

## Some Prose in Scots

In the first number of the LALLANS magazine (Mairtinmas 1973), the editor, J K Annand,<sup>1</sup> declared it as his policy to encourage prose writing in Scots and requested authors not to send him *onie verse*. Annand recognised that the Scots language was already an excellent register for poetry, but was employed much less for prose. Most distinguished prose written in Scots has taken the form of dialogue in a narrative in English, in which Scots is represented as a relic form of speech reported in a 'serious' 'educated' English context. Satisfactory models of expository prose written after the Parliamentary Union of 1707 are almost non-existent, as a consequence of an 'educational' policy over hundreds of years, in which Scots was represented as unsuitable for serious purposes.

A few church sermons have been delivered in Scots and some attempts have been made to use Scots in official documents, but these have sometimes invited ridicule. The provincial cringe has been a feature of the Scots psyche for too long to be cured in the short term, without a major change in public policy.

In 1997, the Scottish Office published information on the powers for the proposed Scottish Parliament entitled, SCOTLAND'S PARLIAMENT,<sup>2</sup> and a complementary rendering in Scots was provided at the same time as this document. This included the following sentences: *Scotlan's MPs wuid yet play thair full pairt at Westminster. The nummer o Scots seats wuid hae tae be keikit ower.* The author of this passage seems to have been unaware that the verb *ti keik* in Scots relates to a specific kind of 'looking' which is quite inappropriate in this formal context.

Although it seems a healthy sign that people should seek to extend the range of Scots by inventing new Scots words, or by borrowing new words from outside sources, this is an area where caution is required. In his translation in the nineteenth century of the psalms into Scots, Waddell<sup>3</sup> devised a number of novel expressions for formal English words for which there were no obvious Scots equivalents, using *dinsome thrang* for *insurrection*, *kithgettin* for *generation*, *hame haudin* for *inheritance* and *leal-gate* for *integrity*. Most of his inventions have not been adopted by later writers.

However, in Germany before World War II, a number of Teutonic words (such as *Bahnhof* for *Station*) were successfully introduced in place of words of foreign origin, and the German preference for native sounds led to the concoction of *Fernsprecher* for *telephone*. On this basis, A J Aitken<sup>4</sup> facetiously suggested that a standard Scots word for *telephone* might be *langspeaker* or *langbletherer*.

The whole Nynorsk experiment in developing an indigenous Norwegian language from ancient native roots was based on a natural desire to free Norwegian speech from Danish influence. On the basis of Scandinavian analogies, the idea that a standard form of literary Scots might include such words as *seikhouss* for *hospital* and *stoursoukar* for *vaccum cleaner*, has a certain romantic attraction. This is also true of *flichterbarrae*, a word that was suggested some years ago for *airplane*. However, although *flichtermouss* has been used in writing for *bat*, it is clear enough that nobody in the foreseeable future, is likely to make a demand at Glasgow Airport for, *twa tickets for the flichterbarrae til Toronto, gaun an cummin*.

Certainly, it is a good sign that people should want to invent new Scots words, since this is an indication of an interest in the language which is not simply antiquarian. McClure<sup>5</sup> has cited a number of new expressions concocted by Douglas Young, such as *licht-bumbazed* for *dazzled* and *owreset* for *translate*, and while there seems little need for the former, the word *owreset* has been adopted by several contemporary writers. *Aefauldlie*, has also gained ground in correspondence, in place of *yours sincerely*. *Anent*, *gruesome*, *remit*, *sculduddery* and *wee* are now part of the common lexis shared globally with English. *Unthirldom the-nou* is unlikely to be adopted as a slogan for *Freedom now!* *Freedom* already exists as a Scots word shared with English.

Since Scots has been such a satisfactory medium for poetry, Annand was obliged to modify his original policy and accept contributions to LALLANS in both narrative prose and poetry. Discursive prose in LALLANS has been largely confined to editorial columns and reviews, where there has been some useful extension of the use of Scots in this area. Scots is certainly, also well developed for narrative prose, but this is a ghetto where the language has been largely confined to relating to a living community which is disintegrating under the impact of globalisation.

Sydney Goodsir Smith,<sup>6</sup> in an essay entitled, 'A Short Introduction to Scottish Literature,' stated: 'in Scotland we had no Renaissance, for the end of the Gothic period, and the end of Scotland as a separate kingdom and culture, and the Scots language as an official and standard vehicle, all occurred disastrously at the same moment.....our true tradition (the popular and gothico-celtic tradition) now went underground, and survived only in private manuscripts as art poetry, or else on the lips of the people in the form of folk song and ballad.' This submergence took longer than a moment, although the Union of the Crowns of 1603 was a major cause of its taking place..

Although a hundred years later, under the impact of public dissatisfaction with the Parliamentary Union of 1707, there was a revival of interest in things Scottish, this was largely confined to poetry and the further development of a literary tradition of prose in Scots was impaired. However, before the Union of the Crowns of 1603, Scots was undoubtedly the State Language of Scotland. It was the language of the Court and Parliament, the language in which the State records were kept and there are numerous examples of official prose, such as the Acts of the Scots Parliament, before 1603.

The following passage by Robert Lindesay of Pitscottie<sup>7</sup> (written before 1575, but relating to events in 1528), gives an interesting impression in Middle Scots of what Scotland was like during the reign of James the Fifth (1513-1542), during the early part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The spellings in this piece of 16<sup>th</sup> century Scots prose are already considerably anglicised, in conformity with English practice. At this time, the lack of a satisfactory rendering of the Bible in Scots was already having a significant effect on the orthography of prose in Scots.

## HOW THE KING PASSIT TO THE HIELAND TO THE HUNTING

And eftir this the king remanit in the castell of Edinburgh sum tymes meckill of that winter tyd, syne the nixt sommer passit to the hieland to hunt in athole, and tuik with him his moder Margret, quine of Scotland, and ane ambassador of the paippis wha was in Scotland for the tyme, the erle of athole, heran of the kingis cuming, made gret provisioun for him in all thingis necessar perteinand to his estait as he had bene in his awin pallice of Edinburgh.

He wanted nothing: for I hard say this nobill erle of athole gart mak ane curious pallice to the king and to his moder and to the ambassador, whair thay war so eassielie and honourabillie ludgit as thay had beine in ingland, france, italie, or in spaine, concerneing the tyme and equivalent for thair hunting and pastyme, whilk was buildit in ane fair medow ane pallice of grein tymber wood that war greine bayth under and, abone, whilk was fassonit, in four quarteris, and in evirie quarter an nuck thairof ane gret round, as it had beine a blockhouse, whilk was loftit and jeistit the space of thrie hous hicht; the fluir layd with greine scheirrittis, with sprottis, medwartis, and flouris, that na man knewe whairon he gaed bot he had beine in ane gairden. Forder, thair was two gret roundis in ilk syde of the yet, and ane gret portcullis of trie fallin downe the maner of ane barrass yett with ane gret drawbrig, and ane gret fowsie ane stank of wattir of sexteine fute deip and xxx fute bred, full of wattir.

And also this pallice within was weill sylled and hung with fyne tapestrie and arasis of silk, and lichtit with fyne glassin windowis in all airthis, that this pallice was als plesand with all necessaris pertenand to ane prince as it had beine his awin pallice royall at home. Forder, this erle gart mak sic provisioun for the king and his moder and that stranger the ambassador, that thay had all maner of meittis, drinkis, dilicattis that was to be gottin at that tyme in all Scotland, ather in burgh or land, that micht be gottin for money, that is to say, all kyndis of drinkis, as aill, beir, wyne, bayth whyte wyne and claret, mavasie, muscatie, and allagant, inpechryst, and accaquytie: forder thair was of meittis of breid, whyte breid, main breid and gaige breid, with fleshis, beif, muttone, lamb, veall and venisoun, guse gryce and capoun, and cuning, and cran, swan, wyld guse, peirtreik, and plevaer, duik, draik, mortoun, and murfoull, with goudneis, brissel cok, pownis, black cok, and caperkeillie; and also the stankis that was round about the pallice was soumand full of all delicat fisches that could be gottin in fresche wattiris was reddie to be prepairit for that bancatt. Syne was thair proper seuris and cunning baxteris, and also excellent cuikis and potingaris with confectiounis and droggis for thair desertis. All thir things beand in ordour and prepairit as I haue schawin to yow, hallis, chalmeris, with costlie beding, weschell, and nepprie according for ane king, nothing was deminischit of his ordour more than he had beine at hame in his awin pallice.

The king remanit in this present wilderness the space of thrie days and thrie nichtis with all his cumpanie, as I haue schawin to yow afoir. I hard men say that evirie day that the king was thair, cost the erle of athole ane thousand pound in expensis. This ambassador of the paipis, seand this gret bancat and triumphe beand maid in ane wilderness, whair thair was na toune nar be xx myllis, thocht it ane gret merwell that sic ane thing sould be in Scotland, considdering that it is namit the ears o the world be uther cuntries, that thair sould be sic honnestie and policie in it, and speciallie in the hie hieland, whair thair is bot wood and wilderness; bot maist of all, this ambassador merwellit, when the king depairtit and all men tuk thair leive. The hieland men set all this fair pallice in ane fyre that the king and his ambassador micht see.

Than the ambassador said to the king 'I merwell that ye sould thole yone fair pallice to be brunt that your grace hes beine so weill ludgit into.' The king ansuerit to the ambassador: 'it is the use of our hieland men, thocht thay be nevir so weill ludgit, to burn the ludgin when thay depairt.' This beand done, the king come to Dunkell that nycht, and on the morrow to Sanctjohnstoun.

I hard say the king at that tyme in the boundis of athole and strathrale, that is to say beginning at beneurie and benecrumie betuix thir hills and the bowndis foirsaid, that he slew xxx scoir of harte and hynd with uther small beistis, as ra and rebuck, wolf and fox, and wyld cattis.

At this time, the wolf was evidently detined to survive aother two hundred years in the Highlands of Scotland.

### Examples of Narrative Prose in Scots

After Jamie the Saxt blithely took the road to London in 1603, there was little writing in prose in Scots and after the loss of the Scottish Parliament in 1707, writng in Scots was virtually confined to poetry, plays in Scots and reported speech in the context of a narrative in English. However, the work of John Galt (1779-1839) is of interest, since he wrote before the later decline into the Kailyaird..

Galt<sup>8</sup> had the vision and perception of a social historian and was familiar with the relatively uncorrupted Scots spoken at the onset of the industrial revolution at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The following passage of dialogue from *The Entail* (World's Classics, 1993), illustrates Galt's remarkable command of the language in a period of unprecedented social change. There is no trace of the mawkishness which characterised the work of the Kailyard novelists who followed later in the century.

#### From The Entail, Chapter XXV

“Wattie,” said the Laird o Grippie to his hopeful heir, calling him into the room, after Kilmarkekkil had retired.

“Wattie, cum ben an sit doun; Ah want ti hae sum solid converse wi ye. Dae ye herken ti whit Ah'm sayin? - Kilmarkekkil haes juist been wi me – dae ye hear me? – deil an Ah saw the lyke o ye – whit ir ye luikin at? As Ah wes sayin, Kilmarkekkil haes been here, an he wes thinkin that you an his dochter.”

“Weill,” interrupted Wattie, “if ever Ah saw the lyke o that. Thare wes a Jennie Langlegs at the corner o the windae, whan doun cam a speider wabstar as big as a puddok, an claucht it in his airms, an he's af an awa wi hir intil his nest – Ah never saw the lyke o't.”

“It's maist extraordnar, Wattie Walkinshaw,” exclaimed his father peevisly, “that Ah canna git a mouthfu common sense out o ye, altho Ah wes juist tellin ye o the gretest advantage that ye'r ever lykelie ti meet wi in this warld. Hou wad ye lyke Miss Bettie Bodil for a wyfe?”

“O faither!”

“Ah'm sayin, wadna she mak a capital Leddie o the Pleilands?”

Walter made no reply, but laughed, and chuckingly rubbed his hands and then delightedly patted the sides of his thighs with them

“Ah’m shuir ye canna finnd onie faut wi hir; thare’s no a brawer nor a better-tochert lass in the thrie shyres – Whit think ye?”

Walter suddenly suspended his ecstasy, and grasping his knees firmly, he bent forward and looking his father seriously in the face, said:

“But wul she no thump me? Ye mynd whan she made ma back baith blek an blue.

Ah’m frichtit!”

“Haud yeir tung wi sic nonsense; that happent whan ye war but bairns. Ah’m shuir the’r no a blyther bonnier quaen in aw the kintrasyde.”

“Ah’l no deny that she haes rid cheeks, an een lyke blobs o hinnie dew in a kail-blade; but faither – Lord faither! She haes a neive lyke a beer mell.”

“But for aw that, a sichtlie lad lyke you nicht pit up wi hir, Wattie. Ah’m shuir ye’l gang ferr, baith Aist an West, afore ye ‘l meet in wi hir marrae; an ye soud reflekt on hit tocher, the whilk is a wull-eise that’s no ti be fund at ilka dykesyde.

“Ay, sae thay say; hir unkil fraudit his ain onlie dochter, an left hir a stockin-fou o guineas for a legacie. - But wul she no lat me gae haufer?”

“Ye needna misdout that; na, an ye fleitch hir weill, Ah wadna be surprysed if ye wad gie ye the haill tot; an Ah’m shuir ye ne’er hae seen onie wumman that ye can lyke better.”

“Ay, but Ah hae tho,” replied Wattie confidently.

“Wha is’t?” exclaimed his father, surprised and terrified.

“Ma mither.”

“The old man, sordid as he was, and driving thus earnestly his greedy purpose, was forced to laugh at the solemn simplicity of this answer; but he added, resuming his perseverance:

“True! Ah didna think o yeir mither, Wattie - but an ye war aince mairrit ti Bettie Bodil, ye wad suin lyke hir ferr better nor yeir mither.”

“The fift command says, ‘Honor thy father an thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land,’ an thare’s no ae wurd about lykin a wyfe in aw the rest.”

“Weill, weill, but whit Ah hae ti say is, that me an Kilmarkekkil hae made a paction for ye ti mairrie his dochter, an ye maun juist gang owre the-nicht an court Miss Bettie.”

“But Ah dinna ken the wey o’t, faither, Ah never did sic a thing aw ma days; Od, Ah’m unco blate ti try’t.”

“Guid forgie me,” said Claud to himself, “but the craetur growes sillier an sillier ilka day – Ah tell ye, Wattie Walkinshaw, ti pluck up the speirit o manheid, an gang owre this nicht ti Kilmarkekil, an speik ti Miss Bettie bi yeirsell about the waddin.”

“Atweill, Ah can dae that, an help hir buy hir parapharnals - We wul hae a pryme aipil pie that nicht, wi raisins in’t.”

The old man was petrified . – It seemed to him that it was utterly impossible that the marriage could ever take place, and he sat for some time stricken, as it were, with a palsy of the mind.

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What is now described as *kailyaird* writing is the nineteenth century equivalent of what is now called “kitsch” or “schmaltz”. Nevertheless, the *kailyaird* is the mainstream Scottish tradition and parts of it have considerable merit. Any writing which can evoke genuine tears from readers (grannies or otherwise) is not to be despised. *The Daith o Dr MacLure*, the final scene in *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush* by Ian Maclaren,<sup>9</sup> has been adapted here into a dramatic format. The original book, which perhaps could be described as a “Victorian tear-jerker”, sold more than fifty thousand copies before 1895. This kind of sentimental story is typical of the genre. It belongs to *the auld Scotland we maunna forget: blinkert an nairrae, but staunch an kynd, leal an true*.

## THE DAITH O DR MACLURE

A dramatic adaptation from *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush* by Ian Maclaren, 1895

### SCENE

*The home of Dr William MacLure in Drumtochty, Perthshire, North Britain, where the doctor, after a lifetime of service to the parish, lies ill on his bed. He is attended by his old housekeeper, Janet, and is about to embark on his last journey. Janet has lit a fire in the unused grate, and hung a plaid by the window to break the power of the cruel north wind, but the bare room with half a dozen bits of furniture and a worn strip of carpet, has a bleak aspect. Dr MacLure’s lifelong friend, Drumsheugh, arrives to visit him.*

Narrator: It was a bitter December day and the parish was ankle deep in snow when Janet told Drumsheugh that Dr MacLure was not able to rise but wished to see him. The doctor had weakened sadly, and could hardly lift his head, but his face lit up at the sight of his visitor, and the big hand came out from the bed clothes with the old warm grip.

MacLure: Cum inby, man, an sit down; it's an awfu day ti bring ye sae faur, but Ah kent ye wadna grudge the traivel. Ah wesna shuir till last nicht, an then Ah felt it wadna be lang, an Ah tuik a weariein ti see ye. We've been freins sen we war laddies at the auld skuil in the firs, an Ah wad lyke ti hae ye wi me at the end. Ye'l stey the nicht, Paitrick, for auld lang syne.

Drumsheugh: It's maist awfu ti hear ye speakin about deein, Weelum; Ah canna beir it. Dinna say ye'r gaun ti leave us! We canna dae athout ye in Drumtochty.

MacLure: Na, na, Paitrick, it's owre late nou. The'r a knock that canna be mistaen, an Ah heard it last nicht. Ah hae focht Daith for ither fowk for mair nor fortie year, but ma ain tyme haes cum at last. Ah'm juist fair worn oot, Paitrick; that's ma complaint an its past curin.

Drumsheugh: Whit wul becum o us when ye'r no here ti gie a haund in tyme o need? We'l tak ill wi a stranger that disna ken ane o us frae anither.

MacLure: It's aw for the best, Paitrick. Ah'm the last o the auld skuil, an Ah've kent fyne for a whylie that ma day is owre, an that ye soud hae a yungir man.

Drumsheugh: Weelum, gin ye cairrie on sic nonsense onie langir, Ah'l leave the houss; Ah canna listen ti ye.

MacLure: It's the truith, Paitrick, but we'l git on wi oor wark, for Ah'm failin fast.

*(He gives Drumsheugh some directions about his household affairs)*

Drumsheugh: *(In great distress)* Ah-Ah haena the wurd.

MacLure: Juist say whit's in yeir hert! The Almichtie wul ken the lave Himsell!

*(Drumsheugh kneels and prays with many pauses)*

Drumsheugh: Almichtie God.....dinna be haurd on Weelum MacLure, for he's no been haurd wi oniebody in Drumtochty.....Be kynd ti him as he's been til us aw for fortie year....Forgie him whit he's duin wrang, an dinna cuist it up til him!.....Mynd the fowk he's helpit.....the weimen an the bairnies.....an gie him a walcum hame, for he's sair needin it.....eftir aw his wark.....Amen.

*(Drumsheugh rises)*

MacLure: Thenk ye, Paitrick; an guid nicht ti ye, ma ain true frein. Nou Ah'l say ma mither's prayer an hae a sleep, but ye'l no leave me til aw is owre.  
*(Then he repeats his prayer, as he has done every night of his life)*

This night I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep and if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.

*(He is sleeping quietly when the wind drives the snow against the window with a sudden swish, and he instantly awakes, so to say, in his sleep. Somebody needed him. In his dream, he was away on some errand of mercy, and struggling through the storm.)*

MacLure: It's a coorse nicht, Jess, an heavy traivlin; can ye see afore ye, for Ah'm clean confuised wi the snaw? Steidie lass, steidie!  
Dinna plunge; it's a drift we'r in but ye'r no sinkin.....up nou; that's it.....thare ye ir on the road again.  
Ai, but it's deep the-nicht, buit the'r a puir wumman micht dee gin we dinna warsil throu.  
That's it, yon's the houss, blek in the snaw, an the licht glimmerin in the kitchen windae.

*(Drumsheugh hold his friend's hand, which now and then tightens in his, and as he watches, a change comes over the face on the pillow beside him. The lines of weariness disappear, as if God's hand had passed over it; and peace begins to gather round the tired eyes. The doctor has forgotten the toil of later years and has gone back to his boyhood. "The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want," he repeats till he comes to the last verse, and then he hesitates.)*

MacLure: Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me. Follow me. Follow me...and.....whit's next? Mither said, Ah wes ti hae it ready when she cam. Ah'l cum afore ye gang ti sleep, Wullie, but ye'l no git yeir kiss or ye feinish the psaum."  
An .....in God's House.....for evermore, my .....hou dis it rin?  
Ah canna mynd the neist wurd....my.....

Drumsheugh: (In agony) My dwallin place, Weelum!

MacLure: That's it, that's it aw. Ah'm ready nou, an Ah'l git ma kiss whan mither cums. Yon's hir step, an she's cairriein a licht in hir haund. Ah see it throu the door. Mither! Ah kent ye wadna forget yeir laddie. Ye promised ti cum, an Ah hae feinisht ma psaum.  
And in God's house for evermore.....my dwellin place shall be.

Mither!

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The following excerpt is from *The House with the Green Shutters* by George Douglas Brown,<sup>10</sup> (World's Classics.1901). This novel seems modelled on Greek drama and together with the publication of *Weir of Hermioston* by Robert Louis Stevenson about the same time, it heralded the decline of the Kailyaird tradition. The picture of a Scotland inhabited by kind *couthie fowk* in the shadow of the Kirk was replaced by a more realistic image in which greed, anger and malice found a realistic role.

He wes born the day the brig on the Fleckie Road gaed down, in the yeir o the gret flude; an sen the gret flude it's twal year cum Lammas. Rab Tosh o Fleckie's wyfe wes hevie fuitit at the tyme, an Doctor Munn haed been aw nicht wi hir, an whan he cam ti Barbie Wattir i the mornin it wes rairin wyde frae bank ti brae; whaur the brig soud hae been the war naething but the swashin o the yalla waves.

Munn haed ti dryve aw the wey round ti the Fechars brig, an in pairts of the road, the wattir wes that deep that it lappit his horse's bellyband. Aw this tyme Mistress Gourlay wes skirlin in hir pains an prayin ti God she micht die. Gourlay haed been a gret cronie o Munn's, but he quarrelt him for be-in late; he haed trystit him, ye see, for the occasion, an he haed been twantie tymes at the yett ti luik for him---ye ken hou littil he coud stammak that; he wes reddie ti brust wi anger. Munn, mad for the want o sleep an wat til the bane, swure back at him; an than the thunner raired as if the heivins war tummlin on the warld, an the lichtnin sent the trees daddin on the roads, an fowk hid ablo thair beds an prayed---thay thocht it wes the judgment!

But Gourlay rammed his black stepper in the shafts.an drave lyke the deivil o Hell ti Skeighan Drone, whaur thare wes a yung doctor. The lad wes feired ti cum, but Gourlay swure bi God that he soud, an he garred him. In aw the kintriesyde, dryvin lyke his that day wes never kent or haird tell o; thay war back within the oor! Ah saw thaim gallop up the Main Street; lichtin struck the grund afore thaim; the yung doctor cuivert his face wi his haunds, an the horse nichert wi feir an tryit ti wheel, but Gourlay stuid up in the gig an lasht him on thou the fyre. It wes thocht for lang that Mistress Gourlay wad die, an she wes never the same wumman eftir.

Atweill, aye serr's, Gourlay haes that mornin's wark ti blame for the puir wyfe he haes nou. Him an Munn never spak ti ilk ither again, an Munn died within the twalmunth--he gat his daith that mornin on the Fleckie Road. But for aw sae pack's thay haed been, Gourlay never luik't near him".

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The following passage by the Edwardian writer, Joseph Laing Waugh,<sup>11</sup> was written at the end of the Kailyaird period around the time of World War II and although still nostalgic, *couthie* and homespun, lacks some of the sanctimoniousness typical of some of the earlier Victorian writing.

From *Robbie Doo* by Joseph Laing Waugh

Ah think Ah wad be about sax yeir auld whan Ah first gaed ti the skuil. Ah mynd fyne o ma faither takkin me up the street bi the haund, an intil a bare room, whaur a gentie bit bodie, cawed Miss Macdonald, sat on a chair, in the middil o the fluir, wi mebbe thrie-an-twantie bairns around hir.

Ma faither, as Ah've said, wes a verra tall man. He haed ti courie doun gaun throu the lobbie, an whan he wes in the skuilroom, staunin afore Miss MacDonald, the croun o his heid, Ah noticed, wes amaist skreivin the ceilin. "Miss MacDonald," said he, "here's a wee callant for ye. Thare's no mukkil o him, but he'd quick in the uptak, an Ah leave him wi confidence in yeir keepin." Ah want him ti wag his powe in a poupit, but dinna stert him wi Horace strecht awa," an he laucht owre his shouther an left me staunin in the middle o the fluir.

Ah beguid ti greit whan Ah saw he haed gaen awa, but Miss Macdonald tuik me up on hir knee an askit me ti be a wee man an no ti greit afore aw the lassies. She wypit ma face an set me doun on a wee stuil bi the fyre, an tellt ane o the bigger anes ti see that Ah didna tummil agin the ribs.

Man, Ah think Ah see that wee room yit. It wes laich o the ceilin, haed a stane fluir, an fower waws culort a licht green, an as bare as birkie, except for a map o Scotland an a picter o ane elephant wi a wee houss on its backm, out o whilk a blek man wes luikin. A singil desk ran alang ae syde o the waw, an this wes uised bi the biggest o the scholars, an thrie binks athout backs held the lave.

It wes lit bi twae windaes---a wee ane at the back an a bigger ane atr the front. The war juist fower peins o gless in the wee back ane, an throu thaim, Ah coud see intil a gairden whaur the war ane aipil tree juist hingin wi wee rid-cheekit aipils. The war flouers in plentie---Nancy Pretty, Sweet William, Batchelor's Buttons an Sidderwood, ---aw mixt up in a raw, borderin a walk. Monie a lang wearie luik Ah haed throu that wee windae, an aften, whan Ah wes sair at hert an trauchilt wi spellins an quaistens, Ah uised ti watch the sparraes anblekkies fliein about the aipil tree, an wush ti guidness Ah haed been born a burd instead o a laddie.

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The original version of the following passage by Elliot Cowan Smith, was written in the Hawick dialect, using an unconventional personal spelling system. This passage has been a popular source with lexicographers.

From *Mang Howes an Knowes* by Elliot Cowan Smith, 1926.

The heit wesna cannie as Ah cam til the main road, ayont the Yill, again. Awthings whufft an dovert bar the midges an me, an thegither we turnt ti the richt for the Teviot an the countie toun. At the fuit o the brae, a flittin wes gaun on; twae-thrie cheils war biggin furniter an plenishin on ti larries, an still anither road-ingine wi the inspyrin name: "Jethart's Here!" stuid neirby, nidgin ti dae the pouin. Ancrum Brig, weill kenned ti fisher-fowk, is baith braid an strang, an a gledge owre lat me see the bonnie Teviot, douce an purpose-lyke (for aw it's new hoven wi Yill!) glydin naith the pends.

Out frae about the Brig-end hous lampit a mukkil big, bang fallae, braid-shoudert, rash an stuffie, that staupit alang the Jethert road wi a tattie-steppin stryde. Game for ochts, Ah snuived steivlie on about thertie yairds ahint him. Wow! sic a bleizer as it wes, wi no a whuf o wund, an wi nae beild. The sweit wes juist hailin af me til Ah wes neirhaund swutten ti deid: ma serk wes drakkit wi weit till it stak til ma verra back; an dicht as Ah micht, dreips rowed doun owre brou, branks an brecham round a yaud. Birsilt an skowdert, lyke a bubblic-jock duin weill in an oven, Ah coud hae fund it in ma hert ti hae stappit an gaen in for a douk, insteid, i the cuil, siller Teviot, whaur it laipit bi leifie Monteviot. But the buirdlie Borderer snodged on a guid ane, an Ah polled ahint him at the same jock-trot.

Upby, as Ah pat on a bit aixtra brash, a grocer bodie gaun his eirants, gied me the weill-wuirn hail: "It's a graund day!" "Deed ay!" says Ah, "But man, it's byordnar het for us anes that's walkin!" Ah'l aye mynd the lauch he leuch! He leuch till he wes awa in a kink, an fair soupil; sae that his bycicle stytert anaith him, an Ah thocht the sowl wad tak a dwaum, an kilt owre, -- banyels, creil, an aw thegither. Dod, the snirtin bodie! He wad think Ah wes fond, braisslin on an stressin masell that gait in onie sic wather (Aiblin he thocht it wes for a weiger). He cam tae, an rallied, tho, an awa he birlled, still buffin an smudgin intil his-sell.

It wad want twae-thrie meinits ti twae i the eftirnuin whan Ah turnt intil the High Street o Jethart, whaur the war ane unordnar steir for the tyme o day. At the Mercat Place, Ah maircht in til the "Gazette" Office, an bocht a whein picter postcairds for ti send awa up Inland (thay gied me ane intil't) an spiered anent the Hawick motor.

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An interesting extension of the use of narrative prose was the publication in 1943 of a translation by Douglas Young<sup>12</sup> from the Greek of a passage from *The Iliad*, entitled *Hektor's Twynan frae Andromacha*. This included the passage:

Lang than the baith o thaim leuch, his dad an the leddie his mither. Syne the begesserant Hektor releissit his brou frae the helmet, dounpat it than on the broun derk yird, whaur it bonnilie skinkilt. Kissin the bairn that he loued an dannlin't a wee in his airms, spak he a prayer richt hertie ti Zeus an the lave o the godheids.

“Zeus an aw ither gods, lat this bairnikie be lyke ma ain sell, virrfu lyke me in his micht an the maister of Ilios burgh. Syne may sumbodie say, ‘He’s better a sicht nor his faither, whan he cums up frae the war’. May he cum wi wappins aw bluidie, graith o a fae he’s slain, an the hert o his mither be blythent”.

Siclyke spak he, an neist gied back his son til his wyfe, intil hir haud that he loued. At hir breist she happit him saftlie, lauchin an greitin at aince. An his man wes rowth at the sicht o’t, straikit hir wi’s haund an spak til hir richt couthie an hertie:

“Hinnie, dinna be fasht owre sairlye for me i yeir spreit nou! Nae man’l send me ti Hell gin it’s nae the tyme that’s weirdit. Nae man, trulie Ah tell ye, sal flie frae his weird that is weirdit, naither the cuif nor the guid man, the weird that is his frae his birth tyde. Nou ye maun gang awa hame, an tak tent til yeir ain kynd o darg, mirliego, luim and the lave. An see that the lassies ir eydent tentin thair wark. The war an the battil, the men’l tak tent til, me abuin aw, an the lave that ir bairnies o Ilios burgh”.

Sae spak gesserant Hektor an liftit the bassanat blythlie, horse-hair crestit an aw, an his deir wyfe gaed awa hamewith, turnin aften ti luik at his man, aye greitin fou sairlye.

This passage demonstrates that narrative Scots is not necessarily associated with the Kailyaird image, in the nineteenth century, where ‘snuffling virtue triumphs with a heart-felt prayer’ (Goodsir Smith, 1951<sup>6</sup>). Unfortunately, the reaction against the kailyaird novelists, heralded by the publication of *The House with the Green Shutters* at the turn of the century, was so fierce that much that was good in that tradition was discarded along with its maudlin sentimentality. The baby of genuine sentiment was thrown out along with the bathwater of mawkishness. This was a pity, for the Kailyaird tradition was the only popular tradition that Scotland had since the time of the poetic intensity of the Border Ballads.. The Scottish literati, were unable to stomach what Scotland had become, and danced away up a close, ostensibly in pursuit of Dunbar, and their utter rejection of the Kailyaird tradition was, in a sense, the abandonment of the Scottish people to live unsuccoured with their tartan, white heather and memories of Pickletillie folk. Thus the Scottish Renaissance made its appeal mainly to dilettantes, and failed to encompass and develop what was fine in the only tradition (impoverished though it was) which was alive.

Following Douglas Young's example, Kenneth Farrow has translated the whole of the Iliad into Scots and the following excerpt is an example of the quality of this work.

### PRIAM VEISITS ACHEILLES

Acheilles haed juist feinisht his denner. Priam cam ben, cam neir Acheilles, gruppit his knees, an kisst the man-killin haunds at haed felled sae monie o his ain sons.. Syne Priam made his maen: 'Mynd nou o yeir ain auld faither, maist nobil Prince Acheilles, an auld-yin lyke masell, weill doun the brae. Mebbe he is vext bi the fowk at dwell wi him, an the'r naebodie ti fend him frae daith. But atweill, as lang as he hears ye ir yit leevin, he is gled at hert, an howps ae day for ti see his braw lad win hame frae the weir.

'But Ah im wae, kis Ah aince haed the brawest sons i the haill o skowthie Troy, an nou nane o thaim is left. Fiftie sons Ah haed whan the men o Achaea cam; nyneteen o thaim born ti me frae the ae wame, an the lave drappit bi weimen frae ma houss-hauld. Aw thir haes fawn in battil, an ma brawest ane, wha bi himsell wes oor howp an beild, ye killt juist the ither day at the fechtin. Ay, Hektor; it's for him at Ah cum nou ti yeir dwellins, ti win him back, an Ah bring a rowthie ransom. Ai, Acheilles, fear God an peitie me, myndin o yeir ain auld faither! But Ah'm e'en mair ti be peitied. Ah hae voued ti dae whit nae ither man in the haill warld haes duin: ti lift ma haund ti the gash o the man that felled ma son'.

As he said thir wurd, he heized his haund an dawtit the gash o Acheilles, an Acheilles wes hert-sair at the thocht o his ain faither. He taen the auld man's haund an pusht him awa gey an innerlie, an sae the twa o thaim thocht o the deid an grat, tane for his Hektor as he couried afore the feet o Acheilles, an the tither for his faither an Patroklus. Whan his wae haed dwyned an he coud shift aince mair, he raise up frae his sait, an liftit up the auld man wi's haund, peitiein his gray baerd. Syne he spak rael couthie-lyke, frae hert til hert.

'Ai, puir man; yeir hert haes atweill tholit monie dour drees. Whit-wey dae ye cum intil the Achaean camp aw yeir lane? Hou coud ye byde ti luik on the gizz o the man at killt yeir braw sons, as Ah hae duin? Yeir hert maun be as dour as whunstone. C'wa nou, an dowp yeirsel doun bi ma syde. We wul lat oor wae ligg deep in oor herts, kis the'r nae guid ti be haed frae cauld waement. This is hou the gods haes wyvit thair waft for us leevin men! Oor lyfes is aw dule, but thay hae nae wae ti dree thairsel's'.

. These passages quoted from Scots literature illustrate the power of expression of Scots for narrative prose. These have been edited for spelling on the basis of the Scots Language Society's Recommendations for Writers in Scots reproduced in *A Scots Grammar*<sup>13</sup> (Saltire Society 2002).

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