir David Lyndsay. ed. Laing, 1879 II. 287-289
here a correct edition of this celebrated poem." Skeat, on the other hand, pointed out that although a few of Tytler's errors were corrected, new ones were introduced. Most of Sibbald's notes were taken from Lord Hailes, while his method of "improving" his texts and giving them "here for the first time correct" was usually to take Hailes' text and insert in it Pinkerton's readings from the Maitland manuscript. He was quite content to copy the mistakes of his predecessors, as when he gave Pinkerton's very imperfect text of Squyer Meldrum. He did not scruple to do bits of outright doctoring. Sibbald took the poem How a Merchant did his Wyfe Betray from Ritson's Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry, where Ritson in an introductory note had conjectured it to be of Scottish origin. Scott, in a review of Sibbald's Chronicle, contended that the poem was not Scottish, and that many of the Scotticisms in Sibbald's version were interpolated by Sibbald himself.

In his review Scott pointed out that the Glossary was by far the most valuable part of the work. After criticizing it in some detail, pointing out inaccuracies, he called it "a very important national acquisition. The Chronicle itself contains little that may not be found in the libraries of most antiquarians; but all such libraries

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(1) King's Quair, Ed. Skeat. 1884 (Scottish Text Society) p. xlvi
(2) Edinburgh Review. October, 1803. pp. 178-210
will in the future, be imperfect, without this Glossary."
"The most valuable part" of Sibbald's work was to be completely eclipsed only five years later, when Dr. John Jamieson issued his **Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language**.

The most striking figure in this Edinburgh group which gathered about Scott and Constable was John Leyden. Leyden is one of the most amazing figures in the history of literary scholarship. A rough, graceless boy from Roxburghshire, by dint of untiring energy and a phenomenal acquisitive intelligence he made himself a learned man in philosophy, philology, literature, and the sciences. The friendship and patronage of Dr. Robert Anderson enabled him to begin his literary career by publishing a few poems in the *Edinburgh Magazine*, mostly translations. His friendship with Richard Heber, whom he met in Constable's book shop, gained him an introduction to Walter Scott, and to the other literary figures of Edinburgh. Both he and Scott contributed ballad imitations or translations to "Monk" Lewis's ill-starred *Tales of Wonder*.

In 1801, upon the recommendation of Heber and Dr. Anderson, Constable asked Leyden to edit the *Complaynt of Scotland*. The work had long needed a modern editor. Pinkerton had described it as "the only classic work in old
Scottish prose" and had planned to edit it. Lord Hailes had strongly urged its republication. The task was peculiarly fitted to the powers of Leyden, as it required an extensive knowledge of Scottish history and literature.

Only four copies of the work, all imperfect, were known to exist. George Paton's precious library had one; John McGowan of Edinburgh, a contributor to the Reliques, owned another; the British Museum the third, and the Duke of Roxburgh the fourth. Leyden used the copies of Paton and McGowan as the basis of his edition. The proofs of the text were then sent to Thomas Park in London, who collated it with the British museum copy. The accuracy of Leyden's final text was very high; Dr. Murray used it as the basis for his text when he edited the work for the Scottish Text Society.

The Complaynt itself was a political pamphlet composed in 1549 during the minority of Mary, Queen of Scots. It appealed to all classes to forego enmity and bitterness and unite to attain internal peace, and security against the English. Constable had expected the work to be edited with a short preface, notes, and glossary, but

- Ancient Scotish Poems. I.532
- Pinkerton's Literary Correspondence. I.98
- Ancient Scottish Poems. I.279
- Pack to Anderson. April 9, 1800. National Library of Scotland MS. 22.4.17. f.91
he reckoned without Leyden. Scott wrote later:

"As the tract was of itself of a diffuse and comprehensive nature, touching upon many unconnected topics, both of public policy and private life, as well as treating of the learning, the poetry, the music, and the arts of that early period, it gave Leyden an opportunity of pouring forth such a profusion of antiquarian knowledge in the Preliminary Dissertation, Notes, and Glossary, as one would have thought could hardly have been accumulated during so short a life, dedicated, too, to so many and varied studies. The intimate acquaintance which he displayed with Scottish antiquities of every kind, from manuscript histories and rare chronicles down to the tradition of the peasant, and the rhymes even of the nursery, evince an extent of research, power of arrangement, and facility of recollection which has never been equalled in this department." (1)

In his long 292 page introduction Leyden tried to use internal evidence to prove that Sir David Lyndsay was the author of the tract. It had previously been thought the work of Sir James Inglis or Wedderburn. David Herd, in a short article in the Scots Magazine disputed Leyden’s claims for Lyndsay. Leyden answered Herd and further elaborated his argument in a later number of the same periodical. In the same article he turned his fire on Binkerton, who had released some of his own peculiar brand of venom in an anonymous notice of the work in the Critical

(1) Poems and Ballads by Dr. John Leyden, with a memoir of the Author by Walter Scott, Bart. Kelso, 1875. p.xxxvi.
(2) Scots Magazine, January, 1802.
(3) Scots Magazine, July, 1802.
Review. It was not worth the reply which Leyden gave. A most characteristic sentence in Pinkerton's article ran:

"We suspect that the editor of the Maitland poems [Pinkerton himself] would have followed a different method; but he is, we believe, sufficiently disgusted with the barren field of Scotch history and antiquities, in which the greatest labours have been repaid not only with ingratitude but with calumny."

Pinkerton had reaped what he had sown and it was not to his liking.

Ritson had partially prepared a criticism of Leyden's Complaynt. Despite his friendship with Leyden he laid the groundwork for a truly Ritsonian article, but it was never completed and published. A first draft with several detached notes is preserved in the British Museum. On stray scraps of paper he noted specific points brought out by Leyden, doubting references and questioning conclusions. But Leyden was spared. The essay was never finished and published.

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1 Critical Review. May, 1802.
2 The date of the criticism is unknown. It may have been after Ritson and Leyden had quarrelled, which was some time late in 1802 or early in 1803.
3 British Museum Add. Mss. 10285
After 1795 there had been an abrupt break in Ritson's editorial labours. His physical and mental health now rapidly deteriorated. A brief but stimulating friendship with Sir Walter Scott, begun late in 1800, when Scott asked Ritson for help on his *Border Minstrelsy*, probably helped revive his failing powers. In 1802, as a brief flash before his final complete madness and death the following year, came his last three publications which were issued during his life. An *Essay on the Abstinence from Animal Food as a Moral Duty* does not concern us here. The other two works, *Bibliographia Poetica* and *Ancient English Metrical Romancees* were published simultaneously. In both publications he was largely indebted to the help of other men.

The *Bibliographia Poetica* was intended to record every poetical writer in English, excluding dramatists, until the close of the sixteenth century. The work was divided into five separate alphabets, for the five centuries beginning with the twelfth. There were brief discussions of most of the authors, but the book was intended to be primarily a work of reference, and was consequently mostly a record of facts: the name of the author, dates, bald facts of his

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life, and his works. In this ambitious plan Ritson had the assistance of Thomas Park and Francis Douce, two men whose erudition was certainly equal to his own. The idea of the volume, as Ritson stated in his preface, came to him in a conversation with Steevens, the Shakespearean editor. Thomas Park had sent Steevens a list of initials which he had found in Elizabethan poetical miscellanies. Ritson went to work on them, and was obliged to do so much original research that he determined to compile some sort of a dictionary of early English poets. Park was called in for further assistance before the book was far in progress. According to Park's own account of his connection with the Bibliographia Poetica, Ritson sent him in 1800 "my very imperfect manuscript of English Poets: you cannot possibly treat it with too much severity." After Park had returned the manuscript with his addenda, Ritson wrote him on November 10, 1800 in fulsome praise and gratitude for his work, saying that Park had "given it a value and importance to which it otherwise could have no sort of pretensions." Park noted further: "The MS. with such additions as were them

(1) Thomas Park (1759-1834), antiquarian and bibliographer, was the owner of a valuable library of old English poetry. The article in the D.N.B. says that he was described as the best informed student of his time "in our old poetical literature and biography". In the field of ancient poetry he edited the 5th edition of the Reliques (1812) and Ritson's English Songs (1813)

(2) Haselwood: Joseph Ritson. p26
made, went into the amicable hands, and passed under the
careful and corrective eye of Mr. Douce who added ... about
as much to the original as I have done." Ritson was equally
delighted with Douce's work, and in the first draft of the
prefatory advertisement, acknowledged the assistance of
both Park and Douce. Shortly afterwards, however, he
quarrelled with Douce, and suppressed his name in the acknowl-
edgement, whereupon Park desired his name also to be omitted.
The extent of the contributions of Park and Douce to the
volume may be inferred from a letter from Park to Dr. Robert
Anderson, written May 31, 1802.

"I have had enough to sicken me of aiding and
abetting authorship. The little you see in
Ritson's "Bibliographia Poetica" with my
initials affixed, will give you a very
inadequate idea of my attempts to serve him.
I believe that I may securely say that one
third of his poetic list was supplied by
myself and Mr. Douce, whom, (disgracefully
to every honest feeling) he has omitted to
name. To his "Bibliotheca Poetica," I had
also contributed whatever was in my power,
and on calling on the ungrateful compiler
last week, I had the insulting experience
of being charged with having made a knavish
alteration." (3)

And there ended the friendship of Park and Ritson.

Ritson had offered to divide with Park the profits
of the sale of the book, an offer which he never fulfilled.

(6) National Library of Scotland MS. 22.4.10. f.115
(6) Nichols: Illustrations. VII.376
he did not even send Park a copy of the book. The final version of the preface contained a veiled acknowledgement to "a very learned and ingenious friend", which was taken to mean Douce. In the text, however, there are several references to Douce and a large number of notes signed "T.P.".

In this work Ritson did in a more exhaustive manner for English Poets what Pinkerton had done for the Scottish poets in his List of Scottish Poets in his Ancient Scotish Poems. It was by no means definitive, and, as usual, the editor's belligerent opinions were scattered throughout. In spite of the combined labours of three such learned men as Ritson, Park, and Douce, a pioneer work of this kind had to have its inaccuracies. These have been given most attention by later critics, but "the man who knew what he knew a hundred years ago is not to be belittled by those who have profited (or not) by nearly four generations of his and others' labours."

Two years before Ritson's Bibliographia another chronological dictionary of English poets had appeared. Edward Phillips's Theatrum Poetarum, first published in

\(^6\)Saintsbury: History of Prosody. p.221
1675, was brought up to date in 1800 with the new knowledge accumulated by the scholars of the later eighteenth century. S. R. Brydges, who edited the new edition did not go back to original sources but took practically all his new material from the work of the antiquaries who had immediately preceded him. Brydges used the older book merely as a nucleus. He restricted his selection to English poets only, and added none to Phillips' list. He changed the original arrangement, which was alphabetical by Christian names, to chronological. At the beginning of each article he quoted what Phillips had said of the poet, usually not more than one or two sentences. The rest of his discussion, sometimes several pages long, he supplied from information recently brought forward, the bulk of it from Warton.

"... of this elegant writer he [the editor] has, so far as possible, used the very words because he knew every alteration would mar their beauty or their propriety." Other men whose work he felt bound to acknowledge included Tanner, Ritson, Pinkerton, Percy, and Dr. Robert Anderson, but his

basis was always Warton. A quarter century before, the addition of so much information to Phillips would have entailed years of laborious research.

Ritson's last publication before his death, Ancient English Metrical Romancees, appeared at the same time as the Bibliographia Poetica. The latter was printed and ready for publication earlier, but was held up pending the completion of the Romancees. George Ellis had the better claim to the making of such a compilation, which had long needed doing, despite the fact that Percy had suggested the task as early as 1765. Ellis had already started to work on it, when, hearing that Ritson had begun a book on the same subject, he not only immediately gave up his own project, but he induced George Nicol to publish Ritson's product, eccentric orthography and all; not quite all, for Nicol refused to print it until several passages that were most scathing in reference to Christianity were deleted.

(1) National Library of Scotland MS. 22.4.10. f.100v.
(2) Ellis edited Specimens of Early English Romances ... in 1805.
(3) Haswellwood: Joseph Ritson. p22
(4) Park wrote to Anderson Nov. 9, 1801: "I am sorry that he [Ritson] ... should have indulged in any splanetic feeling against Mr. Ellis whose conduct in the whole business has been (as I believe it always is) distinguished for liberality and candour and dignified & friendly exertion, even towards Ritson himself, whose romances never were likely to see the light, but for his generous interference, nor would have been undertaken by Nicol but for his immediate application & all this after he had collected materials himself, at a great expense for a similar public, and had abandoned his design with a view to serving his calumniator." (National Library of Scotland MS. 22.4.10. f.99)
Ritson's preliminary dissertation was divided into four sections: On the origin of Romance; On the Saxon and English Language; On Romances; and On Minstrels and Minstrelsy. As in all Ritson's prefatory matter, the essay was used almost wholly as a vehicle for animadversions on his enemies, Percy, Pinkerton, and Warton, who had died thirteen years previously. Every section of the essay bristled with learning, but the running theme of the whole was an attack on the doctrines of other men. In the first section he showed that the beginnings of Romance in the different countries sprang from the different systems of superstitions, "whether pagan or christian" which prevailed in them. The building up of the case for his own theory took little space; most of the section was an insolent refutation of the Warburton-Warton theory of the Arabic origin of Romances, and the Percy theory of their origin in the northern nations. The section On the Saxon and English Language, in which he traced the transition of one language to another, was brief, containing grudging tributes to the learning of Tyrwhitt and Ellis. In the last two sections of the essay he returned to the familiar strain of attack and abuse. The third section, On Romances, was devoted almost wholly to the sins and shortcomings of

 Mentioned in a note to Love's Labour's Lost in his edition of Shakespeare.
Cf. Essay on the Ancient Metrical Romances in the Reliques
Percy, with the same vein continued with only a little less vigour and abuse in the last section, in which Ritson proved once more that the minstrels were of low social and professional status.

It would seem that the practically insane editor realized that here was his last chance to vent his spleen on Percy, Warton, Pinkerton, and his other old enemies. In the Advertisement, ironically enough, Ritson professed to take from Percy the suggestion for the compilation; but in the prefatory dissertation he slashed at the long-suffering Bishop with a virulence that even Ritson had seldom used. Though he was willing to withdraw one of his earlier charges, saying: "The existence and authenticity of this famous MS. ... is no longer to be denied or disputed," he still harped on Percy's editorial shortcomings:

"It is a certain and positive fact, that, in the elegant and refined work it gave occasion to, there is scarcely one single poem, song, or ballad fairly or honestly printed either from the above fragments or other alleged authorities, from the beginning to the end; many pieces also, being inserted as ancient and authentick, which, there is every reason to believe, never existed before its publication. To correct the obvious errors of an illiterate transcriber, to supply irremediable defects, and to make sense of nonsense, are certainly essential duties of an editor of ancient poetry; provided he act with integrity and publicity; but secretly to suppress the

©Ritson: Ancient Engleish Metrical Romancees. I.cix
the original text, and insert his own fabrications for the sake of providing more refine'd entertainment for readers of taste and genius, is no proof of either judgement, candour or integrity."

To give point to his contentions regarding Percy's editorial honesty, Ritson took as an example of Percy's work the text of The Marriage of Sir Gawaine. With his usual diabolical ingenuity in such matters he chose the most vivid way in which Percy's shortcomings could be pointed out. On the left hand pages of the book he printed the folio fragment which Percy had included in the appendix to the fourth edition. On the right hand page he printed the corresponding passage from the 1775 edition. Many of the left hand pages are completely blank, indicating that the text on the right hand page had been inserted in the original by Percy; other left hand pages contain but a few lines, while a comparison of the parallel passages showed that Percy took the utmost liberty with the original, changing whole stanzas outright. Although Ritson had plenty of material for his side of the argument, he seized upon the minutest flaws of Percy's text, flaunting them with the most extravagant language. Thus he pounced upon Percy's explanation that he had made the not too radical alteration of "Live you upo' the border" to "Come ze frae the border" because he was giving the line from memory, saying,

6) Engleish Metrical Romancees, p.cix. For the creed of the opposite camp see the British Critic reviews of Ritson's Scottish Songs and Robin Hood, p.345 and p.356.
"This, however, is an infamous lye; it being much more likely that he himself, who has practised every kind of forgery and imposture changed the line to give it a false air of antiquity."

The romances Ritson included are, Launfal, Ywaine and Gawin, Le bone Florence of Rome, The erle of Tolous, The squyer of lowe degre, The knight of curtesy and the fair lady of Faguell, Lybeaus Disconus, The geste of Kyng Horne, Emare, Sir Orphee, Chronicle of Englend, and The king of Tars and the soudan of Diames. Ellis had printed Launfal in his notes to Way's translation of Le Grand's Fabliaux, but not even his friendliness to Ritson could spare him Ritson's malice. Ritson's version differs from Ellis' only in a few minor points but he could not refrain from pointing out how "mister Ellis hath strangely misconceived this simple passage" and from giving an interpretation "not as mister Ellis says".

The reviews were mild in their praise of Ritson's editing, but unanimous in their condemnation of his attack on Percy; and, of course, it was the attack that attracted by far the most attention. Scott in the Edinburgh Review discussed the history of the publication of the romances and gave high praise to Ritson's editing, but he strongly disapproved of the insults to Percy and defended Percy's editor-

(Edinburgh Review. January, 1806. pp.397-413)
ial policy:

"When we consider, that the Reliques were published at a time when the public taste was far from encouraging the pursuits of the mere antiquary, we wonder not that the learned editor should have been tempted to render his ancient poetry more attractive by his own elegant interpolations."

The Critical Review again had a reactionary article:

"... In this branch of reading, we meet with objects which disgust, with adventures at variance with probability, with language not refined by art, nor polished by correction. It should also be noticed, that the loose manners, and licentious morality, of these rude times hold out examples of almost every kind of vice ... A more correct taste will not be pleased with the language and seldom with the subject; nor will the man accustomed to more elegant works, wander in this thorny path, to catch a brilliant word, or a poetical image ... This work, then, must be confined to the select few to whom alone such studies are pleasing."

In an account of the book in the British Critic some paragraphs which Ritson had taken from Percy - about the desirability of the publication of the old romances - were re-quoted as if Ritson had taken them from Ellis. In a subsequent issue there appeared a letter ostensibly from "a friend of the Bishop of Dromore", in reality from Percy himself, giving the true source of the quotation and attempt-

Critical Review. October, 1803. p.179-87
This account was written by Nares after he had failed to induce Percy himself to use the British Critic as the medium for a Reply to Ritson. (Nichols: Illustrations. VII.600-07.
British Critic, September, 1804. pp.231-43
Nichols: Illustrations. VII.605
ing a timid refutation of one or two of Ritson's wildest charges. In September, 1803, a year after the publication of the two works Ritson died in a fit of insanity. There were few who mourned.

After his death Ritson left several works more or less ready for publication. Some were published during the early part of the nineteenth century, mostly edited by his faithful nephew, Joseph Frank. Others have never been published and still remain in manuscript, scattered among various libraries. The works published after his death appeared too late for our notice. They included, The Caledonian Muse: a chronological Selection of Scotish Poetry from the earliest times (1821); The Life of King Arthur, from Ancient Historians and Authentic Documents (1825); Fairy Tales, Now first collected (1831); and two ethnological works, Memoirs of the Celts or Gauls (1827), and Annals of the Caledonians, Picts, and Scots (1828) in which he refuted Pinkerton's extravagant anti-Celt assertions. The works still in manuscript include, among non-antiquarian material, Select Scotish Poems, Scotish Ballads, and Bibliographia Scotica; Anecdotes Biographical and Literary of Scotish Writers, Historians and Poets, from the earliest accounts to the nineteenth century. Ritson's was a full and productive career, the value and effect of which will
be taken up in the next chapter. His antiquarian work was an avocation in a busy life. The quantity of his twenty years of editorial labour is amazing, for his collections, unlike those of Evans, Caw, or the Morisons, were not thrown together from readily available materials; he was at great pains to discover accurate texts and to append learned notes to every poem he printed. In quantity his work exceeded that of any other literary antiquary of the time, while his collections achieved greater permanent worth than any others between the work of Percy and that of Scott.
Conclusion
The early eighteenth century collections of ballads appealed frankly to the reader who could stand and relish a lusty masculine obscenity. Consequently, ballad collections and the enjoyment of ballads carried with them a connotation of vulgarity. Although technically a distinction was drawn between the popular historical ballad and the equally anonymous unsavoury street ditty, in practice the two were usually confused, until the more scientifically planned collections later in the century had made the distinction vivid. In spite of Addison, during the first half of the century the ballad continued to be regarded as the amusement of the kitchen and the stable, outside the interests of the discriminating man of taste. The Reliques did not change this attitude overnight, but Percy, by his associating ballad editing with scholarship, and, more than anything else, by his justification of the early pieces in the Reliques as "curiosities" and illustrations of obsolete manners rather than as literature, gave the ballads a respectability they never could have acquired merely through praise of their literary charms. During the latter third of the century, the popular ballad gradually became a reputable branch of
literature; if its editors were still apologetic, it was more in obedience to a literary convention than from any compulsion on the part of the reading public. Collections like those of Caw and Evans catered to the new interest in ballads that came from a higher social class.

No sooner had the ballad surmounted one disadvantage, than another arose. Early popular literature was not altogether fortunate in its champions. Instead of serenely following the path outlined by the Reliques, with a gradual and painless veering toward more modern ideas of editing, the antiquarian revival in literature became the battleground of acrimonious and sensational disputes. Ritson and Pinkerton, the one by his forgeries, the other by his unbalanced attacks on most of the literary scholars of the day, turned the interest in early popular poetry from the general reader to the scholar or critic, from the poetry itself to critical minutiae often unconnected with the main subject. The reading public enjoyed the ballads, forged or genuine, but as presented by Ritson and Pinkerton, the poems were often smothered by the ostentatious and vindictive scholarship based on them. In the course of the century the ballads had been taken from the vulgar crowd and made the battle field of scholars. By the end of the century, the whole literary and antiquarian movement was ripe for another Percy, a man
with a love of older literature for its own sake, who would rescue the ballad once more and give it back to the public. No sooner had the need arisen than Scott was ready, obedient to the "time-spirit".

The making of the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border can be reviewed briefly; the study of Scott's work in the recovery of the folk song of the border is a well-tilled field. Lockhart and his followers tell us much; the rest was explored by F.J. Child when he was making his monumental ballad collection, and in even more minute detail by Mr. T.F. Henderson in his editions of the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, and by Col. Elliot and Andrew Lang in their controversy over Auld Maitland. Scott's story of himself as a boy of thirteen sitting under a tree devouring the Reliques with such eagerness that he forgot his dinner is often quoted. The fondness he acquired so early for the Reliques never quite left him, and he always defended the purposes and methods of its editor. By 1792 Scott had started to collect ballads for himself, with the idea of publication only vaguely, if at all, in mind. One day toward the end of 1799 he called at the establishment of his old friend John Ballantyne. He had previously been impressed with the excellence of Ballantyne's

© Lockhart: Life of Scott. I. 39-40
© W.F. Elliot: The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads. Edin. 1906
© Andrew Lang: Sir Walter Scott and the Border Minstrelsy, London, 1910
printing and suggested casually, as a help to his friend, that he could assemble enough of his collection of border ballads to "make a neat little volume to sell for four or five shillings". Scott, however, reckoned without his future helpers. When Leyden heard from Ballantyne that Scott proposed but a small volume, he exclaimed, "Dash it! does Mr. Scott mean another thin thing like Goetz of Berlichingen? I have more than that in my head myself: we shall turn out three or four such volumes at least." The redoubtable and tireless Leyden became Scott's chief help for the collection. Inspired by "his friendship for the editor and his own patriotic zeal for the honour of the Scottish borders", Leyden ploughed over difficulties. For the sole purpose of getting a missing fragment of a ballad he one day walked between forty and fifty miles and back again. The efforts of Scott and Leyden were further supplemented by eager help from Hogg, Laidlaw, Ritson, Ellis, and Richard Heber, and in 1802 appeared the first two volumes of the Minstrelsy, to be followed in 1803 by the third volume.

The material for the three volumes was divided into three classes, Historical ballads, Romantic ballads, and Imitations of those compositions by modern authors. "As for

© Lockhart: Life of Scott. II.48
© ibid. II.49
the editorial part of the task", Scott wrote in 1830, "my attempt [was] to imitate the plan and style of Bishop Percy, observing only more strict fidelity concerning my originals." Consequently Scott introduced his material with a long essay, an historical sketch of the wars and feuds that had raged in the border country, particularly during the sixteenth century, and a discussion of the life of the people during those turbulent years. Before almost every piece he included a discursive headnote, which sometimes amounted to a separate short essay. In these notes he was aided by the learning of Leyden, George Ellis, and others. The Minstrelsy contained more unpublished ballads than any collection since David Herd's. Motherwell listed 45 poems as appearing in the Minstrelsy for the first time. Of this number Scott took nine from David Herd's manuscript, which had been freely loaned by the unselfish collector. Others he or his helpers secured in their "raids", or took down from the famous Mrs. Brown.

Scott said that he planned to observe stricter fidelity to his originals than Percy had done. In his introductory essay to the Minstrelsy he wrote:

"No liberties have been taken, either with the recited or written copies of these ballads, farther than that, where they disagreed, which

©Minstrelsy. ed. Henderson, 1902. IV.52
©Motherwell: Minstrelsy: Ancient and Modern, 1827. p.lxxix
©Hecht: Songs from David Herd's MS. p.60-61
©Minstrelsy. ed. Henderson, 1902. I.167-68
is by no means unusual, the editor, in justice to the author, has uniformly preserved what seemed to him the best and most poetical reading of the passage. ... Some arrangement was also occasionally necessary to recover the rhyme, which was often, by ignorance of the reciters, transposed or thrown into the middle of the line. With these freedoms, which were essentially necessary to remove obvious corruptions and fit the ballads for the press, the editor presents them to the public, under the complete assurance that they carry with them the most indisputable marks of their authenticity."

The literary detective work of Child and Mr. Henderson has shown that Scott was not so faithful to his texts as his statement implied. The "conjectural emendations" which he acknowledged supplying to several of the pieces often amounted to whole lines and even stanzas, as well as including almost innumerable minor textual changes. Between the wholesale alteration that marked the work of Percy and the scrupulous accuracy of Ritson, Scott steered a middle path, although it must be acknowledged that he veered closer to the policy of the Bishop. In all his comparisons between Percy and Ritson, Scott was benevolently just to both sides, but it is evident that his sympathies lay more with Percy. Although he admitted that Percy was too free in his tampering with the old texts, he always defended Percy on the grounds that such treatment was excusable at the time when the Reliques was published. (2)

© Cf. Minstrelsy, ed. Henderson, i.28-42; Review of Ellis' Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances, Prose Works 1835. XVII, 16-55; and Essay on Romance. XIXXX Prose Works, @Cf. p.429-5
He gave Ritson's learning and textual ideals, but could not agree that an obviously corrupt text should be faithfully transmitted with all its blunders, when they could easily be mended by a skilful hand, "as if a poem was not more likely to be deteriorated than improved by passing through the mouths of many reciters."

Scott's point of view is easy to understand. For his age, it was most sensible, if only he had given his originals. That his editorial practice was much freer than his editorial precepts must be laid first of all to the fact that Scott, like Percy, was a poet, and the temptation to substitute a vigorous colourful word or phrase for an awkwardness which might well be a late corruption of the text was irresistible. And few critics would say that the old ballads were not improved by the touches of the editor.

While the work was in progress, he wrote to Dr. Currie:

"It is however my intention to produce my authorities in as many cases as possible although doubtless as [in] the course of ten & more years I have been a ballad collector, some facts may have escaped my recollection. I mention all this because having been guilty of the sin of rhyming & being therefore a suspicious person I have no doubt that many people will be ready enough to suppose that I have interpolated my originals - an accusation which whenever it may be made, will I do [MS. torn here] be totally unmerited."\(^5\)

\(^5\)Minstrelsy. I.26
\(^6\)Scott: Letters, ed. Grierson. I.120
Probably Scott himself did not realize the extent of his manipulations and thought his acknowledgements sufficient. Years after, in a letter to Motherwell he expressed his regret for his method of selecting the most poetical of the different versions:

"In fact I think I did wrong myself in endeavouring to make the best possible set out of several copies obtained from different quarters, and that, in many respects, if I improved the poetry, I spoiled the simplicity of the old song."

He went on to say that it would have been better to have taken but one version and stuck to it. He seemed unaware that the version most frequently substituted was his own.

Fewer higher tributes can be paid to Scott's genius for friendship, his courtesy and magnificent personal charm than to cite the fact that Joseph Ritson, the bane of all previous ballad editors, was so disarmed by Scott's friendly hospitality that he not only changed his life-long contempt for the Scots as a race to a warm admiration, but he put his learning at the disposal of Scott, and, miracle of miracles, when the Minstrelsy appeared, he greeted it with an almost affectionate admiration. In April, 1801 Park wrote to Dr.


"He (Ritson) was delighted with Dr. Anderson, while the wonderful acquirements of Dr. Leyden and Mr. Scott enforced high commendation. In short, the Scotch as a nation, were men of genius and whoever would wish to be hospitably received in a land of strangers must visit Scotland." Park to Anderson, Nov. 9, 1801. National Library of Scotland Ms. 22.4.17. f. 99
Anderson:

"I dined with Ritson and George Nicols, and if the o'dd saw is to be trusted - in vino veritas - you and Leyden and Walter Scott may assure yourselves of the veritable good opinion of that redoubtable critic - for he warmly, and vehemently and volubly asseverated that no such men for genius, ardour, eloquence, and information existed in the land of beef & potatoes!!"

When Ritson received his copy of the Minstrelsy, he wrote of it to Scott as "the most curious and valuable literary treasure I possess. I mean, however to be very chary of it, and by only perusing a single poem, or ballad at a time, extend my gratification, which will be exquisite, to the most distant period. Everything is excellent throughout, both in verse and prose ..."

Ritson not only aided and abetted the Minstrelsy; it was evidently he who first steered Scott and Leyden to Sir Tristrem. He discovered the Romance among the Auchinleck manuscripts in the Advocates' Library, and was the first to advance the theory, that Scott later embraced so eagerly, that Sir Tristrem was the work of Thomas of Ercildon. In June, 1801 after his visit to Scott at Lasswade, Ritson wrote:

"The Romance of Sir Tristrem, if admitted to be the production of Thomas of Ercildon, I may well enough be said to have discovered,

(1) Park to Anderson. April 20, 1801. National Library of Scotland MS. 22.4.17. f.178
(2) Ritson: Letters. II.223
(3) Ellis: Specimens, 1861. III.409
as I know none who had anticipated my conjecture, though I have not been permitted to announce that discovery myself."

Ritson continued the letter by detailing his reasons for thinking it the work of Thomas, and concluded:

"I understand, however, that some gentlemen, at Edinburgh, have transcribed the entire poem for the purpose of publication, which I should, in fact, have done myself, tho' without the like advantages, had it not been mutilated and imperfect ..."

"The "gentlemen" were Scott and Leyden. Leyden transcribed the text of the manuscript, and helped Scott in the preparation of notes. It was first intended that the Romance be included in the Minstrelsy, but as the notes, constantly augmented by information from Ellis, Douce, and William Owen (Pugh), became more and more bulky, it was successively omitted from the first two volumes and the third, and finally, with a conclusion added by Scott, printed by itself in 1804.

Whether Scott would have continued to be immune from deadly Ritsonian criticism seems doubtful. In spite of Ritson's expressions of good will and friendship, Scott was nervously fearful that this most uncharacteristic attitude would suddenly cease. He wrote to Ellis: "As for Mr. Ritson,
he and I still continue on decent terms; and in truth he makes patte de velours; but I dread I shall see 'a whisker first' and then a claw, stretched out against my unfortunate lucubrations." Almost a year and a half elapsed between the publication of the first volume of the Minstrelsy and Ritson's death, but not so much as a whisker appeared. It is one of the minor miracles of literary history that Ritson accepted without a murmur what, according to his principles, he should have regarded as a deadly sin. His ever alert suspicions had for once been lulled. Scott was able to do right under Ritson's nose, almost with his collaboration, what Pinkerton and Percy had not been able to do even with their originals beyond Ritson's reach. The watchdog of the ballads had howled at Percy the more venomously as the Bishop farther and farther from the scene of his crimes; the guilty Pinkerton he drove to confession; Warton was silenced with one snarl of rage. Scott walked into the holy of holies, and unafraid patted the watchdog on the head, using him as a friendly guide while he plucked and trimmed what he wished. Ritson was hypnotized by the newcomer; it could not have lasted. Ritson would not allow friendship to curb his zeal for what he regarded as truth. Thomas Park, who had long been friendly with him, was assailed for making a "knavish alteration" in one note. Ellis,

6) Lockhart: Life of Scott. II.87
also his friend, was scornfully reproached in Ritson's last work. Ritson's death alone spared Scott.

The relations between Scott and Percy, though slight, were most happy and cordial. Anderson's statement of the slight ill-feeling on the part of Scott and his friends toward Percy should be discounted. Scott himself was incapable of any petty jealousy of the man who had inspired him in his youth, while the aged Percy benevolently gave his blessing to his successor. Percy welcomed the Minstrelsy, and later urged Anderson to induce Scott to visit Dromore. The two great leaders never met, but each recognized the bond between them. Scott always acknowledged his debt to Percy; and in 1806 the 80 year old prelate showed his genuine desire to help the fortunes of his successor: "I should be extremely glad to contribute to any researches of Mr. Walter Scott, whose Taste and Genius and Literary Pursuits entitle him to universal acknowledgement and assistance."

Despite the 37 years between the Minstrelsy and the Reliques, years full of events connected with the revival of ballads, the two collections were remarkably parallel. Both works were designed primarily for the general reader, and

Nichols: Illustrations. VII.155
Percy to Anderson. June 3, 1802. National Library of Scotland MS. 22.4.10
Percy to Anderson. May 19, 1806. National Library of Scotland MS. 22.4.10
thereby gained their popularity. Percy rescued the ballads from one group; Scott, from another. Each editor presented his material with readable notes and introductions, enabling the reader to enjoy the ballads with an intelligent understanding and a critical appreciation of their value. Both Scott and Percy thought it well to compromise with the taste of the times by including modern imitations of the old form, and by "amending" most of the genuine old pieces. Percy was the greater sinner in supplementing older poetry with his own, but Scott had less reason to fear the presentation of unadulterated texts. Like Percy, Scott was greatly aided in gathering material and in the editorial work by a large corps of helpers; where Percy had Shenstone, Hailes, Farmer, and Warton, Scott had Leyden, Ellis, Laidlaw, and Hogg. The helpers of neither editor discouraged him in his policy of perfecting texts by "conjecture". Both Percy and Scott were poets, to whom the temptation to wipe out obvious flaws in the ballads was almost irresistible, particularly since both were steeped in ballad lore. Both men feared Ritson's attack on their alterations; the one because the blow fell, the other because of the possibility of its coming.

The general plan and execution of the two works was similar. More important than the obvious parallels in
form and editorial processes, however, was the similarity in effect. With the obvious exception of Ritson, the editors of older poetry in the later part of the eighteenth century recognized Percy as their guide and leader; the Reliques had been the initial impulse which pointed the way for subsequent collections, and, in addition, prepared the public to receive them. When the later editors became bogged in controversy Scott rescued the older poetry just as Percy had saved it from the unsavoury catchpenny collections. After Scott came a second group of ballad editors, Finlay, Motherwell, Laing, Sharpe, and Jamieson, to mention but a few - who acknowledged Scott as their head. The difference in the number and immediate succession of the followers illustrates the change in literary temper which had taken place. During the first fifteen years after the Reliques was published only David Herd, Lord Hailes, and Thomas Evans followed Percy's lead; in the fifteen years following the Minstrelsy dozens of editions of older poetry appeared. The later years of the century had softened the prejudice against early literature, and only the genius of Scott was needed to stimulate its recovery once more, and so to incorporate it in creative literature that it became forever a permanent literary heritage.
Scott was as bold and vigorous as Percy had been timid, but in the generation that separated the two men, the influence of the Reliques and its imitators had given any coming ballad editor a surer touch of his material and a more receptive public. As Robert Jamieson said, the Reliques had "endeared to the most refined readers a kind of study which was before supposed to have no charms, but for nurses and old women." Ritson, Pinkerton, and the other collectors of the intervening generation, consciously or unconsciously, were all the disciples of Percy. Whether or not they derived from Percy their own taste for older poetry, they certainly owed to him the changing popular taste which led the book-buying public to purchase their various publications. The Reliques was the dominating example of its kind during the eighteenth century. It stood the test of four editions in thirty years, and was never displaced by any other publication as the chief stimulus to research in early poetry. It did not change conventional literary thought overnight, but it continued to serve as a rallying point for the men who were pointing English literature towards the full tide of Romanticism. The critics of the periodicals were inconsistent and wavering in their attitude towards the new-old literature;

(c) Jamieson: Popular Ballads and Songs. 1806. I.xv
even at the turn of the century it was by no means generally granted a right to exist. The Reliques was the one publication which was accepted by all parties, except Ritson, of course; its continued popularity, even when its imitators were enjoying drab fortune, served as a constant stimulus.

The standards of Ritson were stricter than those of Percy, but he could better afford to have them so. Percy was a trail-blazer, and it was well for Scott, well for Wordsworth and Coleridge, that he was, above everything else, a man of his age. One of his most revealing remarks came late in life, in a letter to Robert Jamieson, who had asked if he might consult the famous folio manuscript. Percy replied that he could not oblige, but sent a copy of the song Jamieson most desired, adding, "By it you will see the defective and incorrect state of the old text in the ancient folio MS. and the irresistible demand on the editor of the Reliques to attempt some of those conjectural emendations which have been blamed by one or two rigid critics, but without which the collection would not have deserved a moment's attention." Whether or not it would have deserved a moment's attention, Scott and Jamieson both agreed with Percy that it would not have received much more. As the movement towards Romanticism

Percy to Jamieson, April 4, 1801. In Nichols: Illustrations. VIII.341
grew in strength, the demand that early poetry be brought in line with the refinement of the eighteenth century was, of course, lessened, and Ritson, publishing his collections twenty-five years later, could afford a much more sensitive editorial conscience and greater fidelity to his originals than Percy, who was faced with the original task of popularizing these inelegant productions in an elegant age. Percy's use of his materials was unquestionably too free, particularly since he suppressed his originals, zealously guarding the manuscript from an alien eye. It is unfortunate that except for the alterations in the 1794 edition of the Reliques, which he attributed to his nephew, Percy should have persisted in his course even after the need for it had all but vanished, but any action other than sticking to his guns, particularly in the face of such criticism as came from Ritson, would be unthinkable on the part of the sensitive Bishop. Percy, with his obvious failings, offers an all too easy target for abuse. The far-reaching results of his labours may indeed be partly due to the fact that here was one of those rare and happy meetings of the man, the task, and the moment, but to him must go the credit for introducing early poetry to the general reading public of his time, and for inaugurating the remarkable development of research which followed during the succeeding decades.
Although Percy took more liberties with his material than he ever dared to acknowledge, his defense was that he was dealing with material for which there could be no fixed and accurate text. He might have upheld the motives of Ritson's attempt to bring about a better order of things in textual criticism, if Ritson had confined his attacks to the editors of Shakespeare. But for the ballad there could be no original author's text, and the earliest printed version might be less happy in phrasing, and even in fidelity to the misty original that it would be after the skilful use of "conjectural emendations". Ritson himself almost admitted as much. A communication to the Gentleman's Magazine pointed out some inconsistencies in one of the drinking songs in his 1783 collection, such as attributing the quality of chillness to the Sirocco, and having it blow in winter. Ritson replied the following month, summing up his views with: "Your correspondent's criticisms may, nevertheless, for anything I know, or indeed care, be perfectly just; but they concern the author of the song and not [me]." In other words, fidelity to one version, the oldest version, despite its obvious errors, was the sine qua non of a respectable editorial conscience. It is fortunate for the larger movement that Percy had not such...

© Gentleman's Magazine. November, 1791. p.1017
© ibid. December, 1791. p.1079
strict scruples, though it is harder to excuse his suppression of the originals. Scott, with all his veneration for the old songs, could not agree with Ritson that the best service to them was to prefer poorer readings merely because they might be more authentic, and to execrate all who would "restore" them. "There is no small degree of cant", Scott wrote, "in the invectives with which imposters of this nature have been assailed. In fact, the case of each is special, and ought to be separately considered, according to its own circumstances."

Ritson was spared many of the temptations of Percy and Scott because he very obviously had nothing of the poet in him. Had he wished to repeat Percy's tactics and fill out defective texts, he would have been unable. It was therefore easier for him to insist on the faithful transcription of originals. His obvious function in his age was to impress other editors with his own editorial scruples. His method was vigorous, but its effectiveness is questionable. Other collectors following in the wake of the popularity of the Reliques reprinted Percy's versions, unabashed by Ritson's condemnation; neither Sibbald nor the Morisons heeded his strictures; and Scott, with whom Ritson had opportunity for personal conversion, blandly followed the old editorial path
rather than the new. The effect of Ritson's pictures on the work that was produced in his lifetime was scarcely perceptible. His greatest influence seems to have been in frustration rather than reform. He stopped Pinkerton's forgeries, which is to his credit, but he also stopped Warton from finishing the History of English Poetry. He probably strengthened Percy's episcopal scruples about ballad editing. It is impossible to determine whether other prospective collectors of older poetry were dissuaded from their purpose by the thought of Ritson ready to rip them and their work asunder amid cries of Liar, Swindler, Imposter, Forger, but it seems not unlikely. The ranting schoolmaster found that his bad boys were just as bad, and his good boys made too timid to assert themselves.

Ritson was without breadth of understanding and wide sympathy. He worried the men of his age rather than led them:

"He taught literary men, in some measure, the value of careful research and faithful quotation; in other words, he taught them to speak the truth as they found her ... That (Ritson) ... loved truth must be admitted; but that he loved no one else so much as himself to speak the truth must also be admitted. Nor had he, after all, any grand notions of the goddess. She was, in his sight, rather of diminutive than gigantic growth ... To him, censure was sweeter than praise; and the more elevated the rank, and respectable the character of his antagonist,
the more dexterously he aimed his blows, and the more frequently he renewed his attacks. In consequence, scarcely one beautiful period, one passionate sentiment of the higher order, one elevated thought, or philosophical deduction, mark his numerous writings."

The advocacy of a Ritson might have been precarious to a movement which had a less fundamental change of thought behind it, but during the years of his activity, literary antiquarianism, as one aspect of the greater Romantic movement, grew with resistless power, as more and more its results were absorbed by the increasing volume of Romantic literature.

* * *

© T.F. Dibden: Bibliomania. London, 1811. p.3-10
Viewed in perspective, the revival of early literature in the eighteenth century becomes only one manifestation of a much larger antiquarian movement. The eighteenth century, comfortably established on its plateau of elegance and refinement, turned its eyes back to the past to trace the evolution of its own perfection, and, from a safe distance, to become interested in the life and times of earlier days. The last half of the century brought with it a great surge in the study of history. Hailes, Pinkerton, Robertson, Robert Heron, James Petit Andrews, and others were busy exploring the early past of the British Isles. The historians cooperated with the literary antiquarians and vice versa. In fact, each frequently encroached on the other's domains. Warton's History of English Poetry contains much information of purely historical interest, probably because, as he had to go to the old chronicles for most of his facts, he came across rich mines of untouched material which he could not forbear to include. The historians were frequently compelled to go to early literature as their sources. It was as an historian of Anglo-Saxon times that Sharon Turner uncovered so many almost forgotten pieces of Anglo-Saxon literature.
With the interest in history there went a wave of speculation as to the racial characteristics, life, and manners of the original inhabitants of the islands. Some of the theories were unbelievably fantastic. The druids, and in a different way, the bards, became semi-mythical people about which there was a convenient lack of definite facts. The interrelations of the early European races was a fog of confusion upon which the theorists fell with delight. The druids were, at least in one work, classical Greek scholars. The Norse and Celtic mythologies were often confused. In the Annual Register for 1761 appeared the title Fragments of Celtic Poetry, from Olaus Verelius, a German Writer; literally translated. John Proby's Revenge of Gwendolen (1775) confused the Scandinavian, Celtic, and classical mythologies in a most impressive fashion. Even John Leyden, in a footnote to his Ode on Scottish Scenery and Manners spoke of "the Gaelic legend of the Celtic Ladbrog", and the great Gibbon could speak of the Edda as "the sacred book of the ancient Celts". Mallet's Introduction a l'Histoire de Dannemarck, which gave many men in England, including Gray and Percy, an interest in Norse literature, confused the Celts and the Goths, but Percy in his translation of the work corrected the error.

(6) Annual Register, 1761. p.236
(3) Leyden's Poems. Kelso, 1858. p.291
(4) Miscellaneous Works. III.231
William Stukely in his book *Stonehenge, a Capital temple restor'd to the British Druids* (1740) tried to prove that the Druids came to England with Hercules, who had been converted by Abraham. An equally fantastic theory originated in France, but aroused great interest in England. Jean Sylvain Bailly, the astronomer, published his theories on Atlantis, the gist of which was that the cradle of humanity was near the North Pole, and that the cold had driven the Hyperboreans to a region in the south of Siberia. A second wave of emigrants from the north, the Atlants, invaded the country of the Hyperboreans, whence the latter fled to found the civilizations of India, Greece, and China. L'Abbe Baudeau replied to Bailly the same year and attempted to prove that the Atlants were really the Gauls or Celts and that the arts and sciences originated in Britain, with the druids as teachers. Baudeau's logic can be illustrated by his proof that fire was invented in the Pyrenees - easily and conclusively demonstrated by the work *root pyr*. There was no end to the theories put forth, to the indignant and conclusive letters published in the periodicals, but the question was not settled in that century, nor in the next. In 1932 a party of antiquarians almost came

(1) Lettres sur l'origine des sciences et sur celles des peuples de l'Asie. Londres et Paris, 1777  
Lettres sur l'Atlantide de Platon et sur l'ancienne histoire de l'Asie. Pour servir de suite aux lettres sur l'origine des sciences. Londres et Paris, 1777  
(2) Memoire a consulter pour les anciens Druids gaulois contre M. Bailly, de l'Academie des Sciences. Paris, 1777
to blows in their debates as to the exact purpose of Stonehenge.

The learned societies were encouraging work in antiquarian lore, and it was becoming fashionable to be a bit of an antiquarian. The many works of ethnology, the great interest in medals, coins, monuments, and any material relics of the past, the labours of the country curates and antiquarian societies in topographical antiquities, as well as purely historical works, were all evidences of the wide-spread and fast growing desire for knowledge of earlier ages. Johnson often commended the work of those who were recovering the lost story of ancient Britain. Although, he said, all that we can know is contained in a few pages written by the old writers, and although the rest of the contemporary works on the subject were "all a dream", he did wish "to have one branch well done, and that is the history of manners, of common life." Writing to Boswell in 1773, Johnson recommended him to spend his leisure "upon the antiquities of the feudal establishment" and in conclusion said, "Do not forget a design so worthy of a scholar who studies the laws of his country, and of a gentleman who may naturally be curious to know the condition of his own ancestors." This last sentence shows the attitude

(1) Boswell: Life of Johnson. ed. G.B.Hill. III.333
(2) ibid. II.202
of the layman towards antiquarian pursuits at that time. In an age when there was an aristocracy of culture and learning, it was an accepted avocation for a gentleman to dabble a little in antiquarian research, usually in the shape of encouraging the local clergyman to write a history of the estate and adjoining villages. Again in 1779, Johnson was urging Boswell to occupy himself in historical studies, particularly by inquiring into the old tenures and charters of Scotland. "The knowledge of past times is naturally growing less in all cases not of public record... Do not be tardy nor negligent, but gather up eagerly what can yet be found." In a note to this letter Boswell mentions with evident pride his claims to be an antiquary, chiefly through heredity, and says that he intends to publish a collection made by his father, with some illustrations and additions of his own. This, of course, like his projected History of James IV of Scotland, was never written.

An examination of the articles in the periodical Reviews and the letters to their editors, particularly those appearing in the Gentleman's Magazine, "that truly chaste and respectable repository of erudite and useful information", as the Earl of Buchan called it, reveals that books and articles

© Boswell: Life of Johnson. ed. G.B.Hill. III.414
© Journal of a tour to the Hebrides. August 23, 1773
on antiquarian subjects, which were frequent and popular in the early part of the century, continued to be more absorbing to the readers than war, politics, or theology. Works concerned with local history, coins, or other aspects of antiquarianism were published almost as frequently as commentaries on the classical authors. During the seventies and eighties particularly, to judge from the proportion of articles on various subjects which appeared in the periodicals, the most popular subject with the reading public was topographical antiquarianism, and the controversial discussions connected with that topic. As an example of the popularity of antiquarian subjects I shall list the antiquarian articles and letters which appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine for January and February, 1790, the numbers chosen at random.

January:

p.9. Description and plate of the Priory Hall of St. Bartholomew.

p.11. A remarkable tenure in Cornwall. Taken from Blount's Fragmenta Antiquitatis

p.17. A Saxon door-way

p.23-24 List of London printers in 1628 in four letters of that time.

p.33. Discussion of a prayer book believed to be Mary, Queen of Scots'.

p.40-43 History of Dunkirk

p.55. Review of Hampshire: extracted from the Domesday-Bok by Richard Warner

February:


p.106 Observations on Gough's edition of Camden's Britannia
Discussion of some ancient Welsh and English MSS.

Letter on ancient seal and a psaltery. Plate

Ancient medal. Plate

Ancient tokens

Review of Antiquities of Ireland

The eighteenth century reviewer, representative of the reading audience, usually regarded the revival of early literature as merely incidental to the larger interest in antiquarian studies in general. The universal excuse which the reviewers - and often the editors - gave for collections of older poetry was that they served to illustrate ancient manners and customs. Often when the claims for the literary value of early poetry was regarded as a joke, that same poetry was accepted as valuable, in that it supplied information about the newly interesting past. What disapproval of Percy's editorial methods Ritson succeeded in arousing came from the recognition of the fact that an unacknowledged modern addition to an early poem might give the reader false evidence in ascertaining the antiquity or history of a custom. That tampering with early texts was just as wrong from a purely literary point of view was still an alien idea.

Side by side with the modern texts of early literature and the historical and critical works on the subject
flourished a steady output of creative literature inspired by them. There was a vast amount of material turned out which had some vague connection with the revival, usually in the form of the use of the ballad metre or some variation of the current conception of Middle English. Other material, very scant, sprang from a definite knowledge of early literature together with its history and background. Every branch of contemporary letters made use of the fresh material provided by the newly awakened consciousness of the past. Both the novel and the drama, particularly the ephemeral third-rate work in these fields, turned to the past for new themes, but it was only superficially. The large number of historical plays and novels written during the last thirty years of the century were historical only in the sense that eighteenth century plots and sentiments were transferred bodily to settings placed vaguely in the past. The poets, on the whole, tried to enter more thoroughly into the spirit of early literature, but they were rarely successful until the next generation; the eighteenth century was too much in their blood. An account of all the contemporary works which were coloured by the current interest in the literature of the past would require another thesis. Here I can only cull a few examples of the character of the change brought about
by the works discussed in the previous chapters.

The Norse and Welsh poems of Gray, which we have discussed earlier, were based on actual knowledge of early Scandinavian and Celtic poetry. Gray was among the earliest to use this material, but he started an immensely popular vogue. His followers and imitators were content to use Gray's own Odes, or even more frequently, their own imaginations for authentic colouring in their "Norse" or "Ancient British" or "Runic" pieces. Caractacus, Mason's long dramatic poem which Gray finally licked into shape after much hard work, concerned the life of the early Britons and the Roman conquest. Mason went at his subject with a careless enthusiasm, confounding mythologies and treating ancient rites with an ignorance of historical fact that shocked Gray, and induced him to continue his offers of help, which were never declined. Gray saved the poem from becoming a welter of anacronisms and incongruities but was not able to inject much positive merit into it. Despite the poorness of the poem and the cool reception of the critics, it achieved surprising popularity. Two editions were issued in 1759, and others in 1762, 1764, 1776, and 1777, in addition to the eleven editions of Mason's works published between 1764 and 1811.

The Druids, the Minstrels, and the Hermits were the favourite denizens of the pseudo-ancient poetry. One was
sufficient to give the required touch, but if the poet could work in all three, so much the better. James Beattie's *Minstrel* was based on Percy's *Essay on the Ancient Minstrels*. With some help from Gray, the first half of the poem, written in Spenserian stanzas, was published in 1771. The theme of the poem is simple enough, but it illustrates the cross currents in the literary world of the time. Its design was to trace the progress of a poetical genius, born in a rude illiterate age, until he became a Minstrel. Edwin, the hero, wandered alone in the mountains where he met the inevitable hermit who instructed him in history, philosophy, and — Virgil! The ingenuity of the mixture was not what alienated the critics. Their inflexibility can best be illustrated by the reviewer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* who damned the poem chiefly because it was written in the crude Spenserian stanza, "but our author has been content to recur to the rudiments of our versification, without recurring, as many others have done, to the rudiments of our language." Despite such criticism, the first part of the poem went through four editions before the second part was published in 1774.

The Rev. Richard Hole, who had previously translated *Fingal* into English heroic couplets, published his most ambitious poem *Arthur, or the Northern Enchantment*, *A Poetical Gentleman's Magazine, May, 1771*
Romance in Seven Books, in 1789. His Arthur was not the Arthur of Malory, but, as Hole explained in his preface, "an ideal personage, his achievements groundless and imaginary." Merlin, the great prophet of the Celts, aids Arthur in defeating Hengist, king of the Saxons, who has the northern Parcae, or Weird Sisters, for allies - a strong fare of Celtic mythology derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth and from Macpherson; and northern mythology, based mostly on Mallet. The all-inclusiveness of the work may be judged from the fact that it was "designed as an imitation of the old Metrical Romance, with some of its harsher features softened and modified ... its heroes rather those of Ariosto than of Homer ... Some passages in these tales are, indeed, evidently derived from the classics, but most probably through the medium of Arabian authors." The poem, though mildly praised by the reviewers, was not popular, and there was no call for a second edition.

When Percy published The Hermit of Warkworth in 1771, he, like Mason and Beattie, felt the sting of hostile reviewers. The poem was a long tale designed to glorify the ancient family of Percy. It was written in the ballad stanza, but the diction was polished and the whole theme was soaked in eighteenth century sentiment. The Gentleman's Magazine and the

©Gentleman's Magazine. August, 1771.
Critical Review disapproved of the poem in general terms; the Monthly Review pointed out exactly why it would never do. It deplored "the fashionable but false taste of imitating the venal simplicity of the old ballad poets", and asked pointedly: "What should we think of the temper of those who assert that the original Nut Brown Maid is superior in point of composition to that of Prior?" The reviewer wished, but could not hope, to induce the writer to cease from writing a "species of poetry, the revival of which we cannot but condemn. We give this criticism in support of public taste." Percy was obedient. Despite the fact that the poem had another edition the same year, he published no more of "that species of poetry".

Caractacus, The Minstrel, and The Hermit of Warkworth, poems by three of the leading literary men of the time, illustrate the wisdom of Shenstone's remark that "the taste of the present age is somewhat higher than its genius". As the numerous editions of these poems indicate, the taste of the age craved a flavour which was lacking in the poetry indigenous to the times. What was written to satisfy that longing was third-rate or at best second-rate poetry. The genius who could satisfy the inarticulate demands of the public with great poetry was not to come until the following...

Critical Review. May, 1771
Monthly Review. August, 1771
century, but in the meantime the starved imagination of the age eagerly accepted what crumbs it was offered. The critics, wardens of the status quo, still held back, hostile but powerless. The temper of the age, as embodied in the reading public and in the creative writers, was advancing towards Romanticism far more quickly than was the taste of the minor critics and reviewers.

The public was eager but untrained. As the tide of interest in early poetry rose it gave opportunity for unscrupulous writers to capitalize the general ignorance and forge almost at will, with the example of Macpherson and Chatterton always before them. In 1778 John Clark published at Edinburgh Works of the Caledonian Bards. Translated from the Galic. Vol.1. A second volume never appeared, but the first was reprinted in 1783. It was a bungling forgery, but it was hailed as a silencing blow to the sceptics of Macpherson. The Critical Review rejoiced that the poems were rescued from oblivion, "especially as their strong resemblance to the poems of Ossian would attend additional proof to such as entertain any doubt of the authenticity of those productions."

The critic in the Monthly Review was even more emphatic. He expected the poems to convince the "infidels and disbelievers ... especially in England", and quoted a long letter from a man

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Critical Review. July, 1778
Monthly Review. November, 1778
who purported to know the translator and was willing to touch for him. John Smith's *Galic Antiquities*, Edinburgh, 1780, was a forgery from beginning to end, but it too, was not immediately exposed. The reading public cared little whether it was given genuinely ancient poems or forgeries. What the reader was eager to receive was not the established and correct text of Chaucer, nor the original versions of ballads, but the fascination of strangeness which hung about early literature, and the weird tales of the buried-treasure manner by which old poems were discovered. This they received to some extent in *Ossian* and its imitators, and in the poetry of Percy, Warton, Beattie, Mason, Hole and others, but the chief repository of imitations or outright forgeries of older poetry was the periodicals.

The verse published in the periodicals in the last 35 years of the century was indicative of the underlying power of the movement towards what we now call Romanticism, for it is usually the writers of fugitive poetry, the scrubs and scullions of Parnassus, who first hear the rumblings of a new movement in literature. Great poets and truly original minds can afford to stand aloof from the merely novel, while the minor poets must take advantage of every little fashion and foible of the moment, whether it prove to be a mere
evanescent whim of the first tremblings of a mighty wave of renewed inspiration destined in its maturity to sweep over even the greatest poets. The mere imitator must follow all the meanderings of the stream, while the true thinker can pursue his own course, provided he follows the general direction of human thought. There is probably a moment in the course of every new literary impulse when it is precariously balanced between the glorious immortality of a new and great Movement and the brief day of a temporary craze. To the historian of these important moments it is the fifth rate poet, the fellow with journalistic rather than poetical abilities, who supplies the most significant and most ample material. In attempting to determine the extent of the spirit of antiquarianism in literature during the early days of the movement, a study of the minor poetry, particularly the magazine verse, of the time, gives truer evidence than does the work of more important poets.

As has often been the case in literary history, the work of antiquarian scholars in resuscitating forgotten poetry furnished contemporary poets with new themes and new metres, fresh from centuries of obsolescence. Soon after the publication of the early collections of ballads, a flood of "ancient ballads", "fragments", "runic odes", and "legendary tales" swept before them the Odes to the Nymph Inoculation and Lines to a Petticoat which had previously represented
poetry for the magazine reading public of the day. The many poetasters of the day fell upon the ballad metre with great glee; here was a mold into which any amount of drivel could be poured with the greatest facility and without any requirement of poetic ability. In addition, the "ingenious" poet could claim credit for doing something off the beaten track, for with the use of the ballad stanza or any metre other than the heroic couplet, helped out by the presence of such names as Congal and Fenella, Editha and Ofwy, instead of the conventional Julia and Laura, the poem automatically acquired a touch of the curious and esoteric. But it must be only a touch; there could be no unadulterated fidelity to the style and thought of the poetry of other ages. Side by side with the obvious enjoyment of the public in these imitations, still survived the old objections to literature which was not a restrained copy of "nature". Often an issue of a periodical would contain several ballad imitations or pieces written in pseudo Middle-English while a few pages further on it would give a scoffing review of some revival of an early text. Sometimes these poems and tales were openly labelled as imitations, but more often they purported to be genuine pieces of ancient literature, and were prefaced by an explanation of how the almost illegible manuscript was accidentally discovered
in the false bottom of an ancient chest or under a pile of stones in a cave. Despite the frequently elaborate apparatus of introductions and notes by which the authors of these forgeries tried to produce a genuine note of age, it is very rare that the productions betray any actual knowledge of ancient literature and language.

As late as 1790, the Gentleman's Magazine published The Bard, a Sonnet from the Antient British, a poem in regular sonnet form. Four lines will show the quality of the piece:

"In harsher sounds now roll'd the tide of Glory,  
"Wrath, Ruin, Rage, in Freedom's holy cause,  
"Gainst eagled legions, bands of Gothic story,  
"Lightnings of Joy, and thunders of applause."

One of the choicest specimens of pseudo-ancient poetry was a poem which ran in three issues of the Gentleman's Magazine in 1788. The author's introduction deplores the barren state of literature in ancient days and says he is sending the following poem because every scrap of historical manuscript should be laid before the public. Contrary to the usual practice he gives no account of where he found the piece, of which he says: "The poem, which is here presented to the reader (rude as it is) appears to have been one of the ballads of those days, and, by its several religious pauses seems adapted to the times of solemn festivity. The manuscript from which it was

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(1) Gentleman's Magazine. May, 1790. p. 450
(2) Gentleman's magazine, Sept.-December, 1788. p. 820ff.
taken appears to have been written since the conquest, the character being modern Gothic ..." Despite the introduction and many notes, the poem itself seems to rely on chaotic syntax for any flavour of antiquity. It began:

"Herkeneth that loveth honour,
Of Kyng Arthour and his labour,
And furst how he was begete
As that we in Boke do rede.

...........................
He was courteys, large, and gent,
To all puple verrament;
Beauty, myzt, amyable chere,
To alle men ferre and neere..."

Ballad imitations were even more common than fragments from the"Antient British". Occasionally there would appear a good imitation with a genuine ring, but more often the results were without any of the ballad characteristics, despite the many genuine models which were easily available. A poem called Edwin and Emily appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine in 1782. It was introduced by a letter saying that it "was written on the plan of the ancient ballads" and that as the author did not wish "to impose it as a relic of antiquity on the public, he has not arrayed it in any uncouth phrases, nor does he affect to have found it, fortune favente, among the venerable rubbish of any long-concealed vault or chest." Although the plot is the familiar ballad commonplace of a father pursuing and slaying eloping lovers, all the marks of the ballad, even

© Gentleman's Magazine. February, 1782. p.88
the easily imitated metre are missing. The last stanza will
give an idea of the poem:

"Fair Emily spoke, in wild woe, to her knight,
Then wishfully looked, as the corse could reply;
Then eagerly stooping to kiss her pale love,
She breath'd out her soul on his lips with a sigh."

One enthusiast achieved the heights of squeezing out tears of
sympathy for the "Unknown Author of the ancient Ballad of
Chevy Chace" in an eighteenth century elegy. Part of it ran:

"... Or to his rude untutor'd lays,
Untimely grand, sublimely wild,
Mute was the voice of public praise,
Which made him more Misfortune's child.

Perhaps, remote from hall or bower,
He wore his pensive hours alone,
Where Dulness lavish'd all her power,
And died unhonoured and unknown,

But now from vulgar sight debarr'd
Genii select his ashes keep;
Their spears transfixed, their boundries guard,
Whilst oe'r his hallowed cell they weep." 8)

Knowledge of early literature had not yet permeated
from the learned class to the general public when men could
write and editors would accept such poems as these. The taste
which relished the freshness and vigour of the themes of early
poetry, yet could not divorce itself from the eighteenth
century conventions, produced no genius to speak for it. It
is significant that in the last third of the eighteenth

8) Edinburgh Magazine. February, 1788. p.149
century there appeared no great poet representative of the
times, as Pope had epitomized the earlier period. Burns'
vein was too narrow to be typical, and Blake moved apart in
a world of his own. The old order had spent its strength,
but lingered on, and none of the new forces were as yet
ready for expression by genius. The various currents of the
growing Romantic tide all were to wait brilliant expression
until the early years of the coming century. In literary
antiquarianism the expression came in Scott. Sir Walter
Scott, an antiquarian to whom the past was alive and real,
was at the same time a great poet. He combined in himself
the forces which were being haltingly expressed, and not
only completed Percy's work of restoring the ballads to the
general reader, but by his ballad imitations, longer poems,
and later by his novels, re-created the half-forgotten past
with sureness of understanding and brilliance of execution.
At last, forty years after Shenstone sensed the want, the
taste of the age found the genius to express it.

It was the work of Scott's century to carry on the
restoration of early literature in a friendly rather than a
hostile atmosphere, to fill the lacunae of unpublished works
which still remained, and by the "appreciative" essay and
popularly edited texts, to interpret early English literature
to the modern generation. The late eighteenth century had laid
strong foundations upon which the nineteenth century could build. Tyrwhitt had furnished the first truly critical text of the Canterbury Tales; Warton had brought to light a host of practically unknown writers; Sharon Turner had revealed the wealth of Anglo-Saxon literature; Hailes, Pinkerton, and the Morisons had restored the early Scottish poets; Percy and his followers, the ballads and romances; Dodsley and others, much of the early drama. There still remained such major works as Piers Plowman, Malory's Morte d'Arthur, and Beowulf, as well as numerous minor works. But the last fifty years had changed the attitude towards early literature. During the early part of the next century learned societies were formed, under whose patronage early texts could be published. Older literature was awarded a critical deference and study that would have amazed the timid editor of the Reliques. A revolution in literary thought had taken place, and the new order which supplanted the old drew much of its power from the early literature which the patient research of the eighteenth century editors had made available.
A List of Works Published between 1765 and 1802 Illustrating the Revival of Interest in the Study of the Early Literature of England and Scotland.

This list is limited strictly to the literature of England and Scotland and excludes all works, however attractively antiquarian, which do not directly concern literature. A few French works which were used by English antiquarians are included. When editions subsequent to the first have been considerably altered, they are given separate entry; otherwise all editions within the specified dates are given with the first edition. The works I have have not seen are starred.

1765. Dalrymple, David (Lord Hailes), ed. A Specimen of a Book, intituled, Ane Compendious Booke of Godlie and Spiritual Sangs, collectit out of Sundrie Partes of the Scripture, with Sundrie Ballates changed out of Prophaine Sanges, for avoyding of Sinne and Harlotrie. With Augmentation of sundrie Gude and Godly Ballates, not contained in the first edition. Edinburgh, 1765

Percy, Thomas, ed. Reliques of Ancient English Poetry: consisting of old heroic ballads, songs, and other pieces of our earlier poets, (chiefly of the lyric kind.) Together with some few of later date. 3 vols. London, 1765

- 2nd ed. 3 vols. London, 1767
- 3rd. ed. 3 vols. London, 1775
- Another ed. 3 vols. London, 1790-91
1766. *A Choice Collection of Scots Poems, antient and Modern, selected chiefly from the labours of the most ingenious writers of this kingdom, during the last two centuries. Edinburgh, 1766

Pegge, Samuel. Observations on Dr. Percy's account of Minstrels among the Saxons. By Mr. Pegge. (Read before the Society of Antiquaries, May 29, 1766. Printed in Archaeologia II.100-106)

Steevens, George, ed. Twenty of the Plays of Shakespeare, being the whole number printed in quarto during his life-time, or before the Restoration, collated where there were different copies, and published from the originals. 4 vols. London, 1766. (Contains some pre-Shakespearian texts).


- - 2nd. ed. with large additions. Cambridge, 1767.


1768. *Christ's Kirk on the Green, in Three Canto's. The first canto by King James the First; the other two by Allan Ramsay. Glasgow, 1768.

1769. Herd, David, ed. Ancient and Modern Scots Songs, Heroic Ballads, etc. Now first collected into one body, from the various miscellanies wherein they formerly lay dispersed. Containing, likewise a great number of original songs, from manuscripts never before published. Edinburgh, 1769.


Mallet, Paul Henri. Northern Antiquities: or, a description of the manners, customs, religion and laws of the ancient Danes, and other northern nations, including those of our own Saxon ancestors. With a translation of the Edda, or system of Runic mythology, and other pieces from the ancient Islandic tongue. In two volumes. Translated from Mons. Mallet's Introduction a l'Histoire de Dannemarc, etc. With additional notes by the English translator, and Goranson's Latin version of the Edda. 2 vols. London, 1770. (translated by Percy).


Miscellaneous Antiquities: or a collection of curious papers: either republished from scarce tracts, or now first printed from the original MSS. To be continued occasionally. Strawberry Hill, 1772


Hawkins, Thomas, ed. The Origin of the English Drama, illustrated in its various species, viz. Mystery, Morality, Tragedy, and Comedy, by specimens from our earliest writings: with explanatory notes. 3 vols. Oxford, 1773


1777. The Adventures of Robert Earl of Huntingdon vulgarly called Robin Hood. Being a compleat history of all his merry adventures and valiant battles. (24 ballads with a preface subscribed S----M----). Glasgow, 1777.


Berkenhout, John. Biographia Literaria; or a Biographical History of Literature: containing the lives of English, Scotch, and Irish authors, from the dawn of letters in these kingdoms, to the present time, chronologically and classically arranged. Vol.I. From the beginning of the fifth to the end of the sixteenth century. London, 1777. (No more published).
Evans, Thomas, ed. Old Ballads, historical and narrative, with some of modern date; now first collected and printed from rare copies. With notes. 2 vols. (London), 1777.


The Songs of Robin Hood, containing the history of all the merry exploits done by him and his men. To which is prefixed a Preface, giving a ... full and perfect account of him, etc. London, 1778.

1779. La Curne de Sainte Palaye, J.B. de. The Literary History of the Troubadours. Containing their lives, extracts from their works, and many particulars relative to the customs, morals, and history of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Collected and abridged from the French of Mr. de Saint-Palais, by the author of the Life of Petrarch. London, 1779. (Mrs. Susannah Dobson)


The Playhouse Pocket-Companion, or Theatrical Vade-mecum: containing, 1. A catalogue of all the dramatic authors who have written for the English stage, with a list of their works, showing the dates of representation or publication. II. A catalogue of anonymous pieces. III. An index of plays and authors. In a method entirely new, whereby the author of any dramatic performance, and the time of its appearance, may be readily discovered on inspection. To which is prefixed, a critical history of the English stage from its origin to the present time; with an enquiry into the causes of the decline of dramatic poetry in England. London, 1779.


Pinkerton, John, ed. Hardyknute, an Heroic Ballad, now first published complete: with the other more approved Scottish ballads, and some not hitherto made public, in the tragic style. To which are prefixed two dissertations: I. On the oral tradition of poetry. II. On the tragic ballad. London, 1731.

Pinkerton, John. Rhymes. London, 1731. (Translations and originals based on Celtic, Norse, and Provencal literature)

1732. Baker, David Erskine. Biographia Dramatica, or, a companion to the playhouse: containing historical and critical memoirs, and original anecdotes of British and Irish dramatic writers, from the commencement of our theatrical exhibitions; amongst whom are some of the most celebrated actors. Also an alphabetical account of their works, with dates when printed, and occasional observations on their merits. Together with an introductory view of the rise and progress of the British stage. A new edition: carefully corrected; greatly enlarged; and continued from 1764 to 1732. 2 vols. London, 1732. (Ed. Isaac Reed)


James I. The Poetical Remains of James the First, King of Scotland. Edinburgh, 1783. (ed. by William Tytler)


Ritson, Joseph, ed. A Select Collection of English Songs, with their original airs; and a Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song. 3 vols. London, 1783


La Curne de Sainte Palaye, J.B. de. Memoirs of Ancient Chivalry. To which are added the anecdotes of the times from the Romance writers and historians of those ages. Translated from the French of M. de St. Palaye, by the translator of the Life of Petrarch. (Mrs. Susannah Dobson) London, 1784.

1785. Ames, Joseph. Typographical Antiquities: or, an historical account of the origin and progress of printing in Great Britain and Ireland: containing memoirs of our ancient printers, and a register of books printed by them, from the years MCCCLXXI to the year MDC. Begun by the late Joseph Ames. Considerably augmented, both in the memoirs and number of books, by William Herbert. 3 vols. London, 1785-1790.
Hill, Thomas F., ed. Ancient Erse Poems, collected among the Scottish Highlands, in order to illustrate the Ossian of Mr. Macpherson. London, 1785.

Reeve, Clara. The progress of romance, through times, countries and manners; with remarks on the good and bad effects of it, on them respectively; in the course of evening conversations. 2 vols. Colchester, 1785.


Johnson, James, ed. The Scots Musical Museum. 6 vols. Edinburgh, 1787-1803

Paston Letters. Original Letters written during the reigns of Henry VI Edward IV. and Richard III. By various persons of rank or consequence; containing many curious anecdotes, relative to that turbulent and bloody, but hitherto dark, period of our history; and elucidating, not only public matters of state, but likewise the private manners of the age: digested in chronological order; with notes historical and explanatory; and authenticated by engravings of autographs, paper marks, and seals. By John Fenn. In two volumes. Vols. I and II, London,
Young, Matthew, ed. Antient Gaelic Poems, respecting the race of the Flans, collected in the Highlands of Scotland in the year 1784. (In Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy. 1787. I.43-119)

1788. *Egerton, T and J. The theatrical remembrancer, containing a complete list of all the dramatic performances in the English language; their several editions, dates, and sizes, and the theatres where they were originally performed: together with an account of those which have been acted and are unpublished, and a catalogue of such Latin plays as have been written by English authors, from the earliest production of the English drama to the end of the year 1787. To which are added Notitia Dramatica, being a chronological account of events relative to the English stage. London, 1788.


*Manning, Owen, ed. King Alfred's Will

1789. Brand, John. The History and Antiquities of the town and county of the town of Newcastle upon Tyne ... 2 vols. London, 1789. (Contains the text of the Newcastle Noah's Ark Miracle and information on the Miracle plays given in that town.)


1792. A New Theatrical Dictionary. Containing an account of all the dramatic pieces that have appeared from the commencement of theatrical exhibitions to the present time. Together with their dates when written or printed, where acted, and occasional remarks on their merits and success. To which is added. An alphabetical catalogue of the dramatic writers, with the titles of all the pieces they have written annexed to each name. And also a short sketch of the rise and progress of the English stage. London, 1792.


Ritson, Joseph, ed. *Ancient Songs, from the time of King Henry the Third to the Revolution*. London, 1792
Waldron, Francis Godolphin, ed. The Literary Museum; or, ancient and modern repository. Comprising Scarce and Curious tracts, poetry, biography, and criticism. London, 1792. (also issued under the title "The Literary Museum, or A Selection of Scarce Old Tracts")


De la Rue, Abbé. An epistolary Dissertation upon the life and writings of Robert Wace, and Anglo-Norman Poet of the Twelfth century. (Read before the Society of Antiquaries Dec. 4, 1794. Printed in Archaeologia XII. 50-79)


Ritson, Joseph, ed. Robin Hood: a collection of all the ancient poems, songs, and ballads, now extant relative to that celebrated English outlaw. To which are prefixed historical anecdotes of his life. 2 vols. London, 1795.

1796. Alves, Robert. Sketches of a History of Literature: containing lives and characters of the most eminent writers in different languages, ancient and modern, and critical remarks on their works. Together with several literary essays. The whole designed as a directory, to guide the judgment and form the Taste in reading the best authors. By the late Robert Alves, A.M. To which is prefixed a short biographical account of the author. Edinburgh, 1796.

De La Rue, Abbé. The lives and writings of various Anglo-Norman poets of the Twelfth century. (Read before the Society of Antiquaries Feb. 4, 1796. Printed in Archaeologia XII. 297-326)

De La Rue, Abbé. Upon the life and writings of Mary, an Anglo-Norman poetess of the Thirteenth century. (Archaeologia XIII. 36-67)


Occleve, Thomas. Poems by Thomas Hoccleve, never before printed; selected from the MS. in the possession of George Mason. With a preface, notes and glossary. London, 1796. (ed. by George Mason)


1797. Croft, John. *Excerpta Antiqua; or, A collection of original manuscripts. York, 1797.* (Contains text of York Miracle, Incredulity of Thomas, p.105-110)

1798. Campbell, Alexander. *An Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland, from the beginning of the thirteenth century down to the present time; together with a conversation of Scotch song, by Alexander Campbell, author of Odes and Miscellaneous Poems, &c. To which are subjoined, Songs of the Lowlands of Scotland, carefully compared with the original editions, and embellished with characteristic designs composed and engraved by the late David Allan, historical painter. Edinburgh, 1798*


Ballads & Songs, Scotish. *Ludlow, 1799*

Turner, Sharon. *The History of the Anglo-Saxons from the earliest period to the Norman conquest. 4 vols. London, 1799-1805*

A Compendious history of the English stage, from the earliest period to the present time. Containing a candid analysis of all dramatic writings, a liberal and impartial criticism on the merits of theatrical performers, and a sketch of the lives of such as have been eminent in their profession. By Waldron, Dibdin, &c. London, 1800.

(Additional title page: The Curtain, or an impartial history of the English stage. 1797)

Dibdin, Charles. A Complete History of the English Stage. Introduced by a comparative and comprehensive review of the Asiatic, the Grecian, the Roman, the Spanish, the Italian, the Portuguese, the German, the French, and other theatres, and involving biographical tracts and anecdotes, instructive and amusing, concerning a prodigious number of authors, composers, painters, actors, singers, & patrons of dramatic productions in all countries. The whole written with the assistance of interesting documents, collected in the course of five and thirty years. 5 vols. London, 1800.


Ellis, George, ed. Specimens of the Early English Poets, to which is prefixed an historical sketch of the rise and progress of the English poetry and language. 3 vols. London, 1801


*James I. Chryste-Kirk on the Green: Supposed to be written by King James the first of Scotland. Attempted in Latin Heroic Verse. Edinburgh, 1801


Ritson, Joseph, ed. Bibliographia Poetica: a catalogue of English poets, of the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries; with a short account of their works. London, 1802

Scott, Sir Walter, ed. Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border; consisting of historical and romantic ballads, collected in the southern counties of Scotland; with a few of modern date founded upon local tradition. Kelso, 1802-1803.
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Aikin, John.  Essays on Song-Writing: with a collection of such songs as are most eminent for poetical merit. 2nd edition, London, 1774.

Ames, Joseph.  Typographical Antiquities: Being an historical account of printing in England: with some memoirs of our ancient printers, and a register of the books printed by them, from the year MCCCCLXXI to the year MDC ... London, 1749.

Archaeologia.  An index to the first fifteen volumes of Archaeologia ... London, 1809.

Arnold, Matthew.  On the Study of Celtic literature, London, 1867


Ball, Margaret.  Sir Walter Scott as a Critic of Literature, New York, 1907.


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Beattie, James.  The Minstrel, with some other poems. Edinburgh, 1803.


Bourne, Henry.  The History of Newcastle upon Tyne. Newcastle, 1736.


Brown, Joseph E.  Critical Opinions of Samuel Johnson. 1926
Bruce, Micheal. Poetical Works. Paisley, 1895.

A Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Songs, both Ancient and Modern. Edinburgh, 1706-11.

Dibdin. Thomas F. Bibliomania. London, 1811

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Knight, William. Lord Monboddo and some of his Contemporaries.
London, 1900.

Leyden, John. Poems and Ballads by John Leyden, with a Memoir of the Author by Sir Walter Scott, Bart. Kelso, 1875.
Lownes, W.T. Bibliographers Manuel of English Literature. Lon.1834

Macneill, N. The Literature of the Highlands. Stirling, 1929.
Morison, Stanley. John Bell, Bookseller, Printer, and Publisher. Cambridge, 1930.


Percy, Thomas. Letters from Bishop Percy, David Herd, John Callander and others to George Paton. Edinburgh, 1830.

Ramsay, Allan. The Evergreen. 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1724
Ramsay, Allan. The Tea-Table Miscellany. 5th ed. London, 1730.


3rd ed. Glasgow, 1869.

Saintsbury, G. A History of Criticism. 3 vols. London, 1900
Scottish Text Society Publications.
Steeves, H.R. Learned Societies and English Literary Scholarship in Great Britain and the United States. New York, 1913. (Columbia University Studies in Literature and Comparative Literature)


Young, Edward. Conjectures on Original Composition. London, 1759.

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