SCOTTISH THEATRE AND DRAMA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A critical and historical study

by

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SUMMARY

The thesis begins by examining the general Scottish theatrical situation at the end of the nineteenth century and seeks to establish both the amount of theatrical activity, and how much, if any, of it could be regarded as distinctively Scottish. Attention is given to the heavy dependence of Scotland on the London theatre at this time and to the general view of the situation as reflected in the press of the largest Scottish city.

Attention is then turned to the first attempt to establish a Scottish repertory theatre, the Glasgow Repertory Company. Its progress is charted through the short period of its existence until its sudden termination on the outbreak of the first world war and then the work of the Scottish dramatists who wrote for it is discussed.

The situation in the interwar period is the central focus of study in this thesis and after a general survey and some discussion of various smaller theatrical ventures, the work of the Scottish National Players is carefully scrutinised. After discussing the rise and decline of the Players, the thesis moves on to a consideration to the kind and quality of plays which were written for and produced by the Players. Two dramatists, John Brandane and George Reston Malloch, are discussed at length and thereafter the work of a number of other playwrights is considered. Finally an attempt is made to evaluate the worth of this dramatic writing and to relate it to the Scottish experience.

The next chapter takes the form of a critical essay on the plays of James Bridie which seeks to ask the same kinds of questions about the worth of his contribution to the Scottish theatre and to examine how he tackled the problems which had faced the S.N.P. dramatists.

After a survey of the war period in Scotland, the thesis moves on to the post war situation and attempts to delineate the various tendencies which can be discerned both in the development of theatrical facilities and in dramatic writing. The conclusion draws together the threads of the argument and seeks to explain the rather disappointing progress that

has been made towards establishing a vigorous Scottish dramatic tradition.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with Scottish theatre and drama in the twentieth century, that is to say with the growth of facilities for the presentation of plays and the development of the writing of plays in Scotland.

As far as the former is concerned, the emphasis will be on the non-commercial theatre, simply because it has the better claim to be taken seriously as a purveyor of work of some artistic merit. This is not to denigrate the commercial theatre, but simply to point out a distinction that exists. The non-commercial exists to present plays which the people running it consider to be of some worth, the commercial to make a profit. The two objectives are not always mutually exclusive, but they are so sufficiently often to enable us to make the distinction between the two kinds of theatre.

As far as the writing of plays is concerned, an attempt will be made to trace the development of Scottish playwriting from its first faltering steps to its present position, for which no grandiose claims will be made. Evaluation of the work of Scottish playwrights will be attempted with two principal criteria in mind, the technical mastery of stage craft and the relationship of the work to experience, Scottish experience in particular, for so many of the writers under consideration are concerned with that experience. It is important to discover how far Scottish playwrights have developed an understanding of the mechanics of the theatre and how far what they write bears a relationship to life. It is of course much easier to evaluate stage technique than artistic worth and truth, particularly in Scotland where there are acute problems of national identity. However, in a study such as this, it is vital to come to grips with the problem.

Although mainly confined to the twentieth century, the study will deal with the theatrical situation in the latter part of the nineteenth century by way of introduction. As

a corollary, the post-war period will not be dealt with in such great detail as it comes after what are for the purposes of this study the most interesting periods, that before World War One and that between the wars. It was during the inter-war period in particular that there was a tremendous upsurge in theatrical activity, the writing of plays and public discussion of the problems of a Scottish theatre. It would be the submission of this thesis that while the pattern of repertory theatres is essentially a post-war one, that pattern has developed on the basis of the work done before 1940 and that the pattern of Scottish dramatic writing and the concepts of Scottish theatre which we have had since the end of the war stem largely from the period before the war, although there are signs, as will be indicated towards the end of this thesis, that the pattern and concepts are undergoing considerable change at the moment.

The work of Sir James Barrie, it will be noticed, has been excluded, principally because the emphasis is on the theatre in Scotland, and the writers who sprang from that theatre. Barrie, whose work has been the subject of much study, operated in the English theatre showing little interest in the Scottish theatre and thus comes outside the scope of the present study. His success however, is of ironic importance for no Scottish dramatist has had comparable good fortune.

Although the post-war period is not dealt with in as much detail as previous periods, and the chronicling of dramatic events post-war takes the form of an essay in tendencies which has its point of termination in the early 60's, mention ought perhaps to be made here of some of the developments since then.

It should first be explained that the mid-60's are taken as a point of termination not merely because it is obviously desirable that a thesis of this sort should stop short of the immediately contemporary which is always extending itself forward in time, but also because it is considered that the opening of the Traverse Theatre in 1963 is a highly important landmark in the post-war scene, important enough to be regarded as a terminus ad quem.

With regard to what has happened since then, the first

point to be made is that the repertory theatres have continued to expand their activities, and while there have been no major new theatres opened, with the exception of the McRobert Centre in Stirling, which has theatrical facilities as part of its arts complex, plans are afoot for replacements for four existing theatres and one new theatre. In addition, a large number of small arts centres have sprung up, and these are used more and more by touring companies of small and medium scale. On the debit side, the Close Theatre has been destroyed by fire.

An interesting development has been the emergence of an embryonic 'agit-prop' theatre. Most of the credit for this development lies with the Scottish offshoot of the 7.84 Theatre Company, which in 1973 attracted enthusiastic audiences and reviews with the incredibly titled 'The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black Black Oil' by John McGrath, a marvellously lively production which sought to relate the Highland clearances and the current rush for North Sea Oil to each other. Whether 7.84 marks the beginning of popular Scottish political theatre-taking theatre to the people in halls, community centres and clubs, as 7.84 does at the moment, - remains to be seen.

7.84's social commitment can be paralleled of course in Unity Theatre's and likewise the neo-realism, the dogged neo-realism, of much recent Scottish writing by people like Bill Bryden and Roddy MacMillan, can also be paralleled by Scottish dramatic writing in the late forties and early fifties.

The writers mentioned above have been particularly well served by the Royal Lyceum company which has recently attempted to introduce a more Scottish flavour to its programmes through premieres of Scottish plays and the employment of Scottish actors - a development which reminds one of the Gateway Theatre - the long term impact of which cannot yet be assessed.

It would be my contention that these developments do not alter the basic conclusions of this thesis.

CHAPTER II
SCOTTISH THEATRE IN THE LATTER PART OF THE 19th CENTURY

In the latter part of the nineteenth century there were some 25 theatres in Scotland, most of them in the major cities but also to be found in such places as Coatbridge, Greenock, Inverness, Paisley and Leith. In addition, there were a number of music halls - Glasgow, for example, had about half a dozen of these.

For their presentations, the Scottish theatres of this period were almost entirely dependent on touring companies of actors which were based in London, and which brought along with them the latest metropolitan successes.

> 'London is at present the capital of the British stage-world in a very emphatic and peculiar sense - nowadays it gives the law to the provinces' (1)

In an editorial earlier in the same year, 1890, the 'Glasgow Herald', from which the remark quoted above comes, commenting on a magazine article by Oswald Crawfurd on the degenerate state of the theatre, says -

> 'Mr. Crawfurd may perhaps be entitled to treat the London stage as representative of that of the nation, for it is undoubtedly the case that nowadays no play has much chance of attaining to fame, even if first produced in the provinces, until it has received the hall-mark of metropolitan approval, while the vast majority of the dramatic companies which traverse the three kingdoms are selected and organised in London' (2)

The contention is borne out if one examines the records of performances during the period in question. In Glasgow, for example, innumerable companies, famous and obscure, occupied the theatres - Henry Irving's Lyceum Company, Beerbohm Tree's Company, Charles H. Hawtrey's Company, Hubert O'Grady's Irish Company, John Hare and Company, and F.W. Benson and his Shakespeare Company. The pattern of theatrical production did not differ markedly in Glasgow

from that prevalent in Britain at the time, and the programmes seen in the city merit little special comment here.

It is however, worth mentioning that during this period there were innumerable performances of the stage adaptations from the novels of Scott, and Glasgow, not surprisingly, saw a large number of performances of 'Rob Roy', 'The Lady of the Lake' and 'Marmion'. These performances, which continued into the early twentieth century, and appear to have persisted longer north of the border than south if it, were sometimes given by travelling companies from England and sometimes by companies which appear to have been organised in Scotland by a theatrical management such as Howard and Wyndham.

Some theatregoers of the time were under no illusion as to the worth of these plays -

> 'Apart, however, from the Bailie, the 'Rob Roy' not of Scott but of the present day, is simply a Scotch Showpiece for the delectation of English and American tourists - the same tourists who find the Dungeon of Buchan "so picturesque" and, sustained by aereated beverages and faith in dear delightful Mr. Barrie, try through the Window in Thrums to witness the tragedy of humble Scots life. Major Galbraith and Andrew Fairservice have been converted into sheer "flagrant examples" of the mischief done by Scotch drink, while Diana Vernon and Francis Osbaldistone, with their weakness for bursting into song at the most critical moments, are simply walking illustrations of the beauty of Scotch melody' (3)

Nor were there any illusions in some quarters as to the worthlessness of the great majority of the plays which Glasgow, and Britain as a whole for that matter, were seeing. A perusal of the columns of 'The Glasgow Herald' for example, makes this quite clear.

> 'It may be preducted with absolute confidence that not a single play that has been produced for the first time during 1889 is destined to form a permanent addition either to our dramatic literature or to the repertoire of our stage, and that nearly all of them will be absolutely forgotten half a dozen years hence' (4)

An article on a speech Henry Irving made to the Wolverhampton Literary and Scientific Society contains a reference to the -

'mediocre though highly spectacular melodrame at the Lyceum' (5)

There seems to be a criticism of actor-managers like Irving in another comment -

'Oddly enough, however, theatrical managers and authors do not themselves seem to care in the least whether art and the stage are on good terms or at loggerheads. They produce plays which people are likely to go and see' (6)

On the occasion of Boucicault's death, the 'Herald' is forced to the conclusions -

'Few dramatists have ever excelled him in the faculty of writing crisp and brilliant dialogue, or in the perception of the means of most effectually tickling the ears of an average audience. The misfortune is that he gave himself up to the domination of these faculties, and worked always within the limits they imposed, with the inevitable consequence that he has not left behind him a single play which is likely to survive him more than a few years, while a very large proportion of his long array of "original dramas" are already dead and forgotten. He was, however, a benefactor to his generation by providing it with a great deal of harmless entertainment' (7)

Five years later, in 1895, the 'Herald' is still bemoaning the condition of the British theatre. The London Lyceum's production of 'King Arthur' by J.W.C. Carr is given short shrift -

'To speak plainly, the piece is not, in any serious sense, a drama at all' (8)

A few months later in the same year, an editorial complains that we have nothing to compare with contemporary French drama and that the British stage has reached a 'low ebb in point of literary merit' (9)

In 1899 the writer of an article on 'The world that is never on the stage' says -

> 'No serious effort seems ever likely to be made to reproduce the actual or even possible every-day life of the middle class of a busy commercial city like Glasgow or Manchester or Liverpool' (10)

However, there were more hopeful signs during this year; a series of performances of classical English drama in Glasgow under the auspices of the General Committee of the Classical English Drama, was very successful, thus indicating the growth in public appreciation of drama, something the lack of which the 'Herald' had condemned throughout the decade -

> 'The work in which the Committee are engaged is certain to have a potent influence in removing the pseudo-Puritanical prejudice which still, to so large an extent, exists among us' (11)

It certainly did exist, for the columns of the paper were taken up at this time - 1899 - with a protracted correspondence entitled 'The Church and the Theatre', in which various individuals argued for and against the proposition that the theatre was an abomination of the devil. It is interesting to note that nine years previously the same paper had argued that such prejudice was no longer in existence in Scotland (12). It is also interesting to note that none of the editorials and articles quoted from in this chapter provoked any direct comment in the correspondence columns of the paper.

1890 seems to have been a vintage year for analysis of the maladies of the theatre. Sometimes it is quite simply the lack of good playwrights which is blamed, sometimes the actor-manager system; on other occasions the leader writer is forced to conclude that -

> 'the drama in its loftiest development of both tragedy and comedy is only suited to reflect the moods and attract the sympathies of a people in a comparatively primitive stage of social development' (13)

On another occasion, the superiority of the French

theatre is attributed to the fact that the stage in Britain "has ceased to have that intimate relation with the facts of life which it still maintains among our neighbours" (14). In the same article it is suggested that the British system works unfairly to the financial disadvantage of the author, whereas in France the author has a much better financial deal and that if the French system were adopted in Britain, talent might appear and flourish.

The position of the provinces, dependent on London for their theatrical fare is, as indicated earlier, fairly heavily emphasized. In one sweeping statement, the 'Herald' condemns the system and its effects on a city like Glasgow -

> 'A stranger who should visit London at the present time with the purpose of studying the habits and tastes of the Metropolitan public would be justified in concluding that their preferences are divided between appropriations from the French, trashy melodrama, comic opera, strongly impregnated with the Gallic flavour, and burlesque. The provincial stage is very much in the same condition, necessarily, because provincial lessees are now mainly dependent on London for their pieces as well as for their companies. The Glasgow public were last week regaled with a farcical comedy borrowed from the German, and an Irish "national" drama which is purely a piece d'occasion' (15)

In the preceding remakrs on the condition of the theatre in Scotland, during the period under consideration, attention has been focused on Glasgow, but it is suggested that Glasgow was by no meansatypical in this respect and that the other theatres in Scotland followed a similar pattern to the one found in Glasgow.

We now come to the question of how much, if any, Scottish drama existed in the situation discussed above.

One does find traces of a Scots drama during the period - at least traces of plays written by Scotsmen being performed. In 1895, for example, A.W. Yuill's farce, 'Married by Proxy' was given its first performance in Greenock. In October 1895 the lessee and manager of the

Grand Theatre, Glasgow, Ernest Stevens, had his play 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled' premiered. Stevens followed this with two other plays 'Ivanhoe' (1896) and 'For Bonnie Scotland' (1897). These plays were praised at the time (16) but in terms which place them alongside the hundreds of other meaningless dramas and melodramas of the period. In June 1896 a play called 'Robert Burns' was presented at the Royal in Glasgow. The play had been -

> 'produced for the first time a week before in Edinburgh. It was a failure. Fortunately for the author his name was not revealed' (17)

In September of the same year, at the Princess's in Glasgow, a Scottish opera entitled 'Holyrood', based on the play 'Cramond Brig', was presented. It was preceded each evening by a 'Scotch farce', written by a Glasgow journalist, and entitled 'The McTavish'. In August 1898 'Bonnie Annie Laurie' was premiered at the Luceum in Edinburgh, but far from being a Scottish drama this was yet another version of Scotland by an Englishman, Charles Daly.

It has to be admitted that it is difficult to find much in the way of Scottish drama in the professional theatre at this time. True, Scotsmen were writing plays, but the evidence suggests that they were merely imitating the plays which were being presented in London, and as these plays had little merit, so the Scots ones had little either.

The amateur drama movement had not of course reached the peak it was to attain in the second quarter of this century in Scotland, but seems to have been reasonably active. If one turns to it in the hope of finding hints of a dramatic renaissance however, one is going to be disappointed. In the main, the amateur theatre appears to have followed in the footsteps of the professional one, and one finds records of performances of plays by Tom Taylor, Boucicault and H.J. Byron, for example and a large number of performances of Walter Scott adaptations. There is the occasional Scots play - in 1892, for example, the Irving Dramatic Club of Glasgow presented 'Miss M.E. Niven's original play, 'Many a Slip' (18), and Aberdeen University Dramatic Society presented 'The Gilded Pill', 'a bright

little comedietta by Mr. W.A. McKenzie' (19). In 1893 the Glasgow Junior Club put on a play by their stage manager, W. Graham Moffat, entitled 'The Fifth Act or a Drama Rehearsed', which appears to have been an early dramatic essay by the author of 'Bunty Pulls the Strings', 'The Prompter', a short-lived magazine devoted, initially at any rate, to the amateur theatre in Scotland, from which the judgements quoted in this paragraph come, described it as a 'very clever little piece' (20). Such evidence as there is, however, does not suggest that these plays generally merit serious consideration.

It is arguable that the pantomime in Scotland at this time was much more Scottish than anything else which appeared in the theatre and although pantomime as such is outside the scope of this study, attention will be turned briefly in its direction. Although Glasgow, for example, did often copy London successes, there seem to have been deliberate efforts to produce scripts which are very much localized. This applies in particular to the pantomimes Fred Locke wrote for the Royal Princess's: Robinson Crusoe for example departs from the Broomielaw, and Dick Whittington finds his fortune in Glasgow; in 'Mother Hubbard', performed in the 1888-9 season, one finds that the localisation of the story extends to the introduction of characters such as Sir Kelvin Grove, to references to the Gas Company and to the use of the Scots vernacular for characters on the lower rungs of the social scale.

Pantomime seems to have been an exceedingly popular form of theatre during the period under consideration. According to the 'Glasgow Harlequin', a periodical which flourished briefly during the 1895-96 season,

> 'During the festive season pantomime in Glasgow has a minimum patronage of 60,000 people weekly' (21)

'The 'Harlequin' itself ran a competition in which readers were asked to nominate their choice of best performer of the season. The prize, a large cake, went to Percy Milton for his performance in 'Robinson Crusoe'. Some nine thousand votes were cast, which even allowing for double voting, demonstrates the popularity of pantomime.

In the production of pantomimes, no expense seems to have been spared. F.W. Wyndham, in an interview with the 'Harlequin', is reported as saying -

'our Xmas productions cost between three
thousand and four thousand pounds,
(independent of salaries). Then we have
fully two hundred people in the pantomime,
or, if you like, two hundred and fifty
including our local staff' (22)

In the same issue it is reported that Richard Waldon is rehearsing Fred Locke's sixteenth consecutive pantomime which is to cost two thousand pounds without salaries, and twenty thousand pounds in all. (23).

Another form of theatre very popular at this time was the music-hall, where a native tradition of Glasgow comics and Scots comics was being built up. This tradition - which was very much linked with the pantomime - is also outside the scope of this study, but it does appear that the only genuinely Scots contribution to the theatre during the period was made on the pantomime stage and in the music halls.

There does not, then, seem to have been much in the way of Scottish dramatic art during this period. Several reasons can be suggested. The first and most obvious is that Scotland has no dramatic or theatrical traditions worth talking of. Whereas the English théatre stretches back from the present day through the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights to the medieval drama, the Scottish dramatic inheritance is a very small one. There are ample records of medieval plays being produced in Scotland, but the departure of the Court for London in 1603, and the attitude of the Kirk prevented further developments, had these been likely. The Kirk did not, to be fair, attack the theatre immediately after the Reformation. Indeed, for a time it sponsored plays which were vehicles for anti-Catholic propaganda. John Knox himself attended several performances of these plays. Plays on biblical subjects were also performed. However, the Kirk soon banned 'Robin Hood' plays, and in 1575 the General Assembly went further, and banned 'clerk-plays or comedies based upon the canonical scriptures'. While the Court remained in Edinburgh, it supported the theatre (which probably incensed the theatre's enemies even more), but on the death of Elizabeth I, and the consequent union of the Crowns, this support disappeared. For the next hundred years or so theatrical activity was sparse, although

performances by visiting English companies did take place, and when the Duke of York came to reside in Scotland in 1679 he brought a company drawn from the London playhouses to Edinburgh. The company appears to have remained for several years.

During the eighteenth century, efforts were made to start theatres, in the face of religious opposition, particularly in Edinburgh, and in 1736 Allan Ramsay managed to open Edinburgh's first regular theatre, but this was forced to close the following year, as a consequence of the government's licensing act, a measure which was designed to deal with political satire in the London theatre and had no relevance to the Scottish situation. Nonetheless it had the unfortunate effect described.

In Glasgow similar attempts often met with mixed reactions and on occasions a violent end. George Ann Bellamy in her 'Apology' (24) gives an account of the destruction of a theatre in Glasgow in 1764 by a mob influenced by a Methodist preacher. The theatre had been constructed according to her account of the matter, on the specific understanding that she and her company would act in it, but before they set foot on the boards, the mob had set fire to it.

It is obvious that an atmosphere where such things could happen was, to say the least, inhospitable towards the theatre. Theatrical activity did however continue in both our major cities and theatres began to be established on a permanent basis towards the end of the eighteenth century, but it will be obvious that during most of that century theatre had a precarious hold on Scottish life.

It is extremely improbable that authors will continue to write for a non-existent or scarcely existent theatre, and consequently few plays appeared, and even fewer of merit. It is easy to abuse such plays as were written in the eighteenth century in Scotland, (25), but what must be borne in mind when judging these plays is that their authors had no theatrical or dramatic tradition within which they could work. Their English counterparts were much better off in this respect.

It might be thought that when in the early nineteenth century some Scottish stock companies were formed and theatre in Scotland began to expand, the opportunity would thus have been provided for Scottish writers to develop, but at that time the pitiable economic position of the dramatist would be a major disincentive to any potential playwright. Later in the century, when the economic position of the dramatist had improved, Scotland, like the rest of the provinces, had become so dependent on London for theatrical fare that a Scottish dramatic tradition would have been unlikely to emerge.

It is suggested, then, that the almost complete absence of Scots plays from the nineteenth century Scottish stage and the complete absence of any play of merit, are due quite simply to the economic factors, the dominance of London, the lack of a theatrical tradition as such and the consequent lack of a dramatic tradition within which playwrights could work, and against the achievements of which they could meausre their own efforts. Good writers, almost without exception, spring from a tradition of writing, which need not be a very large one, but one which has both identity and vitality. Such a tradition has only just begun to exist in Scotland.

If we look at contemporary opinions of the Scottish theatrical situation at the end of the nineteenth century, we discover that some writers were convinced that a theatrical tradition could not be forstered in Scotland. In 1890, 'The Glasgow Herald' printed a review of Charles Waddie's play, 'Wallace or the Battle of Stirling Bridge' (26). The reviewer poses the question 'why is the dramatic muse silent in Scotland' and quotes Waddie as suggesting this is because there is no resident dramatic company in Scotland. The reviewer rejects this idea and says there is no silence in Scotland, for there is no muse to be silent - 'The poetic genius of Scotland is entirely and intensely lyrical'. This statement is obviously debatable, but it does seem to show the pessimism of some Scotsmen with regard to Scottish drama.

In 1895, the Herald devoted an editorial to the death of the leading actor-manager in Scotland, Howard, in which it castigates him for his part in breaking up the old 'Scotch "stock companies"', 'which has involved the denationalisation of the theatre in Scotland' (27). It is true to say that during the period of the existence of these companies more Scots plays were put on and well patronised, but none of any worth, as the same editorial admits -

> 'Scotland has never produced a great play or playwright .... There is, of course, the Reverend John Home and his "Douglas" which caused the greatest ebullition of Scotch national conceit, and which led Burns to commit his greatest blunder in criticism - or perpetrate his greatest practical joke'

The writer goes on -

> 'The appearance of a Scotch dramatist ought to be as likely an event as the appearance of a Scotch novelist. Unfortunately he would not be in so fortunate a position as regards "aids to understanding". The English devotee of the Kailyard School can, with the aid of a glossary, fight his way to a faint appreciation of what gives him so much joy. But a Scotch dramatist, however ably he might reproduce the humours of Bellahouston or Stockbridge, the passions of St. Andrews or Millport, would be almost powerless without the backing of trained Scotch actors and actresses. These are days of decentralisation in fiction, as in other things, but decentralisation in the drama is as yet but the wildest of dreams'

It is certainly significant that the beginnings of a Scottish drama, which we have seen this century, originated in the productions of resident Scottish dramatic companies whether the Scottish Playgoers Company, the Scottish National Players, Unity Theatre, the Citizens' Theatre or one of the smaller groups. It is to the work of these companies that attention will now be turned.

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CHAPTER III

THE GLASGOW REPERTORY COMPANY

Theatre was a growth industry in Scotland at the beginning of this century, asthe figures below demonstrate.

	All Scotland	Number of Theatres: Aberdeen	Dundee	Edinburgh	Glasgow
1900	32	2	3	5	10
1910	53	3	6	7	15

The first decade of the century was marked by an upsurge in theatre building particularly in Glasgow: The King's opened in 1904, the Pavilion the same year, the Alhambra in 1910, the Lyceum in 1900, the Palane in 1903, the Coliseum in 1905, Hengler's in 1905 and the Gaiety in 1906. It is interesting to note that the King's, Pavilion and Alhambra were large theatres in the centre of the city while most of the others were music halls serving their immediate locality. In the event it was the music halls that suffered most as a consequence of the advances of the cinema: from being neighbourhood music halls they became neighbourhood cinemas, a transition that was not so readily open to the city centre theatres.

Elsewhere in Scotland theatres were being opened: The Gaiety in Ayr (1900) for example, the Grand (1903) and the Electric (1910) in Falkirk, the Empire (1903) and King's (1909) in Dundee, the King's (1906) in Edinburgh, the Empire (1903) in Greenock, the Hippodrome (1907) in Hamilton and the King's (1904) in Kirkcaldy.

Against this background there was established in Glasgow a repertory company whose work, although it was shortlived, is of great importance in the history of the Scottish theatre. This was the Glasgow Repertory Company, which for most of its life was under the managing directorship of Alfred Wareing, an Englishman who devoted his life to the repertory theatre movement, and the man whose work with the League of Audiences led to the setting up of the C.E.M.A., and later of the Arts Council.

The Glasgow Repertory Company was established in 1909,

but before that time there were signs of an upsurge in interest in serious theatre in Scotland. Amateur dramatic clubs were being formed - the Glasgow Amateur Dramatic Company, for example, was formed in 1907, and gave its first performance at the beginning of 1908. In 1908 the Glasgow Stage Society formed for the purpose of fostering interest in the literary drama in Glasgow and district, held its first meeting at which a lecture was delivered by Mr. Frederick Whelan of the London Stage Society on 'The New Drama' in the course of which he stated that -

> 'The first thing in the new drama of the country was to get plays about English and Scottish life written by men who knew the life of the English and Scottish people' (1)

An article entitled 'A Scotch National Theatre', written by C.R.J., was published in 'The Glasgow Herald' in 1907, in which the writer declares his faith that -

> 'There is a very flourishing and distinct national life in Scotland, and that this life so far has had almost no expression in literature of the better sort, or in the drama. The stirring times of the past have their splendid and ever-increasing monument of romantic literature. The kailyard has been done and overdone, till, like the cuckoo in midsummer, its note strikes out of tune. We do not, as someone has well said, want "tartan plays" at the present moment. We want plays as true and national, though not necessarily as sordid and bitter as Mr. Douglas's novel "The House with the Green Shutters". We want modern life in Scotland, particularly I believe middle-class town life, portrayed as R.L. Stevenson has portrayed it in certain tentative but valuable essays' (2)

One notes the emphasis on modern Scottish life and the half-approving reference to Douglas's novel as a model for aspiring playwrights. C.R.J. puts forward several proposals which he feels, if acted upon, would lead to the establishment of a national theatre, including the formation of a stock

company. A year later however, the Herald was still bemoaning the theatrical situation.

> 'There seems nothing for it therefore but that we must languish in the cold while our fellow citizens in London crowd comfortable small theatres where they have the essence of life dressed up for them in forms that are specially appetising. Either that must be accepted as part of our melancholy destiny or some arrangement must be made, say under the new alliance between Church and State, whereby during the winter small entertainments may be given in small halls to small audiences hitherto unaccustomed to them' (3)

It is interesting that what the writer appears to be advocating here as a solution to the problem is something akin to J.T. Grein's Independent Theatre of London or the Stage Society in London.

In 1909, as a result of the efforts of Wareing and several prominent Glasgow citizens, a stock company was established. A meeting was held on 19th February at which Wareing explained his proposal to start a citizens' theatre in Glasgow, and thus make Glasgow theatrically independent of London. The enterprise was to be started with a capital of £2000, £1000 of which would be called up. It was estimated by Wareing that it would cost £240 per week to run the theatre.

> 'Professor Phillimore said ... that, if Mr. Wareing's estimates were correct ... he did not see that there should be any more than a small modicum of risk attaching to the venture' (4)

By the middle of March plans had been announced for a first season which was to commence at the beginning of April and a prospectus of Scottish Playgoers Ltd. was issued.

> 'The objects of the company include the establishment in Glasgow of a Repertory Theatre ... the organisation of a stock company ... and the encouragement of the initiation and development of purely Scottish drama by providing a stage and

> acting company which will be peculiarly adapted for the production of plays national in character, written by Scottish men and women of letters' (5)

The directors of the company were Professor W. MacNeile Dixon, Deacon Convenor Andrew Macdonald, Neil Munro, Professor J.S. Phillimore, J.W. Robb, an accountant, and Alfred Wareing. They decided in fact to start the company with a capital of £3000 in £1 shares, £1000 more than had originally been announced, of which 2000 were offered for subscription. In point of fact only 1000 of these had been taken up when the company began operations in the Royalty Theatre which had been leased for £80 per week from Howard and Wyndham with all the profits from bars, cloakrooms and programme sales to go to the proprietors.

It is important to realise that those who worked for the establishment of a peculiarly Scottish theatre had constantly before them the example of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, where a distinctively Irish drama was in the process of being created. The achievements of the Irish drama are constantly invoked in all that was written about the Glasgow Rep. On the death of J.M. Synge, for example, the Glasgow Herald comments that the country is moving towards the 'establishment of a Scottish theatre equal to the Irish one in national spirit and possibly superior to it in breadth of artistic horizon' (6), and later on when things were not going very well for the Rep. the writer of a letter to the same paper also invokes the Irish example.

> 'Part of the original intention of its promoters I understood, was to make the Repertory as far as possible a national Scottish theatre. By developing upon such distinctively national lines the Abbey Theatre at Dublin has achieved notable artistic and probably financial success, and I cannot help thinking that similar results are to be achieved by similar means in Glasgow' (7)

In 1908 two plays in "braid Scots" by Graham Moffat were presented in Glasgow and their reviewer in the Herald comments -

'The example of the Irish playwrights and players has inspired Mr. Graham Moffat to embark on a similar reform of the theatre in Scotland' (8)

We are still of course waiting for our Scottish national drama and some attention will be given later to the reasons why the Glasgow Rep. failed to produce it.

In the souvenir programme for the opening season in 1909 a great deal of emphasis is put on the 'ensemble' method the company is to adopt.

'Playwrights have ceased to turn out work of the joiner's shop order - no longer do they remember they must fit 'the leads', 'the juveniles', 'the old men', 'the comedians', 'the responsibles', 'the first and second walking gentleman', 'the utility' and 'the chambermaids'. The most modern dramatic authors write for no particular actor or actress and when the play comes to be produced London is searched for a cast that shall realise all the author hopes to get out of his work ..... In the programme presented by the Scottish Playgoers Company the names of ultra-modern dramatists will be found: Bernard Shaw, John Galsworthy, and Arnold Bennetthave thrown off allegiance to the star actor and refused a monopoly of limelight to the leading lady. Their art is above petty claims, their aims are beyond the personal glorification of the individual. Thus they merit the support of all thinking men and women; their purpose is firm, and the hope for the future of the drama lies at the goal they set out to attain: the play is the thing - Miss Blank or Mister Dash are only the means of expression to be used when there is something for them to say' (9)

The programme note concludes -

'It only remains for playgoers and those interested in the drama to support, actively and energetically, the movement which may

lead to the establishment of a Scottish National Theatre'

The company seems to have put the ensemble approach into practice, for an article in 'The Times' 1909 on the theatre comments 'the man who has a big part one week is liable to open the door and announce dinner the next' (10).

During the first six weeks of the company's existence Shaw's 'You Never Can Tell', Ibsen's 'An Enemy of the People', Galsworthy's 'Strife' and Arnold Bennet's 'Cupid and Commonsense', along with plays by other writers, were produced. The season did not make a profit and the capital was absorbed to cover the operating loss. The company continued to lose money until the final year of its existence when it made a profit. The figures for the five years are as follows -

1909 - 1910	:	Loss of £3019
1910 - 1911	:	Loss of £1539
1911 - 1912	:	Loss of £322
1912 - 1913	:	Loss of £125
1913 - 1914	:	Profit of £790

There is something sadly ironic about some of the speeches made by Wareing at the beginning of the enterprise and about some of the comments in the press. On the first night, for example, Wareing declared 'If we go on as we have begun, our "Citizens' Theatre" is assured to us' (11). The Herald comments -

'A Citizens' Theatre has come to stay. It has earned its full rights of civic nationalisation and the public support asked for in the letter from the directorate which we publish today is not sued in forma pauperis, but claimed as a tribute justly due to a native institution of tried and sterling worth' (12)

(The letter in fact asked that people come forward to take up the unsubscribed shares). At the beginning of 1910 the Herald remains optimistic -

'The variety of the programme inspires a suggestion. It is that the Repertory Theatre of Glasgow affords a basis, such as exists nowhere else in Britain, for the establishment of a Dramatic Academy which would not only

be ultimately invaluable to the theatre but would bring great credit to our city' (13)

Wareing, however, had been much more cautious at the end of the second season the previous November - 'As to their future, experience had taught him not to promise too much or to be too definite' (14).

At the end of the spring season in 1911, Wareing spoke to the audience in the following terms - 'If each Repertory enthusiast made a convert our anxieties would cease and the Repertory Theatre future be assured' (15). The note sounded here had also been sounded in the introductory programme for the fifth season in the autumn of 1910, (on the front cover of which a highlander in warlike garb is shown drawing a curtain).

'The Repertory Theatre enters upon its fifth season with such a handsome record that it would seem to many that its future is now assured. But - and it must be fully emphasised - much remains to be done before those whose enthusiasm and material support have helped to the present position can ease up, to admire from a distance the result of their energies. To come out of this season with satisfaction it is necessary that all the former supporters should adhere and that every other one should convert one playgoer into one Repertory enthusiast. The programme for the coming season is more ambitious and costly than any yet arranged. It is something to have survived four strenuous bouts with prejudice and intertia, but to make sure the wreath is "laurels" and not "immortelles" demands not only a continuance of, but an accession to the support already referred to' (16)

In April 1912 Wareing's end of season speech was delivered in his absence, since he had taken ill as a result of overwork. It is not at all optimistic.

'This season has been one of ups and downs; there have been many downs, mostly due to the coal strike and if the future of the

> Glasgow Repertory Theatre depended upon the results of this season, I should not feel very happy about it; but hope springs eternal, and I have the courage to think that the results of the next four weeks will revive the ebbing interest' (17)

At that year's A.G.M. at the end of May it was reported that the loss of £322 on the previous 31 weeks would have been much higher but for the success of J.J. Bell's 'Wee Macgreegor' over the Christmas period. However the directors recommended that -

> 'provided a theatre can be obtained on reasonable terms a short season of eight or twelve weeks should be undertaken in the autumn. This might be extended if proved successful, or if arrangements could be made for the interchange of companies and productions with one or more of the theatres working on similar lines in other cities' (18)

In addition, Wareing's contract was terminated 'In view of the indefiniteness of the future of the company' (19) and it was decided to engage a director on a seasonal basis, although the board would be prepared to consider appointing Wareing if he were available in the autumn.

This statement of the directors gave rise to several letters in the press suggesting ways in which the future of the company could be better secured (20). Several correspondents suggest that the Royalty Theatre should be abandoned and much smaller and cheaper premises sought. One said that what was required was a small theatre like Gertrude Kingston's 'Little Theatre' in London (21), another that a hall seating 400 - 500 people should be obtained and turned into a workshop theatre with the absolute minimum of equipment, and operated as a private club. The hall could be let in the off-season to bring in extra money (22). Another suggests that the Repertory Theatre programme has fallen between the two stools of popular and artistic taste -

'What is essential is that only plays of sufficient artistic merit should be produced - good plays and good acting - and if this were consistently done there would be no doubt of an early success' (23)

Yet another comespondent - 'Root of the Matter' - returns to the old theme -

'Part of the original intention of its promoters, I understood, was to make the Repertory as far as possible a national Scottish theatre. By developing upon such distinctively national lines the Abbey Theatre at Dublin has achieved notable artistic and probably financial success, and I cannot help thinking that similar results are to be achieved by similar means in Glasgow ' (24)

There was no autumn season in 1912, as the directors were unable to obtain a lease of a theatre on favourable terms, although a short programme of plays was presented in the Alhambra music hall, each play being only one part of a variety show which also included, for example, 'Willard the man who grows in full view of the audience'. In the spring of 1913 Alfred Wareing, who had been away on a cruise to recover his health, returned to Glasgow, and presented a short season of plays which included two private performances of 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', an event which led inevitably to questions being asked in Parliament. Wareing presented this season on his own account. It had no connection with Scottish Playgoers Ltd. which was at the time preoccupied with its own doubtful future. Wareing's season, in which he presented nine plays, eight of which were new to Glasgow and four new to the stage, was apparently a financial success, but only just.

Meanwhile a meeting of the shareholders of Scottish Playgoers Ltd. had been called, since several of the large shareholders had indicated that the company might have to consider winding up. However, at the meeting the directors were instructed to carry on, and it was decided to run an eight week season the following autumn.

The season actually materialised in the spring of

1914 under the directorship of Lewis Casson, and opened on the 22nd January with a production of Alfred Bennet's 'The Honeymoon'. 'The Glasgow Herald' declared -

> 'The re-opening of the Royalty Theatre last night by the Scottish Playgoers Ltd. may be said to mark the renaissance of the repertory movement in Glasgow ' (25)

Twenty-two plays were presented in thirteen and a half weeks, four of which were new to Glasgow and four new to the stage. The season was the first which was both a financial and an artistic success and the directors were able to report in May 1914 that a profit of over £790 has been made. Colonel F.L. Morrison, the chairman, remarked at this meeting that he thought they had at last turned the corner and had reached a self-supporting stage, although he pointed out that the margin of profitability was narrow, since average weekly receipts were only nine pounds higher than two years previously when a loss of £322 had been sustained (26). It was decided that the name of the company should be changed to the Scottish Repertory Company Ltd. and that a bolder policy would be followed in future, in particular with regard to the production of modern and Shakespearean plays, despite the expense of presenting these. However the company had little chance to pursue this bolder policy for the outbreak of the First World War swamped their efforts. On the 16th November 1914 the following paragraph appeared in the Glasgow Herald -

> 'The directorsof the Scottish Repertory Company (Ltd.) have decided that owing to the war the active operations of the company must meantime be suspended. Before the outbreak of the war negotiations had been opened with a view to obtaining a suitable theatre, the intention being to enter upon a dramatic season on the lines of the one which proved as successful in the spring of the present year. The war, however, interfered with the arrangements and with Colonel Morrison, Chairman of the company and Major Jowitt, convenor of the production committee, on military service, it was felt

> that the proposal to proceed with a dramatic season should be postponed and this step has accordingly been taken. Among members of last season's acting company and other members of the staff who are now in France, is the producer, Mr. Lewis Casson, who is serving as a motor driver at the front' (27)

The work of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre was at an end, and although the remaining funds were transferred after the war to the St. Andrew Society of Glasgow, under whose aegis the Scottish National Players were formed, the nature of the work of the S.N.P. was so different from that of the Glasgow Rep. that the tradition started by the latter was not properly restored until the recent growth of professional repertory theatres in Scotland.

It is wrong to look upon the Glasgow Rep. as in any way a failure. Although it had to struggle for the five years of its existence, it had by 1914 reached a reasonably secure position as a serious repertory theatre without benefit of subsidy. Admittedly, the company received private subsidy from its shareholders who did not gain nor expect to gain, any return for their 'investment', but the fact that a profit was made in 1914 does indicate that a repertory theatre had so established itself in the city that it could have been thenceforth a viable financial proposition. It was the first repertory theatre in Scotland (though it never played strictly in repertoire) and the first citizens' theatre in the English speaking world. In five years it presented over one hundred plays, thirty three of which were new to the stage, and about sixteen of which were new Scottish plays. The company performed plays by some of the leading writers of the day - seven plays by Shaw, two by Ibsen, four by Bennett, three by Galsworthy and three by Granville-Barker. It could not be regarded as a thorough going arts or avant-garde theatre, but although a lot of light weight material was presented, it is doubtful if the proportion is much higher than that found in the programmes of many subsidised repertory theatres today.

As can be seen from the figures quoted above, about one third of all the plays presented were entirely new to the stage, a remarkably high proportion. The company scored a few notable firsts, in particular with the production of Chekhov's 'The Seagull', the first production of a play by Chekhov in Britain (Wareing's production during his own 1913 season of 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' was the first production of a censored play outside London). Encouragment was given to Scottish authors, and although no masterpieces were produced, and there was no dramatic renaissance comparable to the Irish one, a start was made to the building up of a native dramatic tradition. It can be argued that the formation of The Socttish National Players stemmed directly from the encouragement given by the Glasgow Rep. to Scottish writers. The scheme for the 'production of plays dealing with Scottish life and character' (28) was in fact instigated by the Saint Andrew Society of Glasgow before the war. The outbreak of war caused the scheme to be postponed but in its place the executive committee of the S.N.P. decided to run a series of lectures including, it was hoped, one by 'one of the leading promoters of the Irish National Theatre in Dublin' (29).

The Glasgow Repertory Company presented some sixteen new Scots plays and several other Scots plays which had already been premiered. Where texts are obtainable, they tend to be in the series 'Repertory Plays' published by Gowans and Gray of Glasgow and London. This series arose out of the work of the Glasgow Rep;

> 'Most modern plays are good reading and the productions by the Scottish Repertory Theatre, produced to satisfy a highly critical and fastidious audience, contain a high percentage of plays that have literary merit style and construction. They are not ephemeral. To publish a careful selection of them in a uniform and beautiful series was long the hope of the Director. The enterprise of Glasgow publishers was not found wanting' (30)

Among the Scots who wrote for the company were Neil Munro, J.J. Bell, G.J. Hamlen, R.K. Risk, Donald Colquhoun, Anthony Rowley and J.A. Ferguson. Harold Chapin, the English

writer who had a large number of his plays premiered at the Royalty, tried his hand at Scots drama with 'The Philosopher of Butterbiggins' (31), later performed by the S.N.P. but never by the Glasgow Rep., in which he captures the Scots idiom fairly successfully but does not put it to any purpose, for it is a pointless piece about an old man's attempts, in the face of parental resistance, to tell his grand-daughter a story before the girl goes to sleep for the night.

G.J. Hamlen, a chemist at Nobel's plant in Sevenston, had several of his plays performed at the Royalty - 'Barbara Grows Up', 'The Truth About De Courcy', (with Alfred Wareing), 'How Cottle Fell From Grace', 'Colin in Fairyland', a pantomime, and 'The Waldies' (this last during Wareing's own 1913 season). 'Barbara Grows Up' (32) for example, concerns a young woman, Barbara, who is married to an industrialist, Kenneth Morrison. She is a very tender hearted woman who takes the part of an old workman who is dismissed in the interest of higher productivity, and then when he is reinstated, the part of the younger man who is dismissed in his place. The humour of the play rests in the matrimonial bickering which arises through misunderstanding over the dismissal of the men, and in the facts that Purdie, the apparently penurious old workman, is a prosperous small time entrepreneur in his own right, and the younger man, an Irishman, spends the money Barbara gives his wife and himself on whisky. Barbara's sister-in-law refers contemptuously to Purdie's 'cheap socialism' to which Barbara has succumbed, but it would be going too far to suggest that Hamlen has any particular attitude here. It is dramatically necessary for Purdie's socialism to be cheap in the same way as it is dramatically necessary for us to feel sympathy in 'The Waldies' for the sufferings of the poor. Hamlen really has no social attitudes at all. He is merely a skilful writer of well made plays. One should emphasise the skill, for his plays are dramatically interesting and their dialogue is lively, but one should also emphasise that Hamlen's plays are instantly forgettable.

'The Waldies' (33) which was first performed at the Haymarket Theatre by the Incorporated Stage Society in

December 1912, is concerned with a family of that name, the head of which, a self-made businessman, has by his autocratic behaviour long since lost the affection of his family. His son, Aleck, has taken to gambling and such other pleasures as he can hide from his father, who has never allowed him any enjoyment in life. To pay off a gambling debt, Aleck contrives to steal a ring of his sister's and allows the blame to rest on Allan Ross, a young evangelist. 'Truth will out' of course. The culprit is discovered in the end and we are left with the impression that Waldie will attempt to regain the affections of his family. 'The Waldies' has all the characteristics of the bad "telly play" - uncomplex stock characters, a strong dramatic situation, a happy ending, superficiality.

Anthony Rowley is a very similar kind of writer to Hamlen. The Repertory Company produced two of his plays - 'A Weaver's Shuttle' and 'The Probationer'. 'A Weaver's Shuttle' (34) is set in Robbiesburgh, West Lothian. William Cotterell's carpet firm is in difficulties, yet Cotterell is unwilling to adopt a new improved shuttle which has been developed in the factory by the foreman, Ronald, and has been found to produce very satisfactory results. Nor is he willing to allow his son, a widower, to marry Miss Ronald, the foreman's daughter. Nor does he show much tact in dealing with a labour dispute. When Ronald overhears Cotterell scorn his son's aspirations to marry Miss Ronald, he resigns, but all ends happily. Cotterell admits Ronald's shuttle is a great improvement and blesses the marriage. Cotterell himself marries Lady Baxter, the sister of Sir George Blunt, Cotterell's chief customer, who has been on an ostensibly social visit to Robbiesburgh but has been taking careful notes, as she is shown found the factory. From now on she will be helping to run the business.

It is a play about nothing much in particular, theatrically effective but of no depth. One thing in its favour is that it is about the life of the lowland Scottish middle class, and although it is a superficial play, it is not escapist in the sense that the experience it deals with is non-existent. The same can be said of 'The Probationer' (35), which is also set in Robbiesburgh and the nearby town - Edinburgh. The Reverend Mr. Logan wants his son, John, to

become a missionary, but Mrs. Logan would rather see him installed in a fashionable parish. Logan's old friend, Murray, is very worried about the fact that several expensive volumes are disappearing from his bookshop in the town, and he suspects that one of his employees, Neil Dinning, another old friend of Logan's, who has been leading an intemperate life, may be responsible. Dinning has been put on a final month's probation by Murray and at the end of the month he is fired by a troubled Murray. However, Dinning discovers the missing books in his home and deduces that they have been stolen by John Logan, who studies there. When Murray is informed of this, he gives Dinning his job back and agrees not to prosecute for the sake of his old friend Logan. John Logan has, by this time, decided to be a missionary, much to the annoyance of the fashionable opportunist minister, Dr. Cameron, whose protege he has been.

'The Probationer' is a good example of a play built around a trifling situation. It is fairly dramatic, although the final resolution of the great mystery of 'who stole the books?' does not justify the effort nor the patience of an audience. There are emotional declarations and changes of emotion which do not ring true. For example, when Logan finds out that his son's faith is very far from strong and that his interest in missionary work is nil, he declares -

'O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom!
would God I had died for thee, O Absalom,
my son, my son!'

The effect of this is bathos rather than pathos.

There is a little feeble social criticism in the presentation of Dr. Cameron.

John Joy Bell, the prolific author of 'Wee MacGreegor' had several plays presented by the Glasgow Rep. - 'Wee MacGreegor' itself, 'The Best Man', 'Providing for Marjorie' and 'Oh Christina'.

Probably the two best Scottish plays produced by the Glasgow Rep. were Donald Colquhoun's 'Jean' (36), (which Wareing thought very highly of) and J.A. Ferguson's 'Campbell of Kilmohr' (37), which was presented during the season under the directorship of Lewis Casson.

'Jean' is set in a farmhouse in Lanarkshire. James Milroy, an old farmer, arrives home from a trip to town to find his son, Sandy, in an irksome mood, which derives from his father's unwillingness to set up Sandy in a farm of his own in Canada. Milroy tries to discourage Sandy from marrying too young (he suspects that his son's desire for a farm of his own has arisen because he wants to get married and tells him that he will receive everything after he, the old man, is dead). Sandy is very far from satisfied and declares that he wishes his father was dead. Milroy is angry about this. He tells Sandy that his doctor has advised him to go easy since a shock would kill him. It emerges that Sandy is interested in Jean, the maid, Millroy tries to put him off Jean by revealing to him that she has had an illegitimate child. (Milroy would prefer Sandy to marry the local doctor's daughter). Sandy is shocked and blurts out that he has married Jean three weeks previously in a registry office. Milroy, in turn, is so shocked when he hears this that he takes a stroke and dies. Sandy is left repentant.

> 'Faither, whit is it? Faither, speak; it's me, it's Sandy. I didna mean it. I ken it wis wrang. Eh, ma faither, ma faither, can ye no' hear me? It's me Sandy, yer son, a gey hard son. Aye, ma faither, I wisht I could tell ye noo. I'll no' gang awa'. I'll bide here. I'll dae richt by Jean. Aye, I'll try tae mak' up. I wis aye a bad son tae you - but I'll be a guid man tae Jean'

The great merit of this play is the truthfulness of its presentation of the hard lifeof the small farmer as he tries to establish himself in a position of security. Milroy's remarks on his wife ring true.

> James:- Afore ye kent yer mither an' me, we wis by wi' the worst o't, we wis kinna weel aff, and easy like ... But ye should have seen us when we started. Man, it wis a fair wrastle, day an' nicht - nicht an' day. I widna like ye to hiv yon tae dae.

Sandy:- It couldna be as bad for me - noo.

James:- Mind ye, it's no' every woman wad hiv turned oot like yer mither. She got on rael weel. There was a wheen years there, afore she deed, ye widna hiv kenned her for the same woman - she wis that sensible and wise - like. But there's no' mony lassies turns oot like her. The maist o' them gangs intae their graves wi' nae mair sense in their heids than the first day they stairted courtin'. Na, na, Sandy, dinna think o't yet. Ye ken fine I'm layin' by for ye. Ye'll be fit to staun' in wi' the best o' them'

Illegitimacy was very much a part of the kind of life with which Colquhoun is concerned and its introduction into 'Jean' adds to the play's authenticity. It is a pity however that the lawyer to whom Milroy refers is called in music hall fasion, Mr. McWhummle, but the faults are minor in a play which slight as it is, is a more significant achievement than all the well made plays the Glasgow Rep. presented. The Scots dialogue is effective without being quaint, as the following extract shows -

James:- Ye're kinna dull the nicht Sandy.

Sandy:- Ay, I'm gey tired. Come awa' tae yer tea.

James:- Hoots man, tired at your age! Whin I wis your age, I wid hiv thocht shame to hiv been tired.

Sandy:- Yon field's gey heavy.

James:- Aye is't. I'll no' say but it's heavy, and I'll no' say but ye've made a graun job o't. There's no' a field like it in the hale country-side. Aye, Sandy, ye'll mak' a guid fermer yin day.

Sandy:- Aye, <u>yin</u> day.

James:- Aye, a guid fermer -

Sandy:- Yin day. That's the bit.

James:- A rael guid fermer.

Sandy:- I wis wantin' tae talk over things wi' ye, the nicht, faither.

James:- Are ye through wi' yer work?
Sandy:- Aye.
James:- Is the horses fed?
Sandy:- Aye.
James:- And the coos bedded?
Sandy:- Aye, Jock's daein it the nicht, I tellt him.
James:- Jock? (sniffs) Ha! Ah well, never heed, whit is it ye want tae ask?
Sandy:- It's a queer long while I've been workin'.

The dialogue continues and Colquhoun uses the language very well here to convey the old man's stubborness and evasiveness in the fact of his son's persistence.

'Campbell of Kilmohr' is set in the Highlands after the '45. The action takes place in a lonely cottage on the road from Struan to Rannoch. Mary Stewart and her niece, Morag, are waiting for Mary's son, Dugald, who is in hiding with several other Jacobites, including, it is implied, the Pretender, to come for provisions. Morag is frightened and suspects that the worst is about to happen. Dugald arrives but shortly afterwards redcoats, under the ordersof the Government official, Campbell of Kilmohr, come to the door. An unsuccessful attempt is made to hide Dugald, after which Campbell tries by bribery and threats to extort from Dugald or his mother the whereabouts of the Jacobite hid-out. Much to his amazement, he fails and it is only at the end of the play that Morag tells Campbell what he wants to know, on condition that Dugald is not hung. Campbell agrees and Dugald is shot - Campbell has kept his part of the bargain. The final irony is that Morag has only heard Dugald say where the Jacobites had been hiding not where they were now going to. So, Campbell has failed after all.

Ferguson seems concerned to contrast the integrity of the Highlander with the dishonesty and roguery of the Lowlander. It is a new experience for Campbell to find that his wiles are unsuccessful. His ideas on human nature are straightforward.

'Now, I've had a lairge experience o' life,
and I never saw yet a sensible man insensible
to the touch of yellow metal. If there may
be such a man, it is demonstrable that he is
no sensible man. Fideelity! quotha, it's
sheer obstinacy. They just see that he want
something oot o' them, and they're so damned
selfish and thrawn they winna pairt. And
with the natural inabeelity o' their brains
to hold mair than one idea at a time they
canna see that in return you could put
something into their palms far more profitable'

However, it looks as if Campbell will be forced to change his ideas.

'It is a thing I do not understand. It is a
thing fit to sicken a man o' the notion that
there are probabeelities on this earth ....
Beforehand I would have said naething
could be easier, and yet - and yet - there
it is! .... Man, it would have been a grand
stroke for me .... Cluny - Keppock - Lochiel,
and maybe ... maybe ... Hell! when I think o'
it! Heard you what he said, James? "You'll
be adding to your experience tonight, Mr.
Campbell, and have something to put to the
other side of it" says he. Aye! And I have
added something to it, and by God it is a
thing I like but little - that a dream can
be stronger than a strong man armed ...
Just a whispered word, a pointed finger
would ha' tell'd us a'. But no! I am
powerless before the vision of an old woman,
the dream of a half-grown lad! '

Morag's weakness is to be taken as that of a young girl and in no way detracts from the impression of the Highlanders' stedfastness which Ferguson wishes to create.

'Campbell of Kilmohr' like 'Jean' is a slight play and its merit is, like that of 'Jean', that it is true to life, though as a reading of 'The Lyon in Mourning' makes clear, it could be a lot truer and a lot more unpleasant. The play is dramatically effective and does not lean too heavily on

'MARK BUT THIS FLEA'

"MARK But This Flea" is a phrase from one of the poems of John Donne, and the title of the last play written by the late George Munro, who lived in Saltcoats. It was premiered by Glasgow University Drama Club last week.

When people speak of a mixed marriage in this country they usually mean not one where the difference is in colour but in one vital point, religion.

Into the fabric of a west coast town where men and women work in the local explosives factory and express their religious beliefs by giving testimonies at Brethren street corner meetings or marching in the Orange Walk, and flaunt their Catholic or Protestant faiths in the coloured scarves of the football team they support, the Saltcoats playwright has woven the story of the Brethren Lennox family, whose only son, Benny, an undergraduate and the apple of his mother's eye, falls in love with Nan Grogan, a Roman Catholic girl; and of Nan's brother, Michael, who considers himself a lapsed Catholic until he wants to marry Nan's friend, Mary, a Protestant.

George Munro does not take sides. He lets his characters speak for themselves and they speak with sincerity and wit.

The play was fast-moving, holding the audience captive from its rousing, flute-band accompanied Twelfth of July start to its quietly impressive conclusion, and the continuity was improved by the rousing renderings of Evangelist hymns by the earnest "hot gospel" chorus during scene changing, which sustained the mood of the play.

CONTRIBUTED

Ardrossan & Saltcoats Herald.
13th March 1970

stock cliches relating to the Highlands.

These two are the only plays among those presented by the Glasgow Repertory Company which in any meaningful way reflect the life of Scotland. It is better to have two plays than none.

Another effect on the development of the writing of Scottish drama traceable to the Glasgow Repertory Company is more difficult to measure. The existence of a theatre presenting new Scottish plays may well have encouraged potential playwrights to write for the stage. We do know for example, that the young Bridie was encouraged by what he saw at the Royalty to try his hand, and indeed he actually submitted a play to Wareing, although it was never performed.

It might be useful to attempt a short consideration of the reasons why the Glasgow Rep. had so much difficulty in establishing itself as a viable enterprise. It should be re-emphasised that we are not considering the reasons why the theatre failed. It did not fail.

In the first place the Glasgow Rep had to break down traditional Scottish anti-theatrical prejudice, something which has yet to be done completely. To have been able in five years to make a profit was a significant achievement - after all five years is a very short time in which to eliminate centuries of opposition and to create an audience for serious theatre. That audiences were at times rather thin is attested by James Bridie -

> 'The other day I happened to see the accounts of the first two yearsof the Glasgow Repertory and was once more astounded by the number of bricks Wareing was able to make out of the few wisps of straw that the wind blew into his playhouse. On one occasion he opened to an audience of five schoolmistresses in the pit. He came in front of the curtain and invited them to the front row of the stalls. The performance was then given and the actors never enjoyed themselves so much in their lives' (38)

One might be forgiven for doubting the truth of Bridie's last statement.

During the course of a talk which he gave in London in 1912, Wareing, having praised Glasgow's sense of civic solidarity,

> 'had to admit that "grey towns" as such do not make for good dramatic art, for people are too much intent on finding on the stage mere diversion. But then, is not anything possible to a city which can drill itself into dropping disused tram tickets into boxes - even the maintenance of a repertory theatre?' (39)

As has been previously indicated, some of the people who wrote letters to the papers in 1912, when there was doubt as to whether the Rep. would continue, suggested that the company should be less ambitious, hire a small hall, use the very minimum of equipment and cater only for the small minority of theatre lovers in the city (40). This, no doubt, could have been done, but it would have been contrary to the whole spirit of the scheme, which was to create a popular audience for the theatre. One can induce the converted into bare ill-heated halls, but if one wants to attract the un-converted, the facilities, on and off stage, of a fully equipped theatre are essential.

Another correspondent suggested that the board of directors, competent business men though they might be, knew nothing of the theatre (41). This is an uncharitable view; most voluntary committees know little professionally of the organisation they are serving and it is for that reason that they hire professionals as Scottish Playgoers Ltd. hired Wareing, and after him, Lewis Casson.

The inevitable criticism that the company did not produce enough Scottish material was made. There was, as can be seen from the programme, a fair amount of Scottish material presented, but little of it was of a particularly high standard and one suspects that a programme made up entirely of Scottish plays of this nature would have been a very dismal one indeed. There is nothing to be gained from setting up a repertory theatre which aims at international standards in choice of play and production and then flinging these standards overboard when it comes to dealing with local plays. True, one is bound to be less demanding if one wishes to encourage the development of

local talent, but it is in the interest of Scottish drama that it competes with the drama of other nations under the same rules.

It is interesting to set alongside the complaint that the Glasgow Repertory did not perform enough Scottish drama a statement made in an article in 'The Times' -

> 'There is no great enthusiasm in Glasgow about a Scottish Theatre; Glasgow men prefer to see English plays. Scotch writers are too sentimental for the Scotch; they have to go to London' (42)

The difficulties the Glasgow Rep. encountered were endemic in the Scottish artistic world and still are. It is mistaken to belittle the work that it did.

> 'The Royalty Theatre, where the plays are performed, is attaining in fact something of the character of a Citizens' Theatre. The enthusiasm which maintains it is not merely a dramatic enthusiasm but has a large proportion of civic patriotism in it - something of the ancient Greek or medieval Italian spirit' (43)

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38. Foreword to W. Isaac - 'Alfred Wareing' - Green Bank Press London 1951

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APPENDICES

1. Plays performed under Alfred Wareing by the Glasgow Repertory Company.

2. Plays performed at the Alhambra music hall, by the Glasgow Repertory Company.

3. Plays performed under Lewis Casson by the Glasgow Repertory Company.

4. Plays performed at the Royalty Theatre by Alfred Wareing's own company.

APPENDIX ONE

Plays performed at The Royalty Theatre, Glasgow, under the Directorship of Alfred Wareing.

* ... Entirely new plays

1909.

April	5	You Never Can Tell	G. Bernard Shaw	
	15	An Enemy of the People ..	Henrik Ibsen	
	21	Admiral Guinea	W.E. Henley and R.L. Stevenson	
	21	The White Dove	R.H. Powell	*
	29	Cupid and Commonsense ...	Arnold Bennett	
	29	The Convenient Lover	C. Roxburgh	*
May	13	Strife	John Galsworthy	
	20	Sir Pertinax (adapted from the Manof the World) ...	Ch. Macklin	
	20	Whose Zoo	R. Bankier	*
Sept.	6	Barbara Grows Up	C.J. Hamlen	*
	16	The Voysey Inheritance ..	H. Granville Barker	
	23	Arms and the Man	G. Bernard Shaw	
	23	The Suffragette's Redemption	J.J. Allen	*
Oct.	7	Dealing in Futures	Harold Brighouse	*
	7	The Drums of Oude	A. Strong	
	13	The Fountain	George Calderon	
Nov.	2	The Seagull	Anton Tchekhov	*
	4	Lanval	T.E. Ellis	
	11	The Falcon	Lord Tennyson	
	15	The Palace of Truth	Sir W.S. Gilbert	
	15	The Price of Coal	Harold Brighouse	*
	20	Macpherson	Neil Munro	*
	29	Liberty Hall	R.C. Carton)	Edward
	29	Sweet Lavender	Sir A. Pinero)	Terry's Co.
Dec.	6	The Barrister	J.H. Darnley & G.M. Fenn)	Henry
	6	Still Waters Run Deep ...	T. Taylor)	Co.
	13	Florodora	O. Hall and L. Stuart)	Charles Constant's Co.
	20	Operas	Sir W.S. Gilbert and Sir A. Sullivan (D'Oyly Carte Company)	

1910.

Jan.	19	Coming Home	M. O'Neill	*
	24	What the Public Wants ...	Arnold Bennett	
Feb.	7	Lady Windermere's Fan ...	Oscar Wilde	
	14	The Excelsior Dawsons ...	R.K. Risk	*
	21	Justice	John Galsworthy	
	28	Candida	G. Bernard Shaw	
	28	Tilda's New Hat	G. Paston	
Mar.	7	Our First Dinner	F. Lloyd	*
	14	The Truth about De Courcy	C.J. Hamlen and A. Wareing	*
	14	The Last Man In	W.B. Maxwell	*
	21	The Man of Destiny	G. Bernard Shaw	
	21	How He Lied to Her Husband	G. Bernard Shaw	
	21	Augustus in Search of a Father	Harold Chapin	
Apr.	4	The Cassilis Engagement .	St. John Hankin	
	18	The Tragedy of Nan	John Masefield	
	18	The Twelve Pound Look ..	J.M. Barrie	
May	2	Prunella	Laurence Housman and H. Granville Barker	
	16	Dandy Dick	Sir A. Pinero	
	16	Jean	D. Colquhoun	*
	30	Cousin Kate	H.H. Davies	
June	6	Oh! Christina!	J.J. Bell and L. Therval	*
	6	The American Widow	R. Fillipi	
Aug.	15	His Excellency the Governor	R. Marshall	
	22	How Cottle Fell from Grace	G. Hamlen	*
	29	Mrs. Gorringe's Necklace	H.H. Davies	
Sept.	5	Caste	T. Robertson	
	12	Captain Brassbound's Conversion	G. Bernard Shaw	
	26	Man and Superman	G. Bernard Shaw	
Oct.	10	The Witch (English translation by J. Masefield) .	H. Weirs Jennsen	*
	24	Chains	E. Baker	
Nov.	2	The Two Mr. Wetherbys ...	St. John Hankin	
	14	The Call	M. Stayton	
	21	The Weaver's Shuttle ...	A. Rowley	*
	21	Between Dances	C. Nicholson	*
Dec.	22	Colin Fairyland	G.J. Hamlen with music by A. Casabon	*

1911

Jan.	23	Colin in Fairyland	G.J. Hamlen with music by A. Casabon	*
	30	The Cassilis Engagement .	St. John Hankin	
Feb.	6	The Tragedy of Nan	John Masefield	
	6	Lonesome-like	Harold Brighouse	*
	13	The Adventure of Lady Ursula	Anthony Hope	
	23	The Three Wayfarers	Thomas Hardy	
	23	Interior	M. Maeterlinck	
	23	Pantaloon	J.M. Barrie	
Mar.	6	The Marriage of Columbine	Harold Chapin	
	13	The Cutting of the Knot .	Cicely Hamilton	*
	13	Muddle Annie	Harold Chapin	*
	20	Pilkerton's Pearage	Anthony Hope	
	20	MacAllister's Dream	R.K. Risk	*
	29	The Girl Who Couldn't Lie	Keble Howard	*
	29	Carrots (Poil de Carrotte)	A. Sutre and J. Renard	
April	10	Macpherson	Neil Munro	
	17	Arms and the Man	G. Bernard Shaw	
	17	The Best Man	J.J. Bell	*
	24	The Cheerful Knave	Keble Howard	
	24	The Autocrat of the Coffee Stall	Harold Chapin	*
Sept.	18	The Great Adventure	Arnold Bennett	
Oct.	2	A Doll's House	Henrik Ibsen	
	9	Providing for Marjorie ..	J.J. Bell	
	9	A Little Stone House	George Calderson	
	16	The Return of the Prodigal	St. John Hankin	
	23	The Greatest of These ...	Sydney Grundy	
	30	Trelawney of the Wells .	Sir A. Pinero	
Nov.	13	The Probationer	Anthony Rowley	
	13	The Cat and the Cherub ..	C.B. Fernald	
	20	The Dumb and the Blind ..	Harold Chapin	
	20	The Maker of Dreams	W.O. Down	
	20	Rococco	Granville Barker	
	27	Macaire	W.E. Henley and R.L. Stevenson	
	27	A Pantomime Rehearsal ...	C. Clay	
Dec.	4	You Never Can Tell	G. Bernard Shaw	
	11	What the Public Wants ...	Arnold Bennett	
	19	Wee MacGreegor	J.J. Bell and H.R. Bell	*

1912

Jan.	10	Wee MacGreegor	J.J. Bell and H.R. Bell	*
Feb.	5	A Doll's House	Henrik Ibsen	
	12	The Lower Depths	Maxim Gorky	
	19	The Great Young Man	Vladimir Bariatinsky	
	19	Rossmond	J. Pollock	
Mar.	5	Romeo and Juliet	W. Shakespeare	
	25	The Admirable Crichton .	J.M. Barrie	
April	9	The Pigeon	John Galsworthy	*
	9	The Fantasticks	E. Rostand	*
	16	The Imposter	Leonard Merrick and M. Morton	
	16	The Tragedy of a Comic Song	Leonard Merrick	*
	23	Civil War	Ashley Dukes	*
	29	Kipps	H.G. Wells	
May	6	A Man of Honour	Wm. S. Maugham	
	13	Cupid and Commonsense ..	Arnold Bennett	
	20	Kathleen ni Houlihan	W.B. Yeats)	
	20	Birthright	T.C. Murray)	
	20	Hyacinth Halvey	Lady Gregory)	Presented by the Abbey Theatre
	20	The Workhouse Ward	Lady Gregory)	
	20	The Well of the Saints ..	J.M. Synge)	

APPENDIX TWO

1912			
Dec.	16	'In Honour Bound'	Sidney Grundy
	23	'Carrots'	
	30	'The Maker of Dreams'	Oliphant Downs
1913			
Jan.	6	'Womankind'	W.W. Gibson

APPENDIX THREE

⁂ Entirely new plays

1914.				
Jan.	21	('The Honeymoon'	Arnold Bennett	
		('The Sire de Maletroit's Door'	Edward McRoberts	
Feb.	2	('The Little Damozel'	Monckton Hoffe	
		('The Point of View'	Eden Philpotts	
	9	('Walker, London'	J.M. Barrie	
		('Yellow Fever'	Constance Ray	
	16	'The Devil's Disciple' .	Bernard Shaw	
	23	('East is East'	Phillip Hubbard	⁂
		('Columbine'	Reginald Arkell	
Mar.	2	('Mollentrave on Women' ..	Alfred Sutro	
		('An Episode'	Schnitzler	
		('An Anatol Dialogue' ...	Granville Barker	
	9	('The Threshold'	Miles Malleson	⁂
		('A Man of Ideas'	Miles Malleson	
	17	('The Liars'	H.A. Jones	
	23	('The Man of Destiny' ...	Bernard Shaw	
		('How He Lied to Her Husband	.Bernard Shaw	
		('Campbell of Kilmohr' ...	J.A. Ferguson	⁂
	30	'Marigold'	Charles Garvice and A.F. Abbott	⁂
		'Womankind'	W.W. Gibson	
Apr.	6	('Mr. Hopkinson'	R.C. Carton	
		('Loving as we do'	Gertrude Robins	
	20	'Man and Superman'	Bernard Shaw	

APPENDIX FOUR

⁂ Entirely new plays

1913				
Mar.	11	A Gauntlet	B. Bjornson	
	18	The Waldies	G.J. Hamlen	
	18	The Surrender of Juan ...	S. Noble	
	26	The Bill	Lady Randolph Churchill	⁂
April	7	The Importance of Being Earnest	Oscar Wilde	
	7	The Carrier Pigeon	E. Phillpotts	
	10	Mrs. Warren's Profession.	G. Bernard Shaw)	two private performances
	12	Mrs. Warren's Profession.	G. Bernard Shaw)	
	21	The Average Man	Kenelm Foss	
	21	Light O' Love	A. Schnitzler	

PUBLISHED TEXTS OF NEW PLAYS LISTED IN FOREGOING APPENDICES

Note:- Where the relevant information has been given in the references it is not repeated here. Where no publication date is given for a new play none has been traced.

H. Brighouse	Dealing in Futures	French 1913
H. Brighouse	The Price of Coal	Gowans and Gray, Glasgow 1911
H. Brighouse	Lonesome Like	Gowans and Gray, Glasgow 1914
H. Chapin	The Autocrat of the Coffee Stall (in 'Three Comedies')	French 1921
H. Chapin	Muddle Annie	Gowans and Gray, Glasgow 1921
K. Howard	The Girl who Couldn't Lie	Nash's Summer Library 1908
J. Galsworthy	The Pigeon	Duckworth 1912
A. Dukes	Civil War	Swift 1911
W.B. Maxwell	The Last Man In	Gowans and Gray, Glasgow 1910

CHAPTER IV

THE SCOTTISH THEATRE IN THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

The inter-war period in Scotland was the period of the so-called Scottish Renaissance, and although the achievments of the drama did not compare wery well with those in poetry and the novel, it might be as well to relate theatrical developments to the Renaissance as a whole. In August 1922 the first number of C.M. Grieve's 'Scottish Chapbook' appeared and in it was printed 'The Chapbook Programme' which can be taken as an idiosyncratic presentation of the aims of the Renaissance.

The principal aims and objects of the 'Scottish Chapbook' are -

> To report, support, and stimulate, in particular, the activities of the Franco-Scottish, Scottish-Italian, and kindred Associations; the campaign of the Vernacular Circle of the London Burns Club for the revival of the Doric: the movement towards a Scots National Theatre; and the 'Northern Numbers' movement in contemporary Scottish poetry. To encourage and publish the work of contemporary Scottish poets and dramatists, whether in English, Gaelic, or Braid Scots.
>
> To insist upon truer evaluations of the work of Scottish writers than are usually given in the present over-Anglicised condition of British literary journalism, and, in criticism, elucidate, apply, and develop the distinctively Scottish range of values.
>
> To bring Scottish Literature into closer touch with current European tendencies in technique and ideation.
>
> To cultive 'the lovely virtue'.
>
> And generally, to 'meddle wi' the Thistle' and pick the figs. (1)

Grieve constantly emphasised the need to avoid parochialism in Scottish art, but although he himself managed to do so, most of the Scottish dramatists of the time did not. Grieve's own contribution to the Renaissance movement in his own person, and as his alter ego, Hugh McDiarmid, was the most significant. As far as the drama is concerned, the magazines he edited give a fair proportion of space to original plays, to articles on the theatre, and to dramatic criticism. In the first issue of 'The Northern Review' (2), for example, it is stated that short Scottish plays are to be published regularly and before the magazine folded up, after the usual short life, Alexander McGill's 'Pardon in the Morning' (3), Naomi Jacob's 'The Dawn' (4), Robert Angus's 'The Cenotaph' (5) and McDiarmid's own play 'The Purple Patch' (6), (accompanied by the injunction that the S.N.P. should produce it) had appeared. Several other plays by McDairmid himself were promised but never appeared and may never have been written. 'The Northern Review' also contained articles on 'The Theatre before the Union' (7) (Alexander McGill) discussion of the Scottish theatre in general and of the plays of John Brandane and G.R. Malloch in particular.

This policy was pursued in all the periodicals which Grieve edited. The other literary and general magazines of the period, as will be seen from what follows, also gave generously of their space to the discussion of the Scottish theatre and the publication of plays.

The resurgence in Scottish literature took place against a background of two major cultural developments, cinema and broadcasting.

Cinemas began to appear in Scotland in the early years of the twentieth century often in makeshift premises. The number of cinemas climbed steadily after the first world war, as can be seen from the figures given underneath.

	All Scotland	Aberdeen	Dundee	Edinburgh	Glasgow
1920	557	15	22	25	94
1930	634	15	27	39	127
1940	615	19	25	38	112

(Source:- Kine Year Books 1921, 1931, 1941)

Obviously a vast popular audience had come into existence and grown at a remarkable rate, for in 1920 there were over five hundred cinemas while twenty years previously there were no institutions that would be recognised as such.

Broadcasting came to Scotland in 1923 when the Glasgow station was opened. Licence statistics were not compiled unfortunately until 1952 but the growth of radio can be assumed to be substantial throughout this period. Early on the BBC in Scotland began to broadcast drama; an adaptation of 'Rob Roy' was broadcast a few weeks after the station opened; in 1932 the Scottish service mounted its first Radio Drama Festival.

The consequences of these two developments - cinema and broadcasting - were many. As far as theatre is concerned, the death of the music hall, which had reached a peak before the war, can be attributed to their growth. Many music halls became cinemas: for example, Glasgow's Britannia, later the Panopticon became the Tron Cinema in 1920; the Savoy opened in the same city in 1911 as a variety theatre and was a cinema by 1916. In Dundee the Palace was a cinema by 1911 (though during the second world war it reverted to variety). In Edinburgh the Grand became a cinema in 1920. Elsewhere in Scotland theatres of all kinds were adapting to the new medium: Arbroath's 'Theatre' in the mid-twenties, Falkirk's Grand in 1934, Greenock's Alexandra in the mid-twenties, Kirkcaldy's King's in 1924.

The extent to which the theatrical boom in the first decade of the century had been reversed can be seen by looking at the relevant figures.

Number of theatres

	All Scotland	Aberdeen	Dundee	Edinburgh	Glasgow
1920	45	3	3	6	16
1930	30	3	0	4	12
1940	32	3	1	6	11

The decline from the 1910 position was most marked among the cities in Dundee and Glasgow. Elsewhere in Scotland there was a steady slide, so that by 1940 there were over a third less theatres in Scotland than there had been in 1910.

While cinema provided little extra employment for Scottish writers and actors, radio began to provide a great deal, but neither development had quite as dramatic an effect on live theatre as television was to have later. However it must be borne in mind that the theatre remained a minority interest, for the popular audience did not support it. Whereas previously that audience had supported music hall, now, vastly increased in numbers by reason of better wages, it gave its allegiance to the cinema, and later transferred it to television. Theatre it passed by.

The inter-war period was the era of the amateur theatre in Scotland, and even those companies which were at the forefront of the dramatic 'renaissance' - the S.N.P. and the Curtain - were non-professional. The professional theatre in Scotland was represented by repertory companies - the Wilson Barrett Players, the Howard and Wyndham Players, the Brandon-Thomas Players and the Masque Theatre - all of which presented seasons of mainly English plays in Glasgow and Edinburgh, although some efforts were made by these companies to encourage Scottish writers. Jevan Brandon-Thomas (8), speaks highly of 'Circus Murder' by William P. Templeton which his company performed. The achievment of these companies was to build up an audience for theatre in Scotland, and the Brandon-Thomas company, for example, despite a lean period during the depression, latterly claimed an audience which averaged 10,000 per week in each of the two theatres in which it performed.

A repertory theatre about which more will be said later, was established inPerth in 1935, but attempts to found a professional little theatre in Edinburgh were unsuccessful, as were efforts to establish a municipal theatre in Glasgow and a Scottish National theatre towards the end of the thirties. It was only when the Gateway and Citizens' theatres opened in 1946 and 1944 respectively that these cities gained permanent repertory theatres. The various little theatres which were established - at Dundee and St. Andrews for example - were for the use of amateurs. The Byre Theatre, a converted byre in St. Andrews was originally used by the St. Andrews Play Club for their productions, while the Curtain Theatre in Glasgow presented its work in a large room in a West End mansion

which had a capacity of 65. The Glasgow Jewish Institute Players opened a theatre in their Institute in 1938.

The Scottish Community Drama Association was formed in 1926 with the aims of encouraging the drama in Scotland and organising festivals of community drama. The sudden rise to popularity of amateur drama can be seen by comparing the number of entries for the one-act festival in 1926-27 (35), 1928-29 (88) and 1930-31 (243). By the 1932-33 season the entry had reached 307 and by 1937 there were more than one thousand amateur clubs in Scotland. William Power (9) expresses the opinion that the S.C.D.A. and the S.N.P. were perhaps winning people over to good plays. However, he is almost alone in taking this view. Joe Corrie, for example, remarks that 75% of amateur groups -

> 'are not interested in drama as an art so much as they are interested in it as an amusement. Their primary object is to make their audience laugh, a process which they themselves enjoy' (10)

If this were the case, little in the way of a serious theatre could be expected from the amateur movement. Corrie suggests that the festival does however stimulate a more experimental approach to production. Macnair Reid (11), disputes this contention. Festivals, he says, prevent the growth of serious or experimental drama among amateurs; indeed they encourage them to be unoriginal in their choice of plays, and to be terrified of anything that might seem at all highbrow. R.F. Pollock, one of the more adventuresome among Scottish amateurs, has the following to say about the S.C.D.A. -

> 'That there is no hope for the development of a Scottish Theatre under amateur auspices may or may not be a statement that is acceptable to you. Nevertheless it is my clear conviction after many years of application to dramatic endeavour in Scotland' (12)

and he comments elsewhere -

> 'Nothing significant has really happened. the features for which resemblance to a

native drama was claimed in loud-sounding phrases, like beauty existed only in the eyes of the beholders' (13)

An extremely outspoken attack on the community drama movement is made by Clyde Irvine (14). His article is entitled 'Drama for Dumb Bells' and in it he rejects the oft vaunted contention that there was a resemblance between the Scottish amateur drama movement and the Abbey theatre. As far as the plays presented by amateur clubs are concerned -

'These "sappy" plays are written by people who believe that the average Scots audience is composed of dumb bells ... we are content to see season after season the amateur stage of Scotland made a penny geggie for the perpetuation of as crass and ignorant a policy as ever disgraced any national attempt at self-expression'

The complaint that the amateur movement takes a low view of the intellect of its audience is common and Jack House makes it specifically against the S.N.P.

'That well known comedy team, the play selectors of the Scottish National Theatre Society, evidently decided that they would give the public "what it wants" in the final S.N.P. programme for the season ... One could almost hear them saying "Sugar, sentiment and a good laugh - that's what the public wants" ' (15)

The predilection of the amateur movement for the sentimental undemanding play - and there is no disputing the existence of this predilection - perhaps no disputing the Scottish people's predilection in this direction - did not lack defenders, the most voluble of whom was Hal D. Stewart, who was one of the S.N.P's amateur actor/playwrights. Stewart's is the classic defence of philistinism.

'My own brow is low, but, thank God, there are others whose brows are as high as their ideals, and I assure you they will not suffer the degrading spectacle of plays that deal with ordinary everyday Scots people without even the excuse of killing off one or two of them' (16)

What is disturbing is that Stewart has not grasped the possibility that the so called high brow writers were very much concerned with 'ordinary everyday Scots people' and could involve themselves much more deeply than Stewart, content as he was with third rate variety turns masquerading as folk plays, could ever have dreamt of.

The amateur drama movement did not serve its authors very well if we are to judge from their comments in a series of symposia in the 'Scottish Stage'. Joe Corrie comments -

'I would like to see half a dozen good honest plays about the lives of the common people. One from the sea, one from the farm, one from the mines, one from the ranks of the unemployed, and one, let us say, from the poorhouse' (17)

(It would be interesting to speculate on the acceptability of Corrie's hypothetical plays to Stewart - one suspects that they would not receive a very warm welcome). Murray McClymont asks for the 'advent of a genuinely Scottish Drama movement' (18) and T.M. Watson for 'Plays which kick orthodoxy in the pants and sail as near to the blasphemy and obscenity laws as possible' (19). (Watson obviously aspired to be a Scottish '<u>enfant terrible</u>' - possibly out of frustration) while George Blake who describes himself as being 'fed up' with amateurs, suggests they try Shakespeare.

'That would be a good deal better for them than the drivel to which they so extensively attach themselves; and I back the majesty of Shakespeare to survive their worst efforts' (20)

As anyone who has had any dealings with the amateur drama movement in Scotland will confirm, the self

expression of the Scottish nation through the drama is very low on their list of objectives, if it is there at all. Many amateurs are not even interested in the theatre. They enjoy prancing about a stage (which is good fun) but would not consider that the question of a Scottish drama was remotely related to their activities. This situation seems to have been a major factor in preventing the growth of a Scottish drama worthy of respect. We must remember that the amateur drama movement, apart from the S.N.P., was well nigh the only outlet for Scottish writers in their own country. The roleof the S.N.P. in this situation, with its declared aim of promoting exclusively Scottish drama, was therefore very important indeed.

Before considering the S.N.P. to which a separate chapter will be devoted, more detailed mention must be made of some of the other theatrical ventures which occurred during the period under discussion. Two of these, the repertory theatres at Dundee and Rutherglen began operations just after the second world war started and just before the war started respectively. They will therefore be dealt with more appropriately in the chapter concerned with the Scottish theatre during the war. Of the others, Perth Repertory Theatre was established in 1935 and The Curtain in 1932.

The Curtain was started by a group of amateur enthusiasts, led by Grace Ballantine who, with a mere £100 in capital, hired a large L-shaped drawing room in a house in Glasgow's Woodside Terrace and Turned it into a tiny auditorium with seating for about seventy people. The aim was to provide a stage where the practising playwright might see his work being rehearsed or performed in the tiny Curtain Theatre itself, and, from 1935 - 1940 in the Lyric Theatre. Initially about six programmes a year were given and the audience was made up of subscribers.

Of the actors who worked with the Curtain, Molly Urquhart, who later founded the Rutherglen Repertory Theatre and then joined the Citizens' Company, and Duncan Macrae are most well-known. Macrae learnt his craft with the Curtain attracting much attention for his performances, particularly for his creation of the title role in Robert McLellan's 'Jamie the Saxt'. John Stewart, who was musical

adviser to the Curtain later opened the Park Theatre (next door to the Curtain) and when it closed, the Pitlochry Festival Theatre.

Although the aim was to encourage Scottish plays, the Curtain had difficulty in attracting enough worthwhile native material and making it commercially viable. Despite this problem, their record of encouraging Scottish writers deserves credit. Among the writers who work was performed at the Curtain were George Malcolm Thompson (in whose 'A Letter to Rome' Macrae played Cardinal Beaton) Robins Millar, Norman Bruce (one of the people behind the Curtain), Paul Vincent Carroll and above all, Robert McLellan, the most significant exponent of Lallans plays.

Carroll's best-known play, 'Green Cars Go East' (21) was premiered not by the Curtain, but by the Glasgow Players in 1937. It is set against the background of Glasgow's East End and centres on the efforts of Mary Lewis, a young schoolteacher who has raised herself above her background - a drunken unemployed father and ineffectual mother - to keep her family out of trouble with the law and to ensure that her two brothers also escape from the sordid background. Her efforts are, in the end, successful.

The play is a good example of naturalism, although the characterisation is at times on the weak side, and the author does not make much of a connection between character and environment, but it has the substantial merit of representing an aspect of contemporary life on the stage.

Although Robert McLellan has written much since the demise of the Curtain it would be as well to consider his work as a whole at this point when the theatre, where his earliest plays were performed, is being discussed.

McLellan grew up partly on a farm in a household where he heard Scots dialect spoken until he was a young man. The Scots he uses is based on a spoken language and is not a synthetic construct. After the controversy over MacDiarmid's use of Jamieson's dictionary to cull words which the poet himself was not familiar with, McLellan resolved that he, as a playwright, would never resort to this device. In fact, he tells me he has found himself on occasion using words which cannot be found in Jamieson, but which he is nonetheless sure he has heard used in the past.

That he has a fine grasp of Scots is the first thing that strikes one about McLellan's work. The dialogue moves vigorously and naturally; one feels that it is a living language that is being spoken, not some anachronistic artefact:-

Sir Robert:- Weill, I propose, Sir Andra, to let ye keep the stock he hae liftit frae the Hanginshaw, for I conseeder ye less to blame for tha affair nor Wat here.

Wat :- Eh'

Sir Robert:- Juist haud yer tongue the noo, sir! I was sayin, Sir Andra, that I propose to let ye keep the stock ye hae liftit frae the Hanginshaw, and I hae entert a clause in the bond to that effect. Ye may regaird it as a jeynt tocher o the two Hanginshaw lassies, wha are to mairry yer sons.

Wat :- Hae my byres and stables to bide toom?

Sir Robert:- Sir Andra will doutless let ye hae yer stock back gin ye mak him a guid offer in ready siller.

Wat :- And had there to be ane tocher wi his dochter?

Sir Robert:- I hae made nae proveesion in the bond for ony sic thing.

Wat :- By God, Drumford, gin ye werena sae weill in at Coort again I ken whaur I wad gang for the beasts I need!

Sir Robert:- Nae dout! Nae dout! But reivin isna possible for the praisint, sae ye'll juist bide quait and save yer braith! We're ready for the bond noo, I think. Maister Lichtbody, will ye read it oot? There's nae need for me to tell ye as, I hope, that ye'll be askit to sign yer names to this, and maun therefore gie it yer closest attention. It'll be gay dreich for the young anes, I dout, but that canna be helpit. Stert, then Peter. (22)

On the other hand, McLellan, who recalls with great regret that every time he wrote a successful play in Scots he was encouraged from all sides to write in English, does not have the same facility with English. Using it, he produces dialogue that is often limp and lifeless, quite lacking the theatricality of his Scots, something for which only part of the blame can be put on the state of the English language itself.

Lucy :- I'm not of my uncle's generation, and I speak as I was taught at school. In any case, we weren't discussing his speech, but his encouragement of the drama. You were suggesting that the new company would put on nothing but the plays of Wycherley and Farquhar. So far they've given us only recent London successes.

Skinner :- London, yes. A sink of iniquity.

Lucy :- Even in London, doctor, standards are very different now from what they were at the Restoration. And the laxity then was a reaction against the puritanism of the Commonwealth.

Skinner :- I can hear your uncle and his kind in every word you speak. Mrs. Lindsay, my dear young lady, don't despise puritanism. It's a better guarantee of respect for female chastity than the laxity of the Restoration Libertine. All this talk of encouraging the arts. It's very fashionable just now, and no doubt you want to feel that you're a little ahead of the times. It's natural in a lively young woman. But it has its dangers, and while I'm glad that your uncle has warned you against too great familiarity with these actors and artists you feel so interested in, I'm afraid he doesn't set you the sort of example likely to impress you that his advice is meant with any great seriousness.

Lucy :- I'm sure my uncle has never been guilty of anything in the least dubious. He can't afford the slightest deviation from the

strictest principle. He's a judge.

Skinner :- Just what I say, he can't afford it, yet he takes the risk. His encouragement of these filthy books. This company of actors. And actresses. Actresses! I ask you, Mrs. Lindaay. What woman could live that sort of life and remain respectable? (23)

McLellan's plays are almost all set in the past, in eighteenth century Edinburgh, in the Borders of the early seventeenth century, at the courts of Mary Queen of Scots or James the Sixth. He prefers to write about the past because he feels that in writing about the present day one is liable to become so bogged down in its trivia that one's work dates very quickly, whereas if one sets one's play in a historical period, one is freed from the deadening weight of such details.

His view of history contrasts sharply with that of many other Scottish dramatists. Whereas they often regard history through romantic spectacles, McLellan presents a more believable and harsher world, even though he is writing comedies. Rather sudden death comes uncomfortably close to Archie Armstrong in 'The Changeling'(24), when he steals one of the Elliots' sheep, and to Will Scott in 'Jeddart Justice' (25), when he refuses to marry one of Sir Gideon Murray's daughters as recompense for a similar misdeed. The laird of Torwatletie inhabits a world of unattractive scheming rascals (26). James Boswell is presented in 'Young Auchinleck' (27), without any attempt to hide his excesses or the venereal disease which ensued in consequence. Samuel Skinner in 'The Hypocrite' is a bigot, supported by legions of other bigots. Jamie the Saxt finds himself in the midst of intriguing lords and only survives by all kinds of deviousness, while the Arran of 'The Cailleach' (28), and 'The Smuggler' (29), is one where violent death can leave a girl to bear an illegitimate child, or a young smuggler can be forced to flee his native country for ever to escape the gaugers.

This aspect of McLellan's work must be emphasised since so many Scots writers refuse to depict Scottish history in even a semi honest light, but insist on sentimentalising it out of all recognition. Nonetheless one feels

disappointment that McLellan has never shown himself able to tackle a large contemporary theme. 'The Road to the Isles' (30), the action of which takes place on a Scottish island in recent times, does set out to deal with the theme of the regeneration of the Highlands, but sadly the play's energies are dissipated as McLellan tilts at a variety of irrelevant windmills. Only two of his historical plays, 'The Hypocrite' and 'The Flouers o' Edinburgh' (31), could be related to the contemporary world.

'The Hypocrite' is set in eighteenth century Edinburgh and centres round the activities of a minister, Samuel Skinner, who successfully prevents an exhibition of Italian engravings being shown in several Scottish cities on the grounds that they are obscene. Skinner is shown to be a lascivious hypocrite whose obsession with nakedness is far from innocent, a man who will happily sleep with a married woman to advance his son's career. Skinner is surrounded by clergymen and burghers as bigoted as himself, and McLellan obviously intends the play as a satire on the civic reaction to the Edinburgh Festival 'happening' in 1963. This 'happening' was staged on the last day of a rather unexciting Drama conference and served both as a comment on the conference and as a way of livening up speakers and audience. It was amusing and inventive but unfortunately part of it consisted of a nude girl being pulled momentarily across the balcony above the speakers' platform.

The papers the next day (appropriately perhaps, Sunday) (32) headlined the 'NUDE AT FESTIVAL' and did not of course bother to relate the appearance of the nude to its context. The Lord Provost made an inane statement -

> 'It is a very great pity, indeed, in a way it is quite a tragedy, that three weeks of glorious festival should have been smeared by a piece of pointless vulgarity. I am advised that the incident can be technically described as a "happening". As a mishap it might have been explained away; as a planned "happening" there can be no explanation or excuse. In spite of (this) I have faith in the drama today and I have faith in the drama of the future. I do not contemplate surrendering to the irresponsible actions of a few people sick in mind and heart' (33)

- and the model was summoned on an indecency charge of which she was later acquitted. In 'The Hypocrite', historically placed beyond libel action, McLellan makes ridiculous such reactions and suggests that they are not as innocent as they might appear.

'The Flouers o' Edinburgh' - again set in eighteenth century Edinburgh - has as its main theme the conflict felt by the gentry of that time as to whether they should speak Scots or English and McLellan has a great deal of fun at the expense of one of his characters who has abandoned his 'barbarous' native tongue. The play is meant as a comment on the discussion of the use of Scots today. McLellan is obviously in favour of using Scots in literature, and perhaps even, it is implied, in life.

Apart, however, from these two plays, there are no real themes in McLellan's work. He says in fact that in most of his work he has been more interested in character than in theme. The characters of historical personages, for example, interest him for their own sake. He is also concerned to present in his plays characters he has known in his own life as a way of 'fixing' certain components of Scottishness which he feels have been ignored by Scottish dramatists. The characters and the conflicts they engender are endemic in Scotland and still to be encountered today.

'Toom Byres', one of the first of McLellan's plays to be presented by the Curtain Theatre (in 1936) is set in the Borders at Kinnelknock in the early years of the reign of James the Sixth. It concerns the novel method in which Sir Robert o' the Drumford, Keeper of the Dale, resolves a quarrel between the Kers and the Scotts by pairing off the young members of the families in marriage. The play is much more involved than this summary would suggest and McLellan handles the complexities of the plot well. The characters, particularly Wat Scott of the Hanginshaw and Peggy Ker, are strong, well-defined, recognisably Scottish creations.

'The Changeling' and 'Jeddart Justice' have both already been mentioned and little more need be said of them other than they are amusing, if slight, comedies set in the same milieu as 'Toom Byres'.

Three of McLellan's plays are set in the Edinburgh of the eighteenth century, the Edinburgh of Hume and Boswell. 'The Flouers o' Edinburgh' reflects the growth of industrialisation and the spread of Anglicisation, two

developments which McLellan considers to be very closely linked. The link is to be seen in Charlie Stanebyres who is promoting (in an underhand fashion) industrial development, and insists on speaking in the English manner, going so far as to refuse to marry a girl since she is unwilling to follow suit. The plan for industrialisation is foiled and McLellan extracts much humour at the expense of Charlie and those who join his attempt to emulate the English. The play is amusing and diverting, if not very substantial. The characterisation is, on the whole, good, although one or two characters, introduced it would seem as pawns in the linguistic argument, approach caricature.

'Young Auchinleck' was written out of the author's interest in the conflict between James Boswell and his father Lord Auchinleck. Boswell, McLellan feels, suffered from a repressive Scots upbringing which was directly responsible for the dissolute life that he led as a young man. Lord Auchinleck represents that background against which Boswell is reacting and at one point in the play the conflict reaches the stage where Boswell has difficulty restraining himself from murdering his father. Although the character of Boswell develops from being a rather repulsive rake to being a reformed one, saved by the love of his cousin, Peggy Montgomerie, whom he marries, he is for much of the time a rather boring character. Lord Auchinleck, who speaks a vigorous Scots (Boswell speaks Anglified Scots), is much more interesting than his son, which is unfortunate, as Boswell is the central character of the play. This happens quite simply because McLellan writes with far more life in Scots than he does in English, and does not seem able to endow his English speaking characters with the vigour of his Scots speaking ones.

Mention has already been made of 'The Hypocrite', which, although a comedy, is a very pessimistic account of Scots puritanism. Skinner's hypocrisy almost catches up with him at the end of the play but he avoids disaster, and declares himself saved to carry on with the work of the Lord. The relevance of the play to contemporary Scotland has been noted and it does make an effective point which needs to be made. However the play gives the impression of being inflated beyond its proper dimensions and might have been more effective in one act. As one might expect, Skinner, who

speaks English, is often stilted, whereas the few characters who speak Scots come alive immediately.

McLellan's best play, 'Jamie the Saxt' (34) is also notable mainly for its characterisations. It is set during the period 1595-94 when the young King was struggling to assert himself at the centre of a web of conspiracy woven by dissident lords, the church, the burghers of Edinburgh and the English government. It is not a play which "says" anything, but the picture of James as a much tried young man who survives, not by a display of heroics, but by using his wits to play one faction off against another is very appealing. McLellan's Jamie is not a clown but a canny individual whose canniness sees him through till the end of the play when he is able to look forward confidently to claiming the throne of England.

The King :- ... Oho, but fortune's favoured me the day! There's naething in my wey! Aa that I hae wished for is promised at last; Bothwell on the scaffold, the Papists houndit doun, the kirk in my pouer, England ahint me, and then, in the end the dream o my life come true! It gars my pulse quicken! It gars my hairt loup! It gars my een fill wi' tears! To think hou the two puir countries hae focht and struggled. To think o the bluid they hae shed atween them, the touns they hae blackent wi fire, the bonnie green howes they hae laid waste. And then tothink, as ae day it sall come to pass that I, Jamie Stewart, will ride to London and the twa countries sall become ane. (Mistress Edward can be heard off calling 'Nicoll! Nicoll! Come for yer supper!')

Maitland:- (Coming out of his trance and reaching for the bottle) Ay, yer Grace, it's a solemn thocht. But the auld bitch isna deid yet. (He places the bottle before the King. The king fills his glass).

The King :- (Raising his glass high) Jock, here's to

the day. May the mowdies sune tickle her taes.

(Mistress Edward appears at the door of the dining room)

Mistress Edward :-Yer Grace, the supper's ready.

(The King and Maitland eye each other and drink the toast)

Jamie's pleasure here is not just in his dream of personal power but in the prospect of a peaceful and united country. High flown sentiments are nicely contrasted with Mrs. Edward's calls to dine and Maitland's down to earth practicality, which Jamie himself echoes with his toast in an acceptably amusing way.

The play, when originally performed, served as a vehicle for a highly individual performance by Duncan Macrae, although McLellan does not appear to have been in complete agreement with Macrae's interpretation of the character which verged on the pantomimical.

A characteristic which 'Jamie the Saxt' shares with 'Torwatletie' is the intricate, not to say confusing, plot structure, which McLellan obviously enjoys creating. 'Torwatletie' is set near the Solway in 1716. The Laird of Torwatletie, mainly to spite the Calvinist Presbyterians typified by his sister, Mirren, harbours a Jacobite refugee who is to be helped to escape to the Isle of Man. This is accomplished after much scheming and counter-scheming involving a displaced Episcopalian curate, a presbyterian spy and a local rascal who is engaged in smuggling and pressganging. It is a lively play which relies over-heavily at times on horseplay, but it is not of any great account. McLellan's dislike of Calvinism is again in evidence but it is not developed as a theme.

'Rab Mossgiel' (35) recounts in straightforward narrative fashion Burns's involvement with Jean Armour, Mary Campbell and 'Clarinda'. McLellan suggests the sad dilemma which Burns finds himself in, but the character of Burns lacks robustness. For example, Burns is made to show a deference to Gavin Hamilton which is difficult to accept. The play, however, does have its touching moments. At the end Burns asks Jean Armour, to whom he has returned having

finally forsaken Clarinda, to hum a tune he has been trying to remember. Jean does so. The tune is one to which Burns has promised Clarinda he will write heart breaking words. The irony is moving.

'The Carlin Moth' (36) is a one act play which is rather different from McLellan's other work. It is a reworking of the old theme of the human seduced by a supernatural lover. The lad of the play is won away from his girl by the Carlin moth which assumes the form of a beautiful girl at some times and that of an old woman at others. The moth effectively destroys the relationship between the two humans. At the end of the play the moth in its final speach implies that human beings are basically unhappy creatures.

'The pouer to bigg a braw world in his
brain make man the only craitur that
can greit'

This may be what McLellan is 'saying' in the play, although it is not a theme which is sufficiently developed to sustain any detailed analysis. The play does succeed however, in evoking in the reader some of the terror which the metamorphic super-natural can arouse, and probably had even greater success with its first audience, which was a radio one.

'The Cailleach' and 'The Smuggler' are two one-act plays set in Arran. 'The Smuggler' which takes place in the eighteenth century, concerns a young smuggler who, to escape the gaugers, has to leave for Canada. There is a reference in passing to the Clearances, but it is not developed. 'The Cailleach' is set in 1652 and is a short tragedy concerning the involvement of an Arran girl with one of the English soldiers garrisoning Brodick Castle. The soldier is killed, as he is waiting for her at a rendezvous, by a party of local men, including the girl's father and brother, who are out to recapture some cattle the soldiers have expropriated. The girl is left lamenting, carrying the dead soldier's child. These two plays are effective little sketches, but no more than that. They probably reflect their period accurately, but do not engage any depth of feeling in the audience.

To conclude, Robert McLellan is a dramatist who has indeed demonstrated his ability to create characters and

interesting theatrical activity, but so far he has been unable to find an important theme attractive enough to engage his obvious skills.

At the same time as the Curtain was in existence, and indeed throughout this period the passion for pantomime continued unabated, and men like Harry Gordon, Tommy Lorne, George West, Dave Willis and Tommy Morgan made their contributions to their audiences' enjoyment and the Glasgow tradition of pantomime.

As has been noted, Perth Repertory Theatre was established in 1935, by Marjorie Dence and David Steuart, who had met at London University where they were both studying. Steuart's ambition of starting a rep in Perth was realised when a theatre was advertised for sale in the city and Marjorie Dence's father, who was Mayor of Greenwich, assisted in its acquisition. The theatre opened on 23rd September 1935 with a production of Clifford Bax's 'Rose without a Thorn'.

By 1939 the theatre felt secure enough to organise a theatre festival, for which Bridie wrote 'The Golden Legend of Shults' and at which performance of 'Romeo and Juliet' (with Alex Guinness), Chekhov's 'The Three Sisters' and Shaw's 'Caesar and Cleopatra' were also given.

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APPENDIX

THE PRODUCTIONS OF THE CURTAIN THEATRE

* Premiere

1933.			Theatre	
Jan. 23	X=0	J. Drinkwater	Curtain	
	The Bear	Chekhov	"	
Feb. 27	Interlude	P.V. Carroll	"	*
	The Apricot Tree	C. Bax	"	
	On the Market	N. Bruce	"	*
Apr. 10	Rendezvous	A. Crawford	"	*
	Descent into Paradise	Robins Millar	"	*
	Trial by Petticoat	N. Bruce	"	*
Oct. 25	We Have Ceased to Live	P.V. Carroll	"	*
Nov. 30	The Best of Both Worlds	M. Ewer	"	*
1934.				
Jan. 8	Bondage	K.W. Lamond	"	*
	Men Born Blind	J.M. Thomson	"	*
	Jeddart Justice	R. McLellan	"	*
Feb. 12	Nothing to Forgive	N. Bruce	"	*
Apr. 12	Tarfessock	R. McLellan	"	*
Sep. 22	Saxby's Circus	J.D. Kelly	"	*
	The Women Have Their Way			
Nov. 27	Straw for the Artist	N. Bruce	"	*
1935.				
Jan. 24	The Widow's Mite	D.G. Wright	"	*
Feb. 25	The True Born Scotsman	C. Macklin	"	
Apr. 10	Cian and Ethne	R. McLellan	"	*
May 28	Autumn Flight	N. Sillars	"	*
Oct. 24	Invasion	W. McFadyen	"	*
Nov. 22	As we Go to Press	N. Bruce	Berkeley Hall	*

			Theatre	
1936.				
Jan. 24	Once a Lady	R. Millar	Lyric	*
Mar. 19	Room in Waiting	D. Maclaren	Curtain	*
May 1	Toom Byres	R. McLellan	Lyric	*
Oct. 27	A Letter to Rome	G.M. Thomson	"	*
Dec. 25	The Crime at Balquhidder	O. Davidson	"	*
1937.				
Feb. 3	There's Money In It.	R. Millar	"	*
Mar. 31	King Jamie the Saxt	R. McLellan	"	*
Oct. 20	Moonlight Flitting	G.M. Thomson	"	*
Dec. 8	Invisible at Morn	N. Bruce	"	*
1938.				
Feb. 23	Emergency Call	R. Millar	"	*
Apr. 21	The Winnock	M. Monro	"	*
Dec. 15	There's Money In It	R. Millar	"	
1939.				
Feb. 23	Portrait of an Artist	R. McLellan	"	*
Dec. 1	The High Wind	N. Bruce	"	*
1940.				
Apr. 19	Once a Lady	R. Millar	"	

The above list is as complete as a thorough search of the files of several newspapers can make it.

CHAPTER V

THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL PLAYERS

The scheme for the formation of the Scottish National Players was initiated before the First World War under the auspices of the St. Andrew Society of Glasgow and was aimed at 'The production of plays dealing with Scottish life and character' (1). The war however, led to the postponement of the scheme, although attempts were made during the war to foster interest by arranging a series of lectures and meetings. One of these took place in February 1915 in the shape of a drama symposium at which A.F. Wilson, the Scots manager of the Abbey Theatre, expressed his opinion as to how a Scottish drama movement would develop.

> 'As to whether the Scottish dramatist would turn to the city's problems or the simplicity of the countryside for his material, he believed that realistic plays of a peasant or folk character would predominate. That at any rate was the experience of the Irish movement. It was only through the peasant or rural character that they could reach the real national soul expressed in national drama' (2)

Wilson continued to favour the development of rustic plays, and after he left his post as producer of the S.N.P, at the end of 1923, he expressed disappointment that no Doric drama had developed.

The Scottish National Players were launched on 13th January 1921 in the Royal Institute Glasgow when three plays - 'Chatelard' by C. Stewart Black, 'Cute McCheyne' by J.L. Waugh and A.P. Wilson and 'Glenforsa' by J. Brandane and A.W. Yuill - were performed and favourably received by the press. Several other performances were given that year and in February 1922 the Scottish National Theatre Society was formed with the following objects.

a) To take over the assets and liabilities of the Scottish National Players Committee of the Saint Andrew Society (Glasgow).
b) To develop Scottish national drama through the productions by the Scottish National Players of

plays of Scottish life and character.

c) To encourage in Scotland a public taste for good drama of any type.

d) To found a Scottish National Theatre. (3)

It is to be noted that the emphasis here is on Scottish plays - objective (c) is not the main one, asit was with the Glasgow Rep. The S.N.P. did perform a few non-Scottish plays - but not so few as to prevent criticism that by doing so it was betraying its ideals!

Having started on a provisional basis, it was now felt necessary to establish the venture on a firm working one with permanent offices and rehearsal accommodation. The link with the St. Andrew Society was amicably severed in September 1921 and the S.N.P. thenceforth pursued its own course.

In 1922 the Players performed for short periods in Glasgow, in January, March and November at the Athenaeum, and in May at the Pavilion. In addition, they played at Oban and Balmoral and in December appeared in London in 'A Valuable Rival' by Neil F. Grant. On this occasion a dinner, attended by theatrical celebrities and others, was given for the players. G.B. Shaw, though unable to attend, sent an encouraging telegram -

> 'As I shall not be in London on the 29th, I cannot avail myself of your kind invitation to dine with the Scottish National Players. The unanimous refusal of the English people to establish an English national theatre must not discourage them. The Englishman is so modest on his own account that he never believes anything English deserves to succeed or can succeed, but he is boundlessly credulous as to foreign possibilities' (4)

Throughout their existence, the S.N.P. gave short seasons in Glasgow spread out over the year and toured at other times. This was deliberate policy, asthe Players sought to be a national rather than a regional group, but it was a policy which attracted some criticism from those who felt that their efforts should be concentrated in Glasgow, rather than spent touring throughout the Highlands. In addition to the performances given at the Athenaeum and,

afterwards, the Lyric Theatre, the Players gave performances at other Glasgow theatres. In May 1922 they presented 'Luiffy' by J.L. Waugh and A.F. Wilson at the Pavilion, and in July 1924, 'The Crystal Set' by J.H. Bone at the same theatre where they found a more popular audience than they were accustomed to (it is arguable that the plays which they presented at the Pavilion were more in the nature of variety sketches, and thus were readily acceptable). In 1925, and again in 1926, the S.N.P. performed Robert Bain's 'James the First of Scotland' at the Theatre Royal, and 'The Glen is Mine' by John Brandane at the King's in 1923 and 1926. 'The Glen is Mine', easily the most successful of the S.N.P's plays was toured throughout Scotland by a professional company in 1927.

The S.N.P. visited London three times - in 1922, 1923 and 1930. On the first occasion, as already stated, they presented 'A Valuable Rival' by Neil F. Grant, and on the second a triple bill of J.F. Ferguson's 'Campbell of Kilmohr' 'A Valuable Rival' and 'Luiffy', and on the third occasion they played 'The Glen is Mine' for a fortnight. At least one visit was paid to Edinburgh, when in 1923, 'The Glen is Mine' and Gordon Bottomley's 'Gruach' were presented at the Lyceum. In addition, radio broadcasts were made on several occasions - in June 1924 of Brandane's 'Glenforsa', George Blake's 'The Mother' and 'The Crystal Set' - on a second occasion in 1924 and in 1927 when two of Brandane's plays were presented.

By far the most important side of the Players' activities, apart from their seasons in Glasgow, were the country tours and one-night stands to which the company itself attached great significance.

> 'It has been said that the work of a national theatre cannot properly be restricted to one centre of activity; it must carry its work to the small town and village as well, and this it should do consistently and thoroughly. Recognising this, as well as the educational and social value of good drama worthily presented, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust has generously guaranteed this tour against financial loss. This guarantee is part of a

considered scheme by the Trust for bringing good drama within the reach of the smaller communities which cannot hope to support it on a purely commercial basis, and follows what has already been done in that direction under the auspices of the Trust by the Arts League of Service and the Village Concerts Fund in their respective tours of rural districts. This welcome co-operation of the Carnegie Trust, for one thing, enables the Society to keep to popular prices of admission. Should this second country tour of the Scottish National Players prove the success it is hoped, they may be able to revisit the Scottish country districts at regular and more frequent intervals' (5)

Local communities are exhorted to give all their support to the company.

'The performance of the Scottish Players in your midst is really a great event for your town or village. Keep the date clear and remember it is your country's movement to establish a National Drama' (6)

Among the places visited were Oban in 1922, Bridge of Allan, Perth and Dunoon in 1924, several towns and villages during a three week tour in summer 1927 of Perthshire, Aberdeenshire and Fife, during which the company slept under canvas, and the Border towns in the course of another tour in 1929.

There can be no doubt that the Players were determined to turn their company into a national movement. That it did not achieve that status is due more to the quality of the plays they presented rather than to any other factor. Attention will be given subsequently to a consideration of the plays presented by the S.N.P. Suffice to say here that of 131 plays they performed, half of these for the first time, few are of any lasting merit.

As has been stated, the actors with the S.N.P. were amateurs (although a good many later turned professional, and had successful careers), despite the efforts of some members of the committee to change this situation. These

men, among them James Bridie and John Brandane, believed that if the company were ever to be properly established it would have to turn professional. The idea was to take the Athenaeum by the season, but the committee did not care for this idea, nor did most of the actors who were understandably nervous about giving up their jobs. A policy of two night runs was adopted instead, and in that year, 1932, the Players gave only four programmes. The principal producers were however engaged throughout on a play to play basis. Among the S.N.P's producers were A.P. Wilson, Frank D. Clewlow, the young Tyrone Guthrie, Elliot Mason and W.G. Fay.

As with the Royalty venture, a study of the reports of the A.G.M's of the S.N.P. shows optimism and enthusiasm waning as support and financial backing do not come up to expectation. At the 1922 A.G.M. it was stated that the membership of the society was 835 which was not considered high enough (by 1925 this figure had reached 1026 but two years later it had dropped again to 820). A loss of £176 had been sustained on the year's working, and it was said that -

> 'If there were 500 additional persons per performance they would be able to show a profit and enable them to stage historical and costume plays' (7)

Despite the unrosy outlook, it was decided to embark on an auxiliary productions scheme whereby members of the Society could have their plays performed at private meetings and dissected afterwards by the other members present. Several sessions under the auspices of this excellent scheme seem to have been held.

At the 1925 A.G.M. (8) the chairman expressed satisfaction at the year's work, which included broadcasts, but was faced with a loss of £140. However, he was able to announce that the building fund which had been started a few years previously, had received a boost through a donation of £500 (the fund never exceeded £620). At the 1926 A.G.M. (9) it was proposed to establish a guarantee fund, since with another loss, this time of £138, the production fund stood at £212, and the following year (10) it was reported at the A.G.M. that 18/11½ in the pound of the guarantee fund for

'James the First of Scotland' had had to be called up. In 1929 (11) the loss on the previous year's working had reached £449 and in 1930 (12) £788. When it was decided to suspend operations in 1934 (13) it was stated that the society had been formally constituted in 1928 with capital of £4000 (when the limited liability company was founded in 1928 to further the objects of the S.N.P. it was registered with capital of £10,000 but only just over 4000 shares were taken up), but as a result of losses each year this had been whittled down to £400. It was pointed out that most of the losses were sustained in the towns and not in the rural districts. The directors hoped that it would be possible for some of the company's work to continue.

> 'The directors do not recommend that the society should go into liquidation. We think it should be kept in existence though inactive. It will not be quite inactive as we will keep in touch with authors, and we may still be able to give help and guidance to budding dramatists'

The company did not in fact disband after this announcement, but insisted on carrying on, which it did until the war, and finally petered out in 1947. The policy was changed after the formal suspension of operations, towards the presentation of light comedies, many of which originated in the English professional theatre, and the Scottish content of the programme diminished, so that the Players ceased to be Scottish National in the sense that they no longer adhered to the original aims. The initiative in the presentation of new Scottish plays passed to the Curtain.

In assessing the work of the S.N.P., one must immediately give credit for the sustained efforts of the Players to cultivate an exclusively Scottish drama. One can easily condemn them for the non-appearance of plays of note - it is difficult to ascertain to what extent they were to blame - but one must admire their determination, as one must also admire the way in which they sought to turn their movement into a National one. It is easy to make fun of the camping tours, but in a country which has no dramatic tradition, and which was scarcely flourishing when

these tours took place, they were a brave attempt to educate an audience for Scottish theatre.

> 'The Scottish National Theatre Society has done more than any other agency for the fostering of good drama in the Scottish countryside. Not only have they built up a standard of Scots acting in theatres under professional producers and brought out the great bulk of those Scots plays which are now the raw material of the amateur movement, but also, through their summer tours and one night stances, they have set a standard of acting and producing in almost every shire in Scotland. Furthermore, actors and producers who have graduated with them are now producing and adjudicating productions up and down the country' (14)

The remarks quoted above give a clue to what the S.N.P. did not do. They may have shown rural drama clubs how to act, but they did not interest them in good plays. They could not, for they did not have any to display.

Much contemporary comment in 'The Scottish Stage' (15) for example, is hostile to the S.N.P's policy in the selection of plays. In that periodical there appeared an article by Murray McClymont entitled 'Have the S.N.P. failed?' (16) in which McClymont says that he had received a letter from the S.N.P. asking for a play from him, and stating that the Players felt that they had been let down by Scottish dramatists. McClymont disagrees.

> 'If the Scottish National Theatre Society demand that Scots dramatists shall pretend that Scots people and things are other than they are, shall ignore existing conditions and perpetuate the hoary tradition of glens and pipers, of kail and kitchens, of mulches and Tappit hens, then I for one, am never likely to be of much use to them ... Damn tradition! Damn our antiquarian habit! Damn everything false and sentimental which stands in the way of truth and turns an

> artist into a romantic pervert ... Scotland, as Gregory Smith has said, has been all too long in suspecting her habit of cottage musings over the unending 'matter' of Habbie Simpson'

The S.N.P., says McClymont, will only gain the support of Scots writers when it attempts to create a Scottish theatre.

> ' ... I say the Society has let not only the dramatists but Scotland down. What has the Society done for Scottish theatrical art? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. And as long as the Society is content to figure as a branch of the English theatre, so long will Scots dramatists continue to send their plays to the top of the tree'

It is interesting to note that this criticism of McClymont's is very similar to some of the criticism made against the amateur movement in general. This is to be expected since, as has been emphasised, the S.N.P. was basically part of the amateur movement. McClymont's criticism of the Players is supported in the same issue of the 'Scottish Stage' by Donald Sutherland.

> 'The plain fact is that in the whole list of thirty full length plays and forty one-act plays produced by the society, they have only succeeded twice in producing tolerably decent works by native dramatists! The two works referred to are Robert Bain's 'James the First of Scotland' and Murray McClymont's 'The Mannoch Family' ... The best service they can offer to the Drama in Scotland is to stage a graceful exit' (17)

McClymont himself had mounted another attack on the S.N.P. elsewhere.

> 'National drama is universal drama. Drama whose appeal is national is parochial drama. I commend the distinction to the notice of the Scottish National Theatre Society ... If an alien medium be good enough for Scotland the sooner the (Society)

abandons its title the better ... The future of Scottish drama lies ... in the evolution of a Scottish form consistent with the race psychology ... My advice to our amateur groups is to abjure Scots plays entirely (for these are hybrid things inimical to theatrical development) and to devote their energies to the presentation of good English plays, or of English translations of good foreign plays, and endeavour to interpret these in a new and genuinely Scottish manner' (18)

There is a lot of question begging going on here!

Among the other criticisms levelled at the Players was a complaint that there was generally not enough progress from a company which imagines -

'they are helping the cause of Scottish drama by gallivanting about the Highlands with a few one act plays and a foolery they call mime, who inflate themselves with big talk about contemplated tours in Canada and America and who have yet to persuade the Glasgow public to take them seriously' (19)

The criticism is echoed in a leader in the 'Glasgow Herald' -

'It is upon the score of lack of promptitude and frequency of production that we think critics of the Society have a legitimate case for serious consideration' (20)

Correspondent, John Brandane, also condemns the Players' experiment in the miming of ballads (21). Brandane received support for this view and dissent.

'It is typical of the narrow spirit of dowdy provincialism that has hitherto so cruelly impeded the progress of the National Theatre Society and the National Players. These so-called Nationalists are for constricting the Scottish Theatre to the production of but and ben comedy, a derivative and feeble Celtic Twilight and "dreich" sentimentalities about Queen Mary and Bonnie Prince Charlie' (22)

This letter came from Donald Sutherland who, four years later, was urging the players to stage a graceful exit (23). (This point is made as it suggests that critics of the S.N.P. were for the most part genuinely disappointed with what they considered to be its failure). The criticism that the Players took too long to make up their minds about plays submitted to them recurs -

> ' ... the trouble is that new dramatists would like to see their plays produced. It is not much encouragement to have them lying about the files of the Scottish Players for an indefinite period' (24)

Another correspondent says that he only buys his tickets out of a sense of duty and links this to the poor attendances at the Players' performances (25).

On the other hand, in an article published in the 'Scots Magazine' in 1924, Reah Denholm says that the aim of the S.N.P. is to 'present in dramatic form the real life of Scotland past and present, of every grade and shade, from every angle' (26). The reading committee, she says, is not looking for kailyard plays. This is encouraging. Not so an article in 'The Scottish Player' by Alexander McGill. He talks about the need for plays on the subjects of Scotland's lost causes.

> 'We do not ask for ranting patriotism and bombast, but we do need a dramatic interpretation of the Wallace symbol, the symbol whose name we salute in our national song after the manner we have of saluting our kings and heroes and the ancient and holy dead' (27)

This seems to me to be as dangerous an escape route as that offered by the kailyard.

It is difficult to evaluate the criticisms made of the S.N.P. The evidence we have consists of the plays actually presented, the S.N.P's declarations of policy, the criticisms themselves and the revealing incidents such as the agonies which the S.N.P. seem to have undergone in deciding whether to stage G.R. Malloch's 'Soutarness Water'.

Rather than speculating any further we shall now look at the plays which the S.N.P. actually performed.

It is of course difficult to survey accurately and fairly the wide range of plays presented by the S.N.P., but some idea of their quality can be gained by considering the most frequently performed one-act and full-length plays. A list of the ten most popular plays in each category is given below - (eleven in the case of one-acters since the final two had an equal number of performances) -

Full-length Play	Author	No. of Performances
'The Glen is Mine'	John Brandane	105
'Ayont the Hill'	Cormac Simpson	63
'S for Sugar Candy'	Donald McLaren	49
'The Flower in the Vase'	Cormac Simpson	37
'The Beannachy Bomb'	Hal D. Stewart	32
'A Month of Sundays'	Hal D. Stewart	31
'Walls of Jericho'	Robert Kemp	30
'Clyde Built'	George Blake	28
'Brief Harmony'	Moultrie R. Kelsall	28
'Late Christopher Bean'	Emlyn Williams	28
One-act		
'A Valuable Rival'	Neil F. Grant	208
'C'Est La Guerre'	Morland Graham	80
'The Scarecrow'	J.A. Ferguson	63
'Luiffy'	J.L. Waugh and A.P. Wilson	58
'The Dawn'	Naomi Jacob	46
'Cute McCheyne'	J.L. Waugh and A.P. Wilson	45
'The Crystal Set'	J.H. Bone	42
'The Poacher'	Joe Corrie	40
'The Mother'	George Blake	35
'Campbell of Kilmohr'	J.A. Ferguson	29
'The Grenadier'	G. Reston Malloch	29

It is the intention to make some observations on these, the most popular plays. ('Walls of Jericho' will be discussed when Robert Kemp's work is considered in a later chapter).

It is however proposed to look first of all at two of the most important S.N.P. dramatists and then at lesser writers, paying particular attention to those whose names appear on the list of the most popular plays. The

dramatists chosen are John Brandane and George Reston Malloch, Brandane because of his work represents exceptionally well the type of play which predominated in the S.N.P's repertoire and Malloch because part of his work represents the kind of play which did not figure very largely in the repertoire, but which exemplifies an important stand in Scottish dramatic writing. Brandane and Malloch have also been chosen because of the number of their plays performed and because they are reasonably interesting writers.

John Brandane (Dr. John McIntyre) made a two-fold contribution to the work of the Scottish National Players. In the first place, he took a leading part in running the company's affairs (he was one of the three sponsors of the ill-fated proposal that the Players should turn professional) and, in the second place, he wrote a number of plays which were performed by the Players. No attempt will be made here to suggest that Brandane is a playwright of any great stature. He is not. What will be done is to examine the type of play that he wrote, and to ascertain how far his plays represent a genuinely Scottish contribution to the theatre.

The most immediately striking feature of Brandane's work is that he invariably chooses Highland settings. The magic attraction of the Highlands is of course apparent in many other Scottish writers - for example Stevenson and Neil Munro, and more recently Neil Gunn where an altogether harsher approach is taken to Highland reality. The one exception to this generalisation, as far as Brandane's plays are concerned, is 'The Happy War' (28), a one-acter, which is set in the Haute Marne at the end of the First World War. Two of his plays, 'The Treasure Ship' (29) and 'Rory Aforesaid' (30) are set in the fictitious West Highland town of Torlochan, one, 'Heather Gentry' (31), in Drimfearn, another fictitious geographical location, and four, 'The Glen is Mine' (32), 'The Lifting' (33), 'The Inn of Adventure' (34) and 'Glenforsa' (35), in Eilean Aros, which Brandane tells us is somewhere in the Inner Hebrides. Obviously it is on Mull where Brandane spent several very happy years as a doctor. 'The Spanish Galleon' (36) which deals with the historical incident of the sinking of one

of the ships of the Spanish Armada off Tobermory, is, naturally, set in Tobermory. Brandane's novels, 'The Captain More' (37) and 'My Lady of Aros' (38), ('The Inn of Adventure' is a theatrical adaptation of the former), are also set in Eilean Aros.

It is interesting that Brandane, who wrote almost exclusively for an urban audience, should choose to set his plays in a part of Scotland about the life of which his audience would know very little at first hand, and whose impressions of which would derive from the popular image of the Highlands as a series of attractive picdure postcards. It is almost certain that his audience would regard the Highlands (as we still do today) as something of an unspoilt paradise to which they, oppressed by their unattractive urban environment, longed, on occasion, to escape, and possibly did on vacation. Brandane (himself a native of Bute and hence not a Highlander) caters in his plays for this longing which he himself may well have shared with his audience. He presents the Highlands as an unspoit paradise. The Colonel in 'The Glen is Mine' trying to dissuade his sone, Charlie, from his iron-mine scheme says -

> 'But the Highlands, Charlie! Is this to be the beginning of the end of them? Are the old hunting pastoral days to go - the wild free open life?'
>
> (The Glen is Mine p.36)

An urban audience would respond very sympathetically to a picture of the Highlands as offering 'the wild free open life'.

Brandane is at pains to emphasize the beauty of the Highlands in his directions regarding the settings of his plays.

> 'It is full sunlight out of doors, and great free spaces of hill and glen and loch are seen' (The Inn of Adventure p.39)
>
> 'The back wall ... is flanked by two large windows, through which the hills and the loch are seen in full sunshine'
>
> (Heather Gentry p.72)

'In Rear wall is a door of wickerwork
standing open, and through it is seen a
Highland moorland stretching up and away
into the distance'

(The Lifting p.167)

' ... a large double window ... looks out
over the little town's roof tops to the
sunlit waters of Torlochan Bay and the
distant Highland hills encircling it'

(The Treasure Ship p.11)

At one point in 'The Treasure Ship' the heroine, Iona, is discovered 'rapt in contemplation of the beauty of the night'.

It is not suggested that the Highlands are not beautiful, that they are not full of sunlit hills, moorlands and bays, but what is suggested is that Brandane's emphasis on the beauty of the Highlands and on their wild open spaces gives one the impression that he is providing escapism for his urban audience, and perhaps for himself also. Brandane was doing in the theatre what 'The Scots Magazine' and 'Scottish Field' do today for a Lowland urban readership.

It is not difficult to deduce Brandane's attitudes to the inhabitants of the Highlands from his plays. For Brandane, the Highlander is a man given to sudden bursts of passion. In 'Glenforsa' (written in collaboration with A.W. Yuill), the two young lairds, Glenforsa and Oskamull, take to dicing, and in a short time draw swords on each other. Elspeth, the heroine, having prevented any harm being done, acts as a mouthpiece for Brandane when she says 'Weary fa' this hot Highland blood' (p.389). Philip Linnell, the hero of 'The Inn of Adventure', who is out to clear the name of his father as a cheat, constantly loses his temper, particularly when talking to Ardow, the son of the man who had accused his father of cheating. This, of course, is not surprising in the circumstances, but it occurs so frequently and intensely that one becomes conscious of the fact that the playwright believes that Highlanders are particularly given to this kind of behaviour.

In 'The Lifting', Callum, who has escaped from the Redcoats who were about to execute him, argues with Iain Dubh

who was planning to rescue him, about the worth of the latter's plans for the rescue, which are, by this time, irrelevant in any case. It is an argument which is excessively passionate - but then Highlanders are men of great passion according to Brandane. Their passion shows itself not only in argument but also in midnight elopements - there is an elopement in 'Glenforsa' and another one in 'The Inn of Adventure'. In the latter case however, Brandane, through Captain MacColl, seems to be making a comment on this type of behaviour (and perhaps on his own attitudes). Talking of Ishbel's elopement with Carsaig, MacColl says -

> 'The young people are ill to bind ever since
> those fellows, Byron and Scott, began their
> heady poetic stuff.
> Poetry's as catching as measles these days.
> And runaway matches have been quite common
> these two years back. Young Lochinvars are
> as busy all over the country, aye, even in
> England, I believe. The English have
> discovered the advantages of a Scots marriage;
> and I hear there's a place down on the borders -
> Gretna Green - by name - .....
>
> (The Inn of Adventure p.42)

One cannot be sure how far Brandane means us to take these remarks of the Captain's as a definite comment on Highland attitudes, as he presents them, and how far it is merely a device he uses to get a few more laughs out of the audience. This play is something of a rag-bag, and it would be difficult to establish any pattern of meaning for it.

There also runs throughout Brandane's plays the suggestion that the Highlander is different from the Lowlander in that he is given to rather bizarre behaviour. Mrs. Fraser, a Lowlander, at one point in 'The Treasure Ship' says of her husband -

> 'Oh let him be! He's aye up to some nonsense.
> He's Highland ye ken'
>
> (The Treasure Ship p.68)

This sentiment is oft repeated in this particular play and finds an echo in, for example, 'The Glen is Mine' where the Colonel says to Gallety, a Lowlander -

'I've just been telling your wife that you'll soon get used to our ways in the Highlands - the drams and all that - a bit queer at first, eh?'

(The Glen is Mine p.17)

Brandane does not seem, to judge from his plays, to take a very high view of the modern Highlander (of the non-professional classes!). Rory MacColl, for example, the hero of 'Rory Aforesaid', is presented as rather a naive individual, innocent of the sophisticated processes of the law, who only gets off a sheep-stealing charge by following his lawyer's advice to say 'Meh' to each question put to him. Rory also says 'Meh' when the lawyer asks for his fee. So, although he is rather naive, when it comes to money, his head is screwed on the right way. MacCallum, the man whose sheep Rory has stolen, is also presented as rather a naive individual - he addresses the judge as 'O Lord' - who likewise loses his naivety when dealing with money matters. One gets the impression that Brandane would have us regard Rory as a rather loveable rascal. The same could be said of Angus MacKinnon, the old crofter in 'The Glen is Mine' who is not above helping himself to a stag or two, and MacIver, the joiner in 'The Treasure Ship', who cunningly dodges out of paying the bill he owes Dr. Fraser.

Brandane also has his yokels - Constable MacPherson in 'The Treasure Ship' who has 'apparahended with celeri-e-ty' the thief who has 'stolen' Fraser's treasure, springs to mind immediately - and one is forced to the conclusion that these creations are caricatures rather than characters. They are stage Highlanders not so far removed from Harry Lauder's debased and fictitious whisky drinking kilted fool.

Brandane's view of the Highlands and its inhabitants is a superficial one. The characters who people his plays are in the first place flat (in 'The Inn of Adventure' for example, Ardow is the rascal and he of course is all black) and in the second hackneyed caricatures, drawn from melodrama and farce rather than from any study of the life. As such, his characters are predictable and not very interesting. 'The Glen is Mine' is, however, something of an exception to this stricture. Angus MacKinnon, although

falling into the loveable rascal category, has more intelligence than Rory or MacIver and can turn his mind to more than finding ways of avoiding paying bills or screwing money out of people (although he does a fair amount of that too). Mrs. Gallety is a much more believable termagant than Beta McDonald in 'The Inn of Adventure', while MacPhedran, the rapacious sycophantic village trader with his obsequious 'Take care of yourself - Good people are scarce', has more individuality than most of Brandane's other characters. The dramatis personae of 'The Glen is Mine' gain something from the fact of course, that the play is about something, it has a recognisable theme to which they all have a relationship, which is more than can be said for 'Rory Afresaid' or even 'The Treasure Ship' (unless, in the case of the latter, one is meant to take it as a comment on the activities of the Dukes of Argyll in attempting to arouse interest inthe Tobermory galleon. This is a very doubtful interpretation).

As has been said, 'The Glen is Mine' has a definite theme. A charge that could be made against Brandane is that his plays are not only 'well made plays' but 'too well made plays', in which successive incidents are continued for no reason other than to provide a series of theatrically titillating thrills and spills. It will be useful to examine this charge with reference to an early play which Brandane wrote in conjunction with A.W. Yuill, 'The Spanish Galleon'.

This play relates the sinking of one of the Armada ships in Tobermory Bay in 1588. When the play opens, John Smollett, a trader in the West Highlands is discussing with Ewan MacMorran his plans to blow up the galleon on the instructions of the English ambassador in Edinburgh. The job is to be done by Doe McLean whom the Spaniards have taken as a hostage and conveniently imprisoned next to the powder cabin. Smollet's son, Jonathan, arrives from Edinburgh and declares that he would like to go on board the galleon, despite his father's attempts to put him off this notion. Barabel McLean, with whom Jonathan is in love, enters, and in the latter's absence, meets Don Sebastian, son of the captain of the 'San Juan Bautista'. Don Sebastian is staying in Smollett's house looking after his father who is supposedly ill, but is actually dead. Don Sebastian and

Smollet have decided to keep the death a secret lest the crew should mutiny. Don Sebastian makes a great show of gallantry to Barabel, and, having offered to show her round the ship, kisses her hand just as Jonathan returns. When the Don goes to fetch his cloak and sword, Jonathan makes it clear to Barabel that he does not approve of her behaviour. Just as Don Sebastian returns, Smollett rushes in to say that Duart's pipers are playing a lament for the Spanish Captain's death (Duart has maintained that there is no need to keep the death a secret as his Highlanders can maintain law and order). Barabel is sent to have Duart play a livelier tune! Left to themselves, Don Sebastian and Jonathan quarrel, draw swords and are only prevented from fighting by Barabel's return whereupon they hide their swords, and when they are noticed do their best to explain the situation away. Barabel refuses to be dissuaded from going on board the galleon, so Jonathan decides to go as well, unknown to his father. Smollett prepares to give the signal for the ship to be blown up, but the lamp is knocked out of his hand by Ewan who has tried to dissuade Smollett from giving the signal, since another of his clansmen has been taken on board as a hostage, and will, consequently, be blown up with the ship. When Smollett is out refuelling the lamp, Don Sebastian returns to say he has had difficulty in getting on board the 'San Juan' but Jonathan has gone out to see if it is safe for Barabel to make the trip. He goes off to try again and Ewan, secure in this knowledge, informs Smollett, when the latter returns, that he will make no attempt to prevent him giving the signal this time. Smollett does so, the ship is blown up, and then Ewan informs Smollett that Jonathan was on board. Smollett is distracted, and Barabel rushes in in the same condition. Curtain.

A glance at this bare summary shows how Brandane has made his play out of a series of dramatic effects drawn from a hundred and one forgotten melodramas. He has an element of intrigue, he has a variation on the eternal triangle theme culminating (almost) in a duel, he has a variation on the mistaken identity theme (Oedipus, Sohrab and Rustum) another variation on which is to be found in 'The Lifting'. The mechanics of 'The Spanish Galleon' are very much contrived. For example, Brandane has obviously

decided that he wants the theatrical effect of a quarrel between Don Sebastian and Jonathan over Barabel. So he has the pipers play a lament (for no very good reason) and thus gets Barabel off the stage, as she is sent (again for no very good reason) to make them play a livelier tune. He can now stage his quarrel which he can conveniently interrupt with Barabel's return. There are too many exits and entrances of this sort in the play, one of the most obvious being Don Sebastian's at the end when he tells Ewan that Jonathan is on the galleon.

'The Spanish Galleon' is a theatrically effective melodrama excessively contrived, 'too well made'. The same could be said of 'The Happy War', another one-act play never performed by the Scottish National Players. Unlike 'The Spanish Galleon', 'The Happy War' does have a theme, the futility of war. The play is set in a deserted monastery in the Haute Marne in September 1917. Pearson arrives to find his Medecin-Chef, who is taking a holiday from the war, returning from a fishing expedition. Brandane draws an effective contrast between the small talk of the two doctors and the serious events which they are temporarily opting out of, and which immediately impinge on them again. Pearson tells his superior that Koechlin, a patient, has escaped (a bit improbable for a start). As the two doctors examine frescoes (in a ruined monastery?) offstage, a German staggers in and goes into a room on the left of the stage. His groans attract the doctors' attention when they come back on stage and they exit and bring him on stage. They try unsuccessfully to revive him. Koechlin enters. It emerges that, having caught sight of the German prisoners, he now thinks one of them is his kin brother, Armand, conscripted by the Germans when they invaded Alsace. The audience now begins to wonder 'is the dead man Armand?' but is put out of its agony by the discovery that he is not. Armand himself soon arrives on the scene (he is of course the other escaped German) and is re-united with Koechlin. Just as this happens the gendarmes outside shoot and Armand is semi-accidentally killed. So the boost given to the audience's morale by finding out that the first dead man is not Armand is cancelled by the ending of the play. Pearson 'Kicking a box savagely' says bitterly 'That's torn it.

War my God War!'

There is no doubt that Brandane's heart is in the right place, but his excessively contrived plot lessens the impact of his play. Obviously a play is a contrived artifice but the trouble with Brandane is that he contrives beyond the point at which contrivance ceases to be believable. This is an objection which can be made to all Brandane's work. In 'The Lifting', for example, contrivance helps him to avoid the implications of an unfortunate moral situation. Iain Dubh has, albeit inadvertently, murdered the brother of the girl he loves. It would be difficult therefore for them to marry, but Brandane gives the impression that this is what will happen until the very end of the play when Iain is shot by chance, and so Brandane is able to avoid the moral problem he has posed himself.

It has to be admitted that very often Brandane's plays although theatrically effective, are about nothing in particular. They are traditional melodramas or comedies which have no relevance to life. (There are of course exceptions to this generalisation which will be dealt with later). 'The Lifting' for example, is a melodrama which happens to have a Highland setting. One expects at the beginning of this play that Brandane will get his teeth into a theme of his own (the wry comment of Donnacha's on the number of people going to see the prospective hanging - "Aye! The Croggan folk were aye keen on a hanging" hints at something more than the superficial but this hope is never realised). The play is full of excitement and sentimental pathos, but there is little else. Brandane makes no attempt for example, to develop the theme of the relationship between the Highlanders and the Redcoats after the '45. The period is merely a convenient historical setting for him.

Likewise, 'The Inn of Adventure' just happens to be set in the Highlands. Its themes bear no relation to the Highlands, to any other geographical location or to life in general, but find their 'loca vivendi' in the tradition of which Boucicault was such an important part. These 'themes' are the efforts of a son to avenge his father, wrongfully accused of cheating at dice years earlier, the love affair of a Highland laird and his mistress and the poetic day-dreams of a young lady much under the influence of Sir Walter Scott.

This last theme is the most interesting, since it provides an anti-romantic balance in Brandane's work, but as suggested earlier it is not developed sufficiently to warrant much attention. There is the hint of another theme in a remark of Bella McDonald, the landlady of the Inn of Aros, when she hears that Carsaig has gambled away all his land to Ardow -

> 'The young lairds, the young lairds! They're all the same; and what's to come of this countryside!'

This theme of the irresponsible behaviour of the young lairds which is not in any way developed in 'The Inn of Adventure', appears in similar fashion in 'Glenforsa', the first play of Brandane's to be performed by the Scottish National Players. (It is interesting to note the reviewer of 'The Spanish Galleon' in 'The Glasgow Herald' remarks of 'Glenforsa' that it 'had its own romantic charm' (39), a remark which would appear to tie in with the comments made above on Brandane's escapism and his attitude to Highland character). 'Glenforsa' also deals with an elopement interrupted by a game of dice in which the two young lairds, Oskamull and Glenforsa, stake their lands in a somewhat ridiculous fashion. Anna, Oskamull's housekeeper, comments -

> 'It's sacrilege and profanation to gamble away the very hills of God ... the bread and life of the good kindly people' (p.385)

and a few lines further on -

> 'Mo thruaigh! the Highlands, the old, old Highlands what's to come of them and their folk with their chiefs so heartless and so spendthrift' (p.385)

But the theme is never developed, for Oskamull returns Glenforsa's lands which he has lost to him, and Glenforsa goes off with Elspeth before her father, whose bagpipes are heard approaching, can catch them. In any case, we are never shown how the lairds' behaviour affects 'the bread and life of the good kindly people'. This theme is in fact a non-theme.

Paradoxically, it is in his comedies that Brandane comes closest to developing themes, and themes which have a relevance to life. His comedies are as full of contrivance

as his other plays but contrivance is more acceptable within the framework of artificial comedy than it is in plays which purport to render life on the stage as it is actually lived, 'the tangle of life' (40), as Brandane himself once called it. The trouble with Brandane's own 'serious' plays is that they do not have the sense of 'the tangle of life'. They are too carefully put together for that. Not only do they fail to convey the way in which the incidents and events of life cohere with each other, but also they fail to penetrate below the surface of life. C.M. Grieve has said of Brandane 'He has a sound knowledge of the theatre - but has no great dramatic gift; he is a better stage-technician than he is a writer. He has nothing to say - but he knows how to say it' (41).

This is a harsh judgement but its closeness to the truth has to be acknowledged, certainly as far as Brandane's 'serious' plays are concerned. It is not quite so accurate a judgement on Brandane's comedies, in one of which at least he does seem to be trying to say something - I refer to 'The Glen is Mine'.

As stated earlier, artifice in comedy is more acceptable than in other plays - it even gives pleasure where in other plays it would annoy. (We enjoy finding out that Bluntschli in 'Arms and the Man' has had previous dealings with Petkoff and Sergius and derive a great deal of amusement from the discomfort this causes, but if 'Arms and the Man' were not a comedy, we would dismiss the situation as improbable and contrived - as it is - and rate the play lower accordingly). It is a paradox that, despite the artifice of comedy, the comic writer may be dealing much more deeply with experience than another type of writer.

To return to Brandane, he has four thorough going comedies to his credit - 'The Treasure Ship', 'The Glen is Mine', Heather Gentry' and a one-act play 'Rory Aforesaid'. The last named is enjoyable (and to be honest, easily forgotten) entertainment. 'Heather Gentry', the last play of Brandane's to be performed by the S.N.P., is more a farce than a comedy. It deals with the ludicrous efforts of Drimfearn, a Highland laird, to keep us his estates, despite falling revenues. To this end he lets out his land to city gents, for shooting, and when they complain about their lack

of success, he has his gamekeeper surreptitiously cover the wings of a few birds with soap in order to make them easier targets for the amateur sportsmen! The characters of the play - Drimfearn himself, the maid, Bridget, who turns out to be the daughter of an Irish millionaire, the tenants, Borden and Craddock - and the incidents - the one described above, the erection of a gate across a road by Drimfearn in order to assert an ancient right (and to gain newspaper publicity) which leads to several accidents - are rather ludicrous and turn it into something nearer pantomime than comedy (significantly the play was first presented on 24th December 1924). However, despite this, there are signs that Brandane was concerned (perhaps) to do more than provide Christmas entertainment. Marsali McAlpine, the district nurse in love with Drimfearn's daughter, objects to Drimfearn's scheming, in particular to the erection of the gate.

Marsali :- I don't like that way of doing things.

Drimfearn :- Neither do I my dear, I don't like advertising of any kind. But if you don't do it, the other chaps will. So where are you? The industrial age has us in its grip, Marsali, Highland though we may be ... Advertise or get out ... That's the slogan for the Drimfearns as well as the Northcliffes; make no mistake about it. Regrettable, regrettable, but there it is ......

Marsali :- Oh it's so undignified all this scheming ... so un-Highland.

Drimfearn :- Yes, Yes! "The moon's on the lake and the mist's on the brae ... Gregarach" Is that it? Rob Roy MacGregor, eh? ... Wasn't Rob Highland? And did Rob not scheme? Were his cattle liftings dignified?

Marsali :- All that was different. There was romance and adventure. And he had to take risks ... Hair breadth escapes at times.

Drimfearn :- Aye, aye. Risks and adventure. And do you think I don't get my share of them? There are nights I don't get a wink o' sleep, plotting and planning how to make ends meet; how to keep up appearances on a reduced income .... It's not an easy kind of fighting - that, I can assure you. God! No! - I'd as soon have Rob Roy's way of it.

Marsali :- I'm sorry, Drimfearn.

Drimfearn :- Oh, don't be sorry for me my dear. I rather enjoy my life, broken-winged as it is.

Marsali :- Broken-winged! What a fine word! If you see things that way, I believe you do get your share of romance, after all. (p.80-2)

In this passage Brandane seems to be pointing out the difficulties facing a laird who is trying 'to keep up appearances on a reduced income' and to some extent he is justifying Drimfearn's scheming, but the theme is never really developed in any depth. Marsali's last comment tends to cancel the effect of what has gone before, and, in any case, Brandane allows this theme to be submerged by the apparatus of his farce. Hinting at themes, and then not developing them is characteristic of Brandane, as has already been suggested.

'The Treasure Ship' is about the efforts of Dr. Fraser and MacLaren, a grocer, to stir up interest in the Spanish galleon supposedly in Torlochan Bay, with a view to attracting tourists who will spend money in Fraser's chemist's shop and MacLaren's grocery. Fraser is as much a schemer as Drimfearn, and his schemes ultimately rebound on himself. 'The Treasure Ship' is entertaining but light-weight. Brandane does not develop the theme which is hinted at below the surface - the essential selfishness of Fraser. The diver, Cooney, complains of the risks Fraser has him run, MacIver the joiner suggests that Fraser should pay more attention to his patients, and Fraser himself, by his treatment of his assistant, demonstrates his own selfishness. He deliberately gives the assistant a testimonial the terms

of which he knows will not appeal to the council to whom the assistant has applied for a job. ('you know your testimonial won't be any good with those Bolsheviks on the Parish Council!). However, all comes right in the end, the assistant gets the job (and Fraser's daughter) and Mrs. Fraser sets out to prevent her husband's deceptions from being discovered.

It is tempting to suggest, as was remarked earlier, that the play is a serious comment on the kind of activity the Dukes of Argyll have been engaged in with regard to Tobermory galleon, but it is doubtful if this is Brandane's intention. The play is too light-hearted and unspecific for that.

'The Glen is Mine' is probably Brandane's best play. Its theme is quite simply the future of the Highlands. Should they remain an unspoilt (and perhaps depopulated) paradise or should they be industrialised? Colonel Murray, the proprietor of Ardsheilach and Coillemore, has handed over his estate to his son, Charlie, in order to avoid death duties ('There's government for ye! There's poaliticks! The big theifs!' Brandane has Mrs. Gallety comment naively). Charlie, unknown to his father, has hired an iron prospector who has found a seam which could be profitably worked. Charlie proposes therefore to start an iron-mine and makes this clear to his father when the latter discovers his plans.

Captain :- .... But it just comes to this. There's money in that old hill; so why shouldn't we have it?

Colonel :- And you're Highland and can say that. Ben Creach! The deer forest! Rubbish heaps and mineral waggons all over it! The river with oily scum in it! Labourers slouching about! You should have consulted me first of all, Charlie!

Captain :- I tell you it was a big chance - hit or miss. The London people were keen. Redfern offered a good price. I had to snap at it or let it go. Besides, the thing will be but a flea-bite in a big countryside like this.

Colonel :- More like a plague that will spread.

Captain :- I think that's a bit savage, dad. Look here! You're Tariff Reform, aren't you? Protection of home industries, and all that? Well, here we are! Sweden has the monopoly at present of this ore. We've got stuff in Ben Creach and elswhere in the Highlands, quite as good as theirs. And we'll bust their market in this country quite easily. Redfern offers good money, and I need it. (p.35)

In this exchange Charlie is putting forward the point of view that the Highlands should be exploited for whatever mineral wealth they possess, whereas his father believes this would be a desecration - or so it seems. Unfortunately Brandane detracts from the integrity of Charlie's point of view by having him admit to needing the money. We are left wondering whether Charlie really believes in the development of the Highlands, or is merely interested in recouping his financial losses. However, a few lines further on Charlie does seem to be advocating the mine for non-personal reasons.

Colonel :- .... But the Highlands, Charlie! Is this to be the beginning of the end of them? Are the old hunting, pastoral days to go? - the wild free open life?

Captain :- Sentiment, dad! Really now, it's nothing else.

Colonel :- Sentiment's a great power, lad, and not to be sneered at, as we army folk should know well.

Captain :- You talk of the old life going. I don't know, but I tell you what will go, dad, if we start a decent industry here - the huckstering of letting deer forests and grouse moors to a lot of scabby profiteers. Aye, and the laird's genteel poverty will go! and these lazy crofters will go! That's what it amounts to.

Colonel :- The lairds! Well, we're maybe not all we should be. But think, man, think. Blast furnaces, smoke, coal-dust in Eilean Aros. Think of the men you'll breed under those conditions. (p.36-7)

In this exchange Charlie points out that his mine would put an end to the shabby manoeuvres of lairds to make ends meet (one is reminded of 'Heather Gentry') but Brandane again detracts from the impact of his remarks by having him abuse the crofters, an action which would probably alienate an audience sympathetic to Charlie's point of view. It emerges further that Charlie proposes to use water power and this involves the eviction of an old crofter, Angus MacKinnon, from his land. The scales are a little bit weighted against Charlie. The Colonel is concerned to emphasise the social price of industrialisation and this is something which is taken up by Angus and his prospective son-in-law, Murdo, in their discussions of the subject. Angus feels the ironworks will ruin the countryside whereas Murdo sees them as bringing 'life', 'knowledge','science' and opportunity:-

'I ken I'm fit for something better than an odd-man's job at Torlochan Hotel. Driving - fencing - sheep-shearing - peat lifting. Tach! The life of a slave' (p.46)

Murdo's problem is (still) the young Highlander's problem - how can he find a job in the Highlands which his abilities fit him for. When Morag, Angus's daughter, objects that the iron mine would destroy the old Highland ways, Murdo replies -

'The good old Highland ways! - Three o'clock of a cold morning and up the hill to the lambing. Bringing the mails over Kellan cliffs when the snow's drifted yards deep. Driving the Doctor to Moy, thirty mile and back, when the North wind's skelping down the sound. That's the good old ways for Murdo Mackay! ' (p.50)

What Brandane is saying through Murdo is that the good old Highland ways mean a miserable existence. Angus, however, sticks to his point and tells Jock Dalgetty, the farmer who has come from Ayrshire, that the way of life in Glasgow is not at all desirable and that it would have been better for the people of Eilean Aros to stick completely to the old Highland ways. 'Aweel' says Jock 'there's twa sides to every story' (p.89), and this seems to be Brandane's attitude. He fails to resolve the dramatic conflict he has set up. (It is not that he fails to take sides. That would not necessarily be a criticism. In 'Sergeant Musgrave's Dance' Arden does not take sides but he does resolve the dramatic conflict of the play. Musgrave and Attercliffe are captured and executed). He jouks (to use a Scots word) out of it by means of a series of contrived 'dei ex machina' - Charlie abandons his plans for the mine because Redfern has decided to proceed no further, because the other lairds are down on him when they hear how he is trying to bankrupt Angus to have him evicted, and because his fiancee might not think very much of this attempt if she were to hear about it, Murdo comes into a croft and forgets about 'civilisation' and 'knowledge'. So at the end of the play, Angus can go off 'into the sunlight and the breeze' banally playing on his pipes 'The Glen is Mine'.

It is a great pity that on the one occasion Brandane really has something to say, he gives up saying it halfway through.

It has been said of the language of 'The Glen is Mine' that it has an "exquisite Celtic idiom, as pure and expansive as Synge's use of the Anglo-Irish speech" (42). This seems absolute nonsense. The language of 'The Glen is Mine' is business-like English with little or nothing which is not plain and matter of fact, although there is an attempt to suggest the Highland idiom where that is appropriate. Where Brandane might be said to be attempting to create some kind of poetic equivalent of Synge is in 'The Lifting'. Compare the following passages:- Iain Dubh making love to Flora in 'The Lifting', and Christy Mahon to Pegeen in 'The Playboy of the Western World' (43). Iain has been day-dreaming of -

'the old sheiling above Keose, lass. (His face becomes serene again). Aye, we'll be going there when this dark day's but a memory that's faded. It will be moonlight there. And your face will be like the white moss, shining and shining in the night, my love, and your words lovelier than the wee burn tinkling in the dark.

Flora: - Iain, Iain!

Iain : - And the snipe and the curlew will cry about us in the hill yonder. And down by the shore Keose will show a lit window or maybe two; and there will be a wee murmur o' talk floating up from the fishers at Cramore. But Flora MacLeod will be high on the hill above them all, her cheek on the bell-heather, yet she'll no' be minding the roughness o' that pillow for Iain Dubh, her lover will be sharing it with her.

Flora: - (yielding herself to his passionate embrace) Mo Chridhe' (The Lifting p.230-1)

Christy: ... and when the airs is warming, in four months or five, it's then yourself and me should be passing Neifin in the dews of night, the times sweet smells do be rising, and you'd see a little, shiny new moon, maybe, sinking on the hills.

Pegeen : (looking at him playfully) And it's that kind of a poacher's love you'd make, Christy Mahon, on the sidesof Neifin, when the night is down?

Christy: It's little you'll think if my love's a poachers or an earl's itself, when you'll feel my two hands stretched around you, and I squeezing kisses on your puckered lips, till I'd feel a kind of pity for the Lord God is all ages setting lonesome in His golden chair'

(The Playboy of the Western World p.119)

The first and most obvious point to be made is that one can imagine people making love like Pegeen Mike and Christy, but not like Iain and Flora. Although Brandane's writing here is not without tenderness, it is stilted and artificial. It moves with difficulty whereas Synge's language moves with the ease of conversation. Brandane plods along well-worn ruts of literary love-talk, while Synge takes the kind of risks which when they succeed produce an effect like the one contained in Christy's final words. (Nicely balanced as they are by Pegeen's rejoinder 'That'll be right fun, Christy Mahon, and any girl would walk her heart out before she'd meet a young man as your like for eloquence, or talk at all').

Brandane often strives after poetic effects by the use of Gaelic phrases. It could be argued that his use of Gaelic is an attempt to overcome the problem of what language his characters should speak. After all, many of the people he is writing about, in both his historical and his contemporary plays, may well have spoken Gaelic, but the S.N.P. audience did not. So, one could argue, Brandane incorporates Gaelic phrases in the interests of being true to life. It is doubtful if this is the case. Brandane, one would suspect, uses Gaelic in an attempt to heighten his language and to add to the 'romantic charm' of the plays. Phrases like 'Mo Chridhe', 'Ochanee, ochanee' or 'Mo thruaigh' may sound impressive to a non-Gaelic audience but it is the impression of ignorance. Brandane is using these phrases to bolster up his rather undistinguished, not to say stilted, English - the number of times a character declares 'my pain and my longing' or something of the sort in Brandane's 'serious' dramas is depressingly often.

Brandane's inability to write well in his 'serious' dramas is counterbalanced to some extent by the language of his comedies, which is unpretentious and functional. 'The Glen is Mine' has dialogue which is lively and conversational, as have its author's other comedies. Only on rare occasions does Brandane write in a stilted fashion in the comedies. One outstanding example of this is the almost unbelievable English of Stockman, the iron-ore prospector, in 'The Glen is Mine' -

Stockman:- ... By the bye, Angus, ever done any deer-stalking yourself?

Angus :- (with a guilty start) Och, yes, when I was younger. I did a lot of gillying at that same.

Stockman:- I wasn't asking about gillying, old bean. I was asking - ever done any slaying of the noble king of the forest yourself - eh?

Angus :- (pretending amazement) Is it me? - Killing a deer? - och but Mr. Stockman knows that is only for the gentry?

Stockman:- (tapping him on the shoulder) Well, you are an old submarine, I must say! See here, it's this - I'm due to go south tomorrow - and I've been fool enough to write home about the great deer-stalks I am having in the intervals of prospecting for the mine here. And - well - can't you see, old pippin? She'll be expecting to see me returning a mighty Nimrod - eh what? (p.81)

One would hope that Brandane does not intend us to take Stockman seriously as a realistic representation of an Englishman (and yet it has to be admitted that the English soldiers in 'The Lifting' who are certainly not comic characters, speak in a fashion similar to Stockman's). Although Brandane's comic dialogue is largely successful, it is not distinguished. It is stage English before it is anything else, and although it works on the stage, it is doubtful if it bears much relation to the way people in the Highlands - English or Scots - actually speak. However, to be fair, as stage English, it is effective.

An attempt has now been made to ascertain how far Brandane's plays represent a genuinely Scottish contribution to the theatre. The conclusion must be that they do not represent a very great contribution. At best, Brandane's plays, in particular 'The Glen is Mine', do attempt to come to grips with the life of Scotland, although they do not go very far in this direction, principally because they are plays which do not often come to grips with life.

George Reston Malloch was born in Elderslie, Renfrewshire in 1875 and was educated at Paisley Grammar School and privately. He died in London on 11th December 1953 aged 78.

Malloch's literary efforts were not confined to the drama. He published several volumes of poetry, contributed short stories to various magazines and acted as dramatic critic for newspapers in Holland and this country. It was in this latter capacity that he appeared in the pages of 'The Scottish Nation', one of the short-lived publications edited by C.M. Grieve (Hugh McDiarmid) which appeared for some seven months during 1923. There is a distinct social bias in Malloch's criticism and sarcastic comments on 'well-fed audiences' appear not infrequently in it. On the other hand, Malloch shows a just appreciation of that supposedly revolutionary dramatist, Bernard Shaw -

> '"Major Barbara" is not so much a play as an unexploded bomb dropped from the Undershaft - Shaw serial battleship, which fell into society with a terrific thud. Men still talk about how they were jolted out of their armchairs - but one of these days the thing may really go off' (44)

Malloch's comments on a production of 'Volpone' are interesting to the student of his plays. For Malloch Jonson's play -

> 'is a comedy of cynicism and in cynicism there is not vitality. It is against human nature! We must believe in honesty or disinterested virtue or give up the struggle. Shakespeare, a greater genius, recognised that mankind is incurably optimistic' (45)

Without pausing to discuss the justice of this criticism (and Malloch has put his finger on the source of the extremely sour taste of 'Volpone') one would note that Malloch asserts that mankind is 'incurably optimistic' yet the attitude behind several of Malloch's own plays, in particular 'Soutarness Water', is one of dour pessimism.

Malloch deals with the London theatre in 'The Scottish Nation' and so he does not say very much about the drama in his native country, although on one occasion he attacks the

drama critic of 'The Times' for referring in his review of 'The Little Minister' to a 'fundamentally barbarous society and a barbarous system of phonetics' (46), and on another he comments on the Russian Blue Bird Company's presentation of a French ballad in dramatic form thus -

> 'Here surely is a vein that our Scottish Theatre might develop; the ballads of Scotland as well as the ballads of France contain endless wealth of material' (47)

Malloch himself never explored this field although 'Thomas the Rhymer' and 'Prologue to Flodden' are set during what might be called the ballad period.

The Scottish National Players performed five of Malloch's plays, three one-acts - 'Thomas the Rhymer' (48), 'The House of the Queen' (49) and 'The Grenadier' (50) - and two full-length plays - 'Soutarness Water' (51) and 'The Coasts of India' (52). 'Who was who 1951-60' states that the 'Scottish National Theatre (sic)' also produced a play of Malloch's called 'Harvest' but this does not appear in the list of plays performed, published in 'The Scottish National Theatre Venture' (53).

Malloch wrote several other plays which can be traced - 'Arabella' (54), 'Prologue to Flodden' (55), 'The Still Folk' (56), the last two being one-act plays - and 'Down in the Forest' (57).

Two of Malloch's one-act plays, 'The House of the Queen' and 'The Still Folk', are obviously to be taken as allegories of the situation in Scottish letters and the Scottish nation as Malloch saw it. There is little action in 'The House of the Queen'. Three men are in the process of carrying loads up a bare hill on which, it emerges, they are to build a house for the queen. The first man is more willing to persevere with the task than are his companions, who refer enviously to the superior lot of the men in the South - 'Our brothers in the meadows of the South are happier' - where life is much easier than it is in the barren country in which they find themselves. The two recalcitrants suggest that the Queen is dead and decide to leave their task - 'I am for the South. I will toil here no more'. At this point a messenger arrives to ask why the house is not yet completed, and when the men tell him that

they want to see the Queen, he points her out, or rather suggests to the men that she is standing in front of them. They appear to see her and return to their task, encouraged by the messenger who tells how the Queen will rally her people to the building of the palace and how the 'wonder ofold times will awaken again'. At the end of the play, the messenger, now alone on the stage, implores the Queen that he too should see her before he dies.

The play is obviously an allegory of the position of the Scotsman seeking to re-establish his national identity, or, more specifically, of the position of the Scottish writer in trying to recreate Scottish literature, and in the case of the Scottish playwright, to build from scratch, although within a specific literary tradition, a Scottish drama. The specifically literary interpretation was not uncommon when the play first appeared (58), and one can well see the parallel between the men labouring to build the palace and hence bring about the restoration of former glory, and the writers of the Scottish Renaissance who were trying to restore Scottish literature to its former glory. It is to Malloch's credit that he shows no naive optimism about accomplishing the task and in the messenger's final invocation he suggests very skilfully that the task he and his fellow writers are taking on is one which may never be accomplished. The Queen may never appear - the men are persuaded she does, but this is obviously a hallucination induced by the messenger - and former glory may never return.

'The House of the Queen' suffers from a lack of dramatic action, of which it has virtually none, but serves as an apt prologue to 'Soutarness Water' which it preceded in performance. In 'The Northern Review' Alan Wylie had this to say of the play -

> 'The House of the Queen' may yet be the 'Kathleen ni Houlihan' of the Scottish movement' (59)

While the play is a call for literary and political nationalism its claims to be 'the'Kathleen ni Houlihan' of the Scottish movement are not nearly so strong as those of 'The Still Folk', a one-act play which seems to have been modelled directly on Yeats' play.

The play is set in the house of a wealthy London businessman, Ian Macdonald, who was born in Scotland and, much to the annoyance of his wife, Lady Mary, has just bought the island on which he was born to which he is proposing to return. Lady Mary tries her best to dissuade her husband without success. He, for his part, tells her of a dream he had just before he left the island as a young man, in which the hillside had opened and he had been kissed by a beautiful woman.

Lord Buckingham, a friend of Lady Mary's, calls and proceeds to make some uncomplimentary remarks on Scottish Nationalism which are parried by Macdonald. At this point, 'The Woman' enters unannounced, speaking a rather stilted English, for as she says 'I do not speak this tongue easily'. While Buckingham suggests to Macdonald that he evict the crofters on his island and turn it into a deer forest, The Woman draws a picture of the desolation attendant upon depopulation.

'And I see the smoke dying out from many a house. I see a great ship coming through between the islands, and gathering the sons from the mother and daughter from the father and leaving the old alone. I see the houses crumbling and the boats rotting, and the nets flying on the wind. Old folks ... and silence'

Buckingham:- Dashed poetic these Highlanders are, Mary!

The Woman goes on to remind Macdonald of his dream and it soon emerges that she is calling him back not just to his island but to the rejuvenation of the way of life which Buckingham's proposals would destroy. When asked who she is The Woman replies 'I am of the Still Folk' who, she explains -

'are bound to men as the water to the shore, as the hills to the valleys, as the flower to the stem. Shall not the Sidhean speak when the voices of men fail from the homes of their forefathers and the hill is left to the eagle and the valley to the stream? In whose eye shall we float, in whose side

shall we walk in silence? In whose dreams
shall we dwell when the sons of men have
departed and left the island desolate?'

She kisses Macdonald and tells him that the third kiss he receives - her's being second after the woman in the dream - will give him 'peace and everlasting rest'. Then she leaves; Macdonald orders his bags to be packed, since he is going away 'for some time'.

The woman is obviously a symbolic figure like Caledonia in Malloch's poem, 'A Vision of Caledonia' who cries -

'Oh my fair land awaken!
My bosom is torn with dread!
Ere thy hills are ill forsaken
And thy great heart dead' (60)

It is unfortunate that the symbolic figure of the Woman does not fit at all well into the naturalistic frame of the play (one is reminded of Eliot's Eumenides) and that this incongruity leads to absurd effects, as when Buckingham makes his remark about the poetic Highlander or the Woman asks for honey and water to drink. Indeed the continual contrast between the banter of Lady Mary and Buckingham and the quasi-mystical talk of the Woman and Macdonald sets up internal stresses the play cannot support, while the political propaganda is much too topical to fit in with the generalised invocations of the Woman.

Malloch seems, then, in 'The Still Folk' to be attempting to emulate 'Kathleen ni Houlihan'. That he does not succeed very well in the attempt is due, not just to any superiority Yeats might have as a dramatist but to the framework he chooses for his play. Yeats introduced Kathleen ni Houlihan into an eighteenth century rural Irish environment where she is quite acceptable - the nearer they get to our own time our own scepticism and our urban environment, the more difficult it becomes for writers to introduce mystical or symbolic figures whose very existence depends on superstition and credulity.

One final point; Malloch, like Brandane, was a Lowlander, yet when he wants to talk about the glory and beauty of Scotland it is the Highlands only he talks of. One could argue, from what has been already said, that only

the Highland traditions would allow of the creation of a symbolic character like The Woman, since the Lowlands epitomize the very tendencies which have been characterised as inimical to the creation in art of symbolic figures representative of them. This is true, particularly if one is only interested in creating pseudo-mystical characters who speak with the hazy imprecision of The Woman, but it does seem that writers who follow Malloch's course in 'The Still People' are isolating themselves from Scottish experience, whether (real) Highland or Lowland, and substituting a purely imaginary one.

'Thomas the Rhymer', the first play of Malloch's to be performed by the S.N.P. suffers, like 'The House of the Queen' from a lack of action. Malloch takes as his subject the legend that Thomas the Rhymer, who had spent some time with the immortals in fairyland, was finally summoned to return thither and had to leave house and family to do so. Much of the play is taken up with the stodgy discussion among Thomas, a knight and a friar on magic, superstition and allied subjects. After his companions have gone, Thomas soliloquizes thus, as he drinks -

> 'This at least is real and no dream. They are fools who philosophise, and seek to realise dreams. The fulness and richness of this life are all that we can hope to attain. There is an element of greater richness to which we are somehow akin but which we can never reach. We long for it but cannot attain it, and so we must live this gross life, and time makes us love it. It is summer for the body; it is winter for the soul. Our souls go like ducks walking on the ice; we can see our natural element but cannot reach it. Let us to the farmyard then, where there is food'

One sees well enough that Malloch is concerned with the tension between man's role as a creature of the material world and his role as a creature of (some one or other) spiritual world, but the language he gives Thomas to express this tension is flat and untheathrical.

As the play continues, the Rhymer becomes worried

since he discovers that 'signs' which indicate his impending recall to Fairyland, have occurred. He tells his wife that he once dreamt that he lived with the Queen of Faery, but longed to return to the mortal world.

> 'who that was born a man would not!
> Human roots go deep. They love the
> dung about them. The children of this
> vexed world cannot bear the unmortal
> calm. I longed for the harsh voices
> of men, for the fires round which men sit
> in winter telling stories of old times.
> I longed for anger, hatred and imperfect
> love, for hope, and even for despair.
> Ah, we are too near nature to suffer
> the immortals. We have our seasons like
> the trees and the flowers, and, like them,
> we have the mercy of death. We are not
> framed for immortality, our systems cannot
> sustain the burden of perfection. It is
> a good thing to die at the last'

At the end of the play, Thomas is summoned by a milk-white hart and hind and, ironically, has to leave the mortal world, which promises death, for the immortal one which condemns its inhabitants to perpetual existence. Malloch seems to be saying that human beings, are not suited for immortality, but this may be to take over-much out of what is a very slight play, at best a sketch for a play.

'Prologue to Flodden' is again a historical play, which deals (in one act) with the murder of James III after the Battle of Sauchieburn. The play opens at the Miller's cottage near Stirling where the murder takes place. The Miller tells his wife, Mirren, how he has deliberately avoided the soldiers and lords on their way to the battle. All the characters in the play speak blank verse, but only the Miller and his wife speak in Scots (being of the lower orders!) while the aristocracy speak in English. Here is an interchange between the Miller and his wife -

Miller :- Aye Mirren,
And folk like us maun win as best they can.
Whit chance o' war micht come to us, God kens,
And He alone. Oor bairns are hid awa'
Wi' their Granny on the hill; we've brose and bread,
And rooftree owre oor heids; and who's to tell
The richts and wrangs when Kings and Helicat lords
Come to the sword straik!

Wife :- Dinna vex yersel!
There's fashery enow in thae black times
Wi'oot you meddlin' in great folks' quarrels.

Miller :- Aye, Maybe so. Whichever way it fa's
They'll aye want corn ground. Men maun eat in war
Or peace. Aweel, the King'll win through the day,
The honest man! He's been sair pit upon,
And maybe, Mirren, A shouldna be staunin here
When he has need o' men. Aye wha's to say!
Yestreen, when A wis winnin' back frae Sauchie
A caught a glish o' him and his nobles ridin'
A whippit sharp intae the wood when A see them!

Even although the movement of the thought is jerky, at least Malloch succeeds in creating the effect of conversation in these lines. On the other hand, when we come to the case of the king and his lords, Malloch writes a stilted pastiche Shakespearean verse. Here, for example, is the King who has been carried wounded into the Miller's house, having fallen from his horse outside -

'Those words of habit, Duty, We, Ourselves,
That are upon a king's lips all day long,
They mean, men hold, the King's no more himself
But the whole people. He is the realm, the nation,
The visible head of things to which men look
For comfort: he is Justice, he is mercy,
He is their bulwark against foreign peril,
Their safeguard against home-bred knavery;
If he is overthrown, all's overthrown,
And life's a rabblement of evil tongues
Swearing their little hates, and all's contending
Strength against weakness, evil against good,
God no more visible and Chance the ruler'

Quite apart from the question of whether it is appropriate (dramatically appropriate) that the king should speak in English, one cannot deny that Malloch's attempt to out-Shakespeare Shakespeare is unsuccessful. Like most pastiche, the verse is basically dessicated and lifeless. Furthermore, Malloch occasionally allows the style to be marred by a casualness which leads to ludicrous effects, as in the following passage, spoken by the murderer, Borthwick -

'King, I have been cast down from a high place
And hunted by your officers like a beast
Till beast of prey they made me. Now my hand's
Against all men and all are against me
But I can't help laughing at what's happening here
This is the kind of thing life does to men'

The change of register in the underlined passage can only produce laughter.

Malloch does not make much of his material in 'Prologue to Flodden'. As the verse is pastiche, so are the thoughts as can be seen from the quoted passages. At the end of the play the Miller moralizes on the fate which awaits the dead king's son -

'Aye noo he's spurrin' awa' hetfit to his dooming,
Soon to be made the Lord's Annointed King
Him but a lad! There's lewrand folk await him
On the lang road to the lofted house o' his dreams'

This kind of verbal haze may be perfectly acceptable at the end of soap-opera, but in serious drama we are entitled to demand a little more.

'The Grenadier' is set in the present. Duncan Grant, a schoolmaster in a Highland village, and his blind wife are awaiting the arrival of the steamer, 'The Grenadier', which is to take their daughter on the first stage of her journey as an emigrant to the U.S.A. Grant very much regrets that his daughter is going. The steamer is late and the Highland maid, Flora, (Grant is himself a Lowlander) says that she has had a premonition that when it arrives the flag will be flying at half-mast. As we have deduced before we are actually told, the dead man is John Grant, returning from his studies in Glasgow on the boat which is to take his sister Margaret, away from home. When 'The

Grenadier' arrives it emerges that John had been skylarking and consequently had been killed by one of the steamer's paddles. His parents and the captain agree to keep this dreadful news from Margaret who sets off on her journey completely unaware of what has happened. At the end of the play Flora comes in with a message of comfort from the minister who has heard of John's death -

Flora :- The Minister gave me a word for you.
"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord'"

Grant :- (with a wild laugh) No, No! No, no! It wasn't the Lord .... It wasthe Grenadier! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

It is easy to find faults in this play. Again it is only really the sketch for a play, the action is too predictable, and Malloch seems to share John Brandane's clicheed notion of the Highlander (Flora has the second sight), but nevertheless one can discern in this play a definite attitude to experience. For Malloch, life is very harsh - not only is Grant's wife blind, not only is his daughter leaving,but his son is unluckily killed. (The fact that it is ill-luck does limit the possibility of our feeling greatly moved by this death). Religion can offer men no consolation on this wretched situation. This leads one directly on to a consideration of 'Soutarness Water' the first play of Malloch's to merit serious attention.

'Soutarness Water' was performed by the S.N.P. apparently after a great deal of heart-searching on the part of the committee which was rather worried about the effect a play which has as its climax an incestuous marriage, would have on its audience. They knew their audience well, for it appears that the spectators reacted 'unapprovingly' to the blasphemy in the second act by Andrew Dochart (61), a reaction which was really against the entire spirit of the play, and not just one character.

Malloch prefaces his play by quoting an 'Old Scots Rhyme' -

'Tweed said to Till,
"Wat gars ye rin sae still?"
Till said to Tweed,
"Though ye rin wi' speed,
And I rin slow,

When ye drown ae man,
I drown twa" '

The grim fatalistic atmosphere engendered by these lines pervades the entire play. In the first act, Hugh Munro has an argument with his widowed mother over his courting of Jean Dochart, daughter of Andrew Dochart of the Mains, whom Mrs. Munro says is a loose woman. The parish minister, Mr. MacPhail, arrives while they are arguing, and when Hugh leaves for the Mains, Mr. MacPhail warns him not to return late if he is proposing to use the stepping stones across Soutarness Water which runs outside the Munros' house. When Hugh has gone, Mrs. Munro tells Mr. MacPhail that Jean Dochart's mother had been the lover of her husband and when the two parted to marry different people, Jean McIntyre, as she was then, 'ill-wisht' old Hugh for breaking up the relationship - 'Ill or well, trickle or spate, Soutarness Water' ll get ye yet' she apparently said to him, and these lines, repeated throughout the play, give specific relevance to the epigraph. Munro was later drowned in Soutarness Water. The minister insists that this is merely coincidence and says he is shocked she believes in 'such nonsense'. After the minister's departure, Daft Jock, the local half-wit, enters and in the course of conversation tells Mrs. Munro that Mrs. Dochart of the Mains was his mother. As the noise of the stream increases he hysterically demands to be let out of the house. Left to herself, Mrs. Munro, worried that Hugh went without her blessing, decides to go across Soutarness Water to meet Hugh. After she exits, there is a cry. She has, of course, been drowned.

A large part of Act II, which takes place on the day of Mrs. Munro's funeral, is occupied by Andrew Dochart's reflections, prompted by whisky, on his past life and on religion. He tells Daft Jock that he was once a staunch church-man but he has left the Kirk, since he has lost his faith in God. Later, he tells Innes and Robson, formerly two of his fellow-elders, how Jean McIntyre had unknown to Dochart, been compelled to marry him when he settled a debt of her father's - after Hugh Munro jilted her to marry a woman with more money than Jean. Jean kept seeing Munro and young Jean is their daughter. So young Hugh is about

to marry his sister. The elders do not give Dochart much help in his terrible dilemma, and he seems about to tell Jean and Hugh something of the truth when he is suddenly paralysed by a stroke.

The third act takes place on the wedding-day of Jean and Hugh. Andrew Dochart, still paralysed and speechless from his stroke, watches the proceedings from a wheel-chair. When the minister comes to the 'impediment' clause Daft Jock interrupts - 'wha wadna lauch tae see a man merrit tae his ain sister?' The wedding is abandoned, and events move to their grim conclusion - Jean drowns herself in Soutarness Water and Hugh shoots himself.

In view of what has been said earlier about the undramatic nature of Malloch's writing, it is only just to say right away that this is not the case with 'Soutarness Water'. The following two extracts substantiate this conclusion.

Hugh :- A'm for oot.
Mrs. Munro:- An' whaur may ye be gaun'?
Hugh :- Oh, A'll just tak' a donner roon'
Mrs. Munro:- Ye needna think tae deceive me.
Hugh :- A'm no' wantin' tae deceive ye, mither, but ye kin o' ask for it.
Mrs. Munro:- Hugh Munro, that's nae wey tae speak to your mither. A ken fine whit's in your mind.
Hugh :- Weel, an' if you do, whit wey dae ye speir at me? There's nae deceit aboot me, naturally, but if A wis tae say A wis gaun' owre tae the Mains there'd be a fine to-do.
Mrs. Munro:-An' maybe there'd be call for it. A'm no' wantin' ony lass frae the Mains brocht intae your father's hoose as his son's wife. Ye ken ma mind aboot it onywey.

(p. 9-10)

Dochart :- A God's mercy, Jock, is a thing the deevil wad spit on. When the weasel gets a rabbit by the windpipe, it ca's that a God's mercy. When a tiger gets its teeth intae some puir black heathen, it ca's that a God's mercy. There's no' a black evil thing done aneath the sky that somebody or something disna' ca' it a God's mercy. Wisna the war wi' its millions o' butchered lads a God's mercy? Didna the minister here thank Him every time we kilt mair Germans than they kilt o' oors, an' every time a German shipload o' men went doon wi' burstin' boilers and explodin' shells an' cauld water an' death? Didna the Germans cry out in praise o' God for ilka deevilish barbarity they put upon oor lads? Heugh! Maybe auld Hugh Munro thocht Jean Dochart a God's mercy tae him. Nae doot but he wad pit up a bit prayer o' thanksgivin' - he wis a releegious man, wis Hugh an' an Elder o' the Kirk. Maybe his children will be speakin' o' God's mercy when A've tellt them whit A've tae tell'

(p.45-6)

For the first time in Malloch's work one feels that his characters are speaking the way real people speak. In the first extract the conversation moves naturally between Hugh and his mother and has none of the stiltedness of Malloch's earlier plays. Likewise, the fairly long speech by Dochart, quoted above, sounds much more natural than anything in 'Thomas the Rhymer' or 'The Still Folk'. The idioms are the idioms of the south of Scotland - one can still hear phrases cast in the form used in the underlined words above, for example.

'Soutarness Water' could well be described as a Calvinist play, not merely because a large part of the play is devoted to a discussion of the doctrine of predestination but also because the events of the play do imply a pattern of fate into which the characters must inevitably fit,

whether they like it or not. Admittedly, the starting point of the play's grim events is the curse Jean McIntyre places on Hugh Munro, and one could argue that it is the dark forces thus invoked which are responsible for the catastrophe, and not predestination. But one does feel that there is a definite correlation between the idea of predestination and the idea that, after a curse, certain events are pre-destined, although it is not a correlation that Malloch explores to the full. Calvinism and a belief in the power of curses are not incompatible bedfellows - far from it.

The minister in the play appears to be a 'new licht' (to use the term current in Burns's day), and does not appear to believe in either evil powers or in predestination. The irony of the events of the play for him, is that they seem to prove that there are malevolent powers at work intent on destroying human happiness. Neither he, nor the kindly elder, Robson, a man who has his doubts about pre-destination, is able to prevent the catastrophe. Innes, another elder, hard unsympathetic character as he is, seems much nearer the truth when he alludes to the 'sins o' the faithers' being visited on the children - although Innes had earlier suggested to Dochart that he stop the wedding. That Dochart is prevented from doing so by his stroke seems to bear out Innes's own professed believe in pre-destination, in the face of which human beings are powerless.

In the speech of Dochart's quoted earlier, he seems to be condemning the abuse of religion which sanctifies something intrinsically evil - for example, the death of the soldiers of an enemy nation, but Malloch has him pursue his thoughts further when he places a whisky bottle in front of the two elders, Innes and Robson -

> 'For jist conseeder the power o' that bottle! It mak's bad men feel guid an' fu' o' soft repentance. It mak's guid men bad and fu' o' anger an' a' sorts o' unrighteousness. It wull fire a saint tae lust after weemen. It can mak' the wise intae fools an' fools as happy as the wise. It mak's guid lassies intae whores an' gars whores think themselves guid lassies. There's black murders in that gowden bottle, an' prisons an' the gallows;

> a' the dark thrills o' lust, an' hatred, an' weans buried under a hedge i' the mirk o' nicht. Aye, there's madness in it an' ripe wisdom, an' folly an' tears. It has power over a' men and weemen. See - A pit it there in the centre o' the board tae preside owre the Session, like the Holy Spirit ye and the Minister is sae fond o' askin' tae descend on yer deleeberations whit does it stand for saintly sirs? Whit could it stand for but God Himsel', since its power is unbounded an' brings as much meesery intae the warld as His does'
>
> (p.49)

By his identification of the power of God with the evil power of whisky, Malloch (for the events of the play bear out what Dochart is saying) is not only suggesting that the Calvinist God is in truth an evil one, but also seems to be going on to suggest that God or the power which orders human destinies in the world, is essentially malevolent.

There are faults in 'Soutarness Water'. Not all the dialect is convincing, some of the events of the play are a little too melodramatic, and Malloch's ideas could have been presented in a clearer fashion, but it remains a play which must rank high in the achievment of the Scottish drama this century - it is a truly Scottish play, not because it is set in Scotland, but because its principal and subordinate concerns - predestination and the power of evil being the former, and the wisdom of the apparently daft (cf. 'Sunset Song' by Grassic Gibbon) being one of the latter - are rooted in the Scottish psyche.

Of Malloch's other plays, 'Down in the Forest' is of no account, while 'Harvest' is a rather lifeless expose of the seamy side of life in an apparently respectable Scottish manse. The Reverend James Patrick is completely unaware of the fact that for years his sister, Jean, has been having an affair with his old friend, Captain Duncan MacDougall, under the minister's roof, when MacDougall is on shore leave. The captain has, however, tired of Jean and is attracted to Patrick's ward, Anne Semple. Jean

resents MacDougall's behaviour and is so jealous that she plans to poison both the captain and herself, but changes her mind at the last moment. Anne and the captain marry while Jean, having refused an offer of marriage from the local doctor, is left at the end of the play resigned to a lifetime as her brother's housekeeper.

'Harvest' never comes alive, despite the fact that the material which Malloch has at his disposal could form the basis of a substantial, if somewhat melodramatic play. One cannot believe in the characters or their situations because Malloch's writing is so unoriginal, although the play is remarkably frank for the period. It is not known whether 'Harvest' was ever considered for production in Scotland (the play was actually put on at the 'Q' theatre in Brentford), but it is doubtful if an audience which objected to parts of 'Soutarness Water' would have tolerated 'Harvest'.

'The Coasts of India' is much more worthy of attention. The play concerns itself with the aspirations of several of its characters towards more satisfying lives than they are able to have. The heroine of the play, Marion Mair, the daughter of a mill owner, at one point talks to Gray, one of her father's men who hasbeen dismissed because he stated the case for a wage increase a little too strongly for Mair's liking. Gray tells Anne of all his frustrated hopes, of how he would have liked to have joined his brother who is an engineer on a boat which sails on 'the coasts of India'. Anne is struck by this phrase which seems to her to embody all her own aspirations. The theme of the play is that life rarely allows us to reach the coasts of India. Anne, very much the Shavian woman, is unable to study as a doctor since her father's business is forced to close down at the end of the play and rather than wearily go on working and studying part time to become a teacher, she accepts a proposal of marriage from an old but persistent suitor. Her acceptance of this is seen as a defeat of her desire to be independent. Several of the other characters in the play find their hopes in life curtailed in a similar manner, among them Anne's cousin Tom who ends up as a coal salesman.

Other themes ard touched on in the play but not developed. Malloch introduces the theme of industrial

conflict but then drops it. The relationship between the sexes could bear deeper examination than Malloch gives it. His presentation of old Mair in financial difficulties, after he has lost all his money, is somewhat comic (Mair is, for example, shocked to learn that his wife now shops at the Co-op) although the effects of such a change of fortune are reasonably well conveyed.

The basic fault of the play is its undistinguished language which continually detracts from the impact that it might otherwise have. Here is an interchange between Marion and Tom at the beginning of the third act.

Thomas Mair:- ... People here don't see beauty. Beauty's not quite respectable. It's all a puzzle to me. Sometimes I get very gloomy - and then just a beautiful evening like this makes the moment it lasts worth while. But that's sort of sad too.

(A corncrake begins calling in the fields)

Marion :- There's the corncrake. It sounds so mysterious - often I lie awake at night listening to them and thinking of the dim fields stretching away under the moon. And I long to get up and go away over the fields to some place I have never seen. Perhaps it doesn't exist, perhaps that's why I want to go there.

Thomas Mair:- They've got a nest somewhere in the big field. Crex pratensis, that's its scientific name. There, you see where I've got with my pottering about in natural history - giving a Latin name to a wild mysterious thing like that bird. I've got a stuffed one at home - I've got a collection of stuffed birds and empty egg shells. Oh my God, you see where I'm travelling to! Sometimes I forget about beauty and poetry and all the adventures of life and collect these wild free things and stick labels

on them. I try to be interested to keep myself from doing something strange - and then suddenly a note of music, or looking at you, perhaps, or a night like this, and the whole thing is dead, my birds are just dead, stuffed things that I hate, things that mock me.

Marion :- Oh Cousin Tom, that's why I am so anxious about life. It's such a splendid thing - the world's so great - it's so full of beauty and poetry and adventure - and it's dreadful to think how easy it might be to miss all that.

Thomas Mair:- Marion, for God's sake, don't you miss it. Do what you want to do and don't give way to anyone or anything. I'm done for now, it's too late for me. But you haven't begun yet. Oh don't let old people force you into things. Choose your own way. Never mind what they say about duty and morality and doing what is right. You must find all that out for yourself. Live, Live! They argued me into an incompetent business man with a wife and child and all sorts of responsibilities I didn't want. Don't listen to them - listen to that bird!

Marion :- It's like the voice of all this mystery.

Thomas Mair :- Aye the gloaming, the blue hills, the sweet-smelling fields - beauty - infinite peace - beauty - what does it all mean?

Marion :- Somewhere infinite beauty that we can strive to reach.

Thomas Mair:- Dragging our heartstrings. Well, I'm getting sort of sentimental (laughs) ...

At times this reads like an embarrassinly bad translation of Chekhov, in whose hands such a scene would have a profundity that completely eludes Malloch.

The great merit of the play, however, is that Malloch as in 'Soutarness Water' deals with recognisable human experience and does not invite us to escape to some non-existent Scottish fairy land. That in the end is Malloch's achievment.

Turning now to the most frequently performed S.N.P. plays, the most popular play the S.N.P. performed was the one-act 'A Valuable Rival' (62) by Neil F. Grant. Jameson, the old proprietor of a newspaper in Sweno, a small Northern Scottish town, is apparently worried about the competition from another recently formed paper, run by a man called Bain. His daughter, Maggie, has discovered a forged letter which Bain has used some years previously to further his career. Bain is summoned and it looks as if Jameson is going to destroy him, but the older man burns the incriminating letter because he values the competition which Bain provides - he has been most unhappy since he smashed his previous competitors. When Maggie protests, after Bain has left, he warns her that unless she desists, he will tell the wold of her infatuation for Bain, which he has discovered and which the audience was supposed to guess.

It is not a play of any great account, but its success can probably be at least partially explained by the way in which theatrical interest is maintained and by the interest which the characterisation of Maggie might arouse in the audience, although the author's psychological insight could scarcely be described as penetrating.

Morland Graham's 'C'Est La Guerre' (63), another popular one-act, is a touching little play set in France during the 1914-1918 war. Jock Broon, a soldier from Shotts, helps Marie, a French girl who has been wounded, by bandaging her arm. They talk in a mixture of languages and there is the beginning of a relationship between them before Jock leaves Marie and her father, while they are asleep. The play, the effect of which depends on the ordinariness of the people involved, is rather spoiled by making Marie an actress who has played Shakespeare's Juliet in Paris.

J.A. Ferguson's 'The Scarecrow' (64), is set in Invernesshire in the early nineteenth century. It is not

the author's best work. A policeman has been asked by an old woman who thinks some kind of witchcraft is going on in a house, to investigate. In fact, what is going on is that a girl is hiding a wanted man in a barrel containing a scarecrow. The man occasionally moves the scarecrow giving the impression that it has a life of its own. At the end of the play, the man escapes using the scarecrow for cover and the policeman collapses at the sight of the 'tattiebogle' taking on life.

By way of balance, mention should be made here of Ferguson's 'The King of Morven' (65), a very un-romantic play about the Highlands, also performed by the S.N.P. The action takes place in the house of McAskill, a factor who is responsible for 'clearing' an estate. His wife is very unhappy about the situation. A tinker arrives, ostensibly to sell delf, and talks, much to McAskill's annoyance, about the empty cottages he has found on his way. Tension develops to such an extent in the house, that McAskill walks out and tells three sailors that the tinker is a wanted criminal. Mrs. McAskill prevents the sailors from press-ganging the tinker, but, as McAskill denies that she is his wife, both she and the tinker are abducted by the sailors. This is a dramatic play that gives grim expression to the author's view of the Clearances. McAskill is a man so corrupted by the evil that he is doing that he is prepared to see his own wife abducted.

'The Dawn' (66), by Naomi Jacob takes us back into the romantic world of Highland myth. Two old people are reminiscing about the '45 in which their son has been killed. A mysterious traveller arrives and it is soon obvious as he talks of his trials with a gloomy sentimentality and looks forward to 'the dawn' that he is the Young Pretender. It is a lifeless play.

'The Crystal Set' (67), by J.H. Bone also has a rural background, although a contemporary one. It is set in a village in Renfrewshire and concerns the efforts of Willie to listen to his crystal radio set despite the interruptions of Gracie, his wife, and Granny. However, his efforts are of no avail for he inadvertently smashes the set himself. It is a very slight play which despite the apparent modernity of the crystal set, has about it an archaic

quality, which is of course reinforced by the use of dialect.

Only two of Joe Corrie's plays were presented by the S.N.P. Corrie, it could be argued, is the dramatist with the greatest claim to be a Scottish folk dramatist, a claim based on his plays about ordinary working people - he was himself a miner - not on the large number of rather pointless pieces he turned out for the amateur movement. Bridie was of the opinion that Corrie was ruined by the amateur movement (68), and one can see what he meant. A dramatist who could have developed some stature, he wasted his talents on kitchen comedy.

'The Shillin' A Week Man' (69), a one-acter, deals with the efforts of a Mrs. Paterson to avoid the 'Shillin' A Week Man' - to whom she owes money. She hides in the back-room while her daughter tells the collector she is in Kirkcaldy. The collector becomes extremely angry, discovers Mrs. Paterson and threatens to have her husband's wages stopped. At this point, Paterson arrives, having just been paid off and despite his wife's efforts, finds out about the debt. The play ends rather anti-climatically with Paterson telling his wife to pay sixpence a week when he can.

There is, in the play, a sense of poverty, which is brought out in small things such as the borrowing of tea, and in larger things such as redundancy, strikes, and the shillin' a week system itself. This sense of poverty is also found in a more deliberately humorous play, 'The Poacher' (70). John McCordie, against his wife's will, is out poaching when his daughter, Bell, brings home the gamekeeper, Rab Fitty. Fitty will not budge from the house and when John returns home he is deprived of his trousers by Fitty's dogs which are outside his house. Fitty is finally got rid of and John goes to bed in a rage. Bell, having been sent for whisky, returns and says she has dropped the bottle, and there, again rather weakly, the play ends. Poverty is apparent in John, for example, trying to coax money from his wife and in a speech by him about the injustices of society, but Corrie displays a fatal tendency to aim for laughs at all costs, a tendency which stunted his growth as a dramatist.

George Blake is a man with a reputation for writing honestly about urban Scotland. He contributed 'The Mother' (71), and 'Clydebuilt' (72) to the S.N.P. 'The Mother' falls into the category of plays about the hot-blooded Highlander, the stereotype of which Brandane was so fond. The play is set in a croft at a place called Ardlamey. Morag Gillespie, the tenant of the croft, is told in the first scene by Catto, the Laird's factor, that she must give up her house since the laird wants it. Catto, it emerges, is really the father of Morag's son, Alastair. In the second scene the laird arrives and reiterates to Morag that she must leave her home. Alastair, who has discovered the truth about Catto, bursts in and murders him. He flees for his life and at the end of the play old Callum, Morag's father-in-law, is left muttering, as he has done throughout the play, 'There was aye a Gillespie in Ardlamey'.

The play could hardly be described as tragic, though it has dramatic power. It lacks the depth of characterisation necessary to engage the audience's feelings, other than on a superficial level.

'Clydebuilt', a full length play, deals with the Crockett family, the owners of an old established Greenock firm of life-boat builders, which is facing bankruptcy. Ruin can only be avoided if the firm is bought up by Mersons, an English firm which has Jewish connections. The price that Crocketts have to pay is the marriage of Old Crockett's granddaughter, Jean, whose father has been lost at sea, to Stanley Merson, the son of the owner of Mersons. Jean's mother does not favour this match understandably, nor does she want her daughter to marry Harry Douglas, a sea captain, because of his hazardous occupation. Jean's mother is contrasted with her Aunt Helen, a social climber, who is very much in favour of her niece marrying Merson. However, at the critical moment when Harry Douglas is feared drowned, and Jean has agreed to marry Stanley Merson, Douglas returns denouncing the jerry-built Merson ship which sank beneath him - the life-boats which saved his life were Crockett products. Old Crockett, on hearing this, decides that he prefers ruin to an alliance with Merson, and tears up the merger agreement.

Although there is a moral conflict in the play, and one's sympathies are with old Crockett in his dilemna, the characterisation is lacking in depth. The play is also redolent of the 'Wha's Like Us' attitude of the Scots and there are strong anti-English, anti-Semitic and anti-American feelings in it. However, credit must be given to Blake for writing a well-constructed and dramatically interesting play.

Cormac Simpson, who began writing under the encouragement of Alfred Wareing, spent most of his life teaching in London and this seems to have encouraged him in a romantic nostalgia for Scotland which is apparent in his plays. The central character in 'The Flower in the Vase' (73), Irene Erndom, decides to forsake London and the fashionable marriage her mother has arranged for her, to go and live with her friend, Mary Cameron, at Mary's parents' farmhouse near Aberfoyle. After much romantic to-ing and fro-ing, Irene and Andy Cameron decide to get married, much to the annoyance of Mrs. Erndom who puts in a piqued appearance at Aberfoyle. The contrast between the metropolis and the country is constantly emphasised to the latter's advantage, in extremely banal language - at one point, for example, Irene refers to 'the green world calling me home out of the smooth hot, dusty desert'. The play is amateurish and pretentious.

The anti-urban theme is continued in 'Ayont the Hill' (74); John Kerr, an old farmer, suddenly decides that he wants a change of life, and despite the advice of family and friends forsakes his farm and his wife who is unwilling to accompany him, for London. He is of course disillusioned with the metropolis and returns repentant to the farm. There is a little subsidiary interest in the play - Kerr's daughter, Jess, has a romance with the local vet, his son, Rob, departs for Canada and Mr. Comrie, the estate agent declares his adulation for Mrs. Kerr - but it does not add up to very much.

'S. For Sugar Candy' (75), by Donald Maclaren is a rather trite comedy. David Coggie and his brother, Sir Peter, run a confectionery firm. Sir Peter is very conscious of having risen in the world and has acquired the appurtenances of gentility including a butler, much to his

brother's annoyance. Into this situation comes Tabitha, daughter of the third long lost Coggie brother, who, together with Budge, the butler, reorganises the household, saves the firm from Jewish cut-throats, and becomes engaged to the butler's son who is thereafter installed as works manager. Although mildly amusing, 'S. for Sugar Candy' commands little attention.

Hal D. Stewart, the S.N.P's militant middlebrow, wrote several plays for them, one-act and full length. 'The Beannachy Bomb' (76), a full length play, is set in the Macdonald Arms in Beannachy, a small Highland town. Colin Macdonald, the proprietor's son, is supposed to be looking after the hotel during his father's absence in hospital, and the play revolves around the attempts by the new maid, Isa Brodie, to improve the hotel. It turns out in the end that Isa has been sent by her mother who owns a string of Glasgow tearooms, to spy out the land, and as a result her mother buys her way into the Macdonald Arms. There is much activity to little purpose, including a mountain rescue, and romance - Colin, having almost succumbed to the charms of a lady artist from Glasgow, marries Isa in the end. 'The Beannachy Bomb' is a cocktail which Isa invents. The play lacks characterisation, plot and theatricality.

'A Month of Sundays' (77), is a slightly better play. It is set in the small town of Netherbrae, near Langholm. A new minister, Alan Forsyth, arrives and shatters the old fashioned ideas of the community. He also becomes involved with a girl, Molly Carlyle, whose previous young man is so incensed that he seizes the opportunity to make trouble for Forsyth by bringing to Netherbrae the show-girl wife whom Forsyth thought was dead. After a struggle, Forsyth wins his congregation back, but then to spite them, he announces his intentions of going on the stage with his wife.

The play is thin, but, despite a wildly improbable ending, has some theatrical power. At the beginning of the play, it looks for the moment as if Stewart is going to develop as his theme the clash between Calvinism and more modern ideas, but this never happens. The play has no theme.

'Brief Harmony' by Moultrie Kelsall, which has never been published, was an unpretentious light hearted piece written for the S.N.P's summer tours.

Of the dramatists who were not among the most popular a few deserve a mention here. Gordon Bottomley, although not a Scotsman, took an important part in the development of the Scottish drama movement and contributed two verse plays to the S.N.P. 'Gruach' (78), tells how Macbeth first met his wife. The play is set in Fortingall Castle. Conan, the Thane, is to marry his cousin, Gruach, the following day, but Gruach, it appears, is a lone brooding kind of woman, given to riding across moors at twilight, who is very unhappy at the prospect of marriage to Conan. Macbeth arrives en route to the Earl of Caithness, and Gruach and he are so attracted to each other that they ride off in the middle of the night, leaving Conan, who is unaware of what has happened, to mutter about his unease at the prospect of being married to Gruach.

It is a play of a certain intensity and the verse, though stilted, is more than competent. Nonetheless the lack of any real subject matter and the language combine to give the play a rather second-hand quality.

'Britain's Daughter' (79), is set during the Roman invasion of Britain. After an unsuccessful revolt against the Romans, Nest, heir to the throne of a British tribe, has been captured, whipped and tied to a post to await execution. Some of the other women accept the advances of Roman soldiers while others look forward to Nest's death. She herself declines a Roman general's offer to look after her, but is forcibly carried off to Gaul with other women prisoners at the end of the play, leaving behind a lamenting people, some of whom pity her and some of whom curse her.

There is a certain grim atmostphere created skilfully in the play, although the verse is more stilted than that of 'Gruach'. However, it must be said that Bottomley is much more skilled in the use of verse than any other S.N.P. dramatists. But his verse could not be described as modern, for in line with the subject matter, it is archaic and in no way draws on contemporary speech idioms.

Robert Bain's verse play 'James the First of Scotland' (80), represents another aspect of Scottish drama, one that has been given a great deal of attention latterly by Robert Kemp, namely the play about some great historical figure,

in this case JamesI. The play narrates the careér of Jame s the king from his ascension of the throne until his death. James is represented as a just man trying to establish order in a country beset by querulous nobles. The play might well pass muster as a pageant, but it cannot make any higher claims. As is so often the case with Scottish plays, there is no depth. The blank verse Bain employs some of the time, is very unsuccessful, being limp dull and pretentious. His prose is much more theatrical. Bain has obviously been influenced by Shakespeare, not only in his use of blank verse but in the general structure of his play, the use of omens in the sky and the regular introduction of the 'common weal' into the action, a device that may also have been borrowed from 'The Three Estates'.

Finally, a play much praised at the time, Murray McLymont's 'The Mannoch Family' (81). Peter Mannoch, a member of a well-to-do Borders family, is in love with Ailsa Stroan, the daughter of a local chicken farmer who warns Peter off his daughter. Mrs. Mannoch, an excessively religiose Old Testament orientated widow, is totally opposed to the marriage, and it is only with an ill grace that she lets Ailsa into the home, when the girl arrives terrified, after being beaten by her father. Likewise, she finds herself in conflict with her daughter, Bee, who is about to run away with a married man. The climax comes when Stroan arrives to reclaim Ailsa and reveals that his elder daughter Grizel, who is now dead, was fathered by Clinton Mannoch, Mrs. Mannoch's husband. Mrs. Mannoch is shocked, though unrepentant in her opposition to her son's marriage which proceeds nonetheless. Bee, having run off with her married man, she is left alone at the end of the play, to read her Old Testament.

'The Mannoch Family' is not an outstanding play but its author does attempt to deal with the hypocrisies of Scottish Calvinism in an honest fashion and avoids the romantic cliches of Scottish rural drama. The characters are not altogehter convincing, but do seem to be modelled on life rather than on stereotypes. One point worth noting is that the climax of the play is very similar to that of 'Soutarness Water'. Both plays deal with t he contrast between apparent religious devotion and the evil, in both

cases, sexual, which lurks beneath it.

Having considered some of the plays which the S.N.P. actually performed, certain conclusions can be drawn. First of all, as one can only expect of a situation where dramatists are learning their job, many of the plays lack sufficient theatricality. Not all the S.N.P. writers, however, fail in this respect. Brandane was sometimes excessively conscious of the need to keep the audience interested in what is going on on the stage, and there is little risk of an audience being bored by his work, however else they might react to it. In a writer like Malloch, one can see the growth of theatrical craftmanship. The early plays are static, whereas 'Soutarness Water', despite its long discussion passages, has dramatic momentum.

On the whole, the one act plays are better constructed. 'A Valuable Rival', the most popular play produced, is designed to hold the audience's attention throughout and is never dull. The same can be said of other plays which have little significance - their authors have taken the trouble to learn a little about stagecraft. It is as if the Scottish dramatists were learning through the simplest and most manageable form. It is easier to sustain interest for thirty minutes than over two and half hours, and the strain of attempting the latter is clear from even Brandane's 'Heather Gentry' or Hal D. Stewart's plays for example.

An examination of the background against which the plays are set shows not so much a predominance of historical settings as rural ones, whether the Highlands, the Lowlands or the Southern Uplands. The S.N.P. dramatists seem to have gone to great lengths to avoid contemporary urban settings, although they apparently felt quite at home in the countryside. Of the most performed plays, leaving aside 'The Late Christopher Bear', a non-Scots play performed late in the S.N.P's career, it can be said that five are historical plays ('Clyde Built' is a possible sixth candidate, but is set close enough to the time of writing to be considered non-historical). Of these plays, 'The Walls of Jericho' is set in the Edinburgh of 1843 while 'The Dawn' 'Campbell of Kilmohr', 'The Mother' and 'The Scarecrow' are set in the Highlands. 'The Dawn' and 'Campbell of Kilmohr' are set in the aftermath of the Jacobite troubles, 'The

Mother' during the clearances and 'The Scarecrow' in Inverness-shire during the early nineteenth century. Thus most of them are remote both in time and place.

Of the remaining plays, almost all are set in rural surroundings, the Highlands in the case of 'The Glen is Mine', most of 'The Flower in the Vase' and 'The Grenadier', and other parts of Scotland in the cases of the other plays. The only exceptions are 'S. for Sugar Candy', a light comedy about a sweet factory, 'Clyde Built' which as the name implies is set on the Clyde, and 'C'Est La Guerre', which is set in France during the first world war.

What we have more evidence of here, is the phenomenon, oft remarked upon in the course of this study, of dramatists choosing not to write about the industrial urban society with which they and their audiences were most familiar, and choosing instead to write either about the past or about rural society. These dramatists, it would seem felt much surer of themselves when they were not dealing with first-hand experience. They preferred to shy away from the problems of identity which contemporary experience provided them with, and to extend the 'Kailyard' version of Scottish experience.

This is not true of all the S.N.P's plays. Joe Corrie's plays are set on the fringes of urban society and deal with situations which are found in such a society. George Blake writes about the Clyde. But they are the exception.. Glasgow, for example, where all the theatrical activity was taking place, hardly makes an appearnace, and the First World War, the effects of which were far from remote, is hardly dealt with at all.

There is throughout the work we have been looking at an obsession with the Highlands. This is, of course one aspect of the Scottish search for identity. Highland experience is different from life in the rest of the British Isles; therefore if the Scotsman identifies himself with the Highlander he has found an identity which distinguishes him from other people. It is not, however, the case that the view of the Highlands put forward in these plays, is consistently a romantic, nostalgic or escapist one. True, there are ludicrous plays like Naomi Jacob's 'The Dawn', and Brandane's largely comic viewof the Highlands is at

times of dubious validity. On the otherhand, there are the grim realities of the Highlands, past and present, to be found in J.A. Ferguson's work. George Blake in 'The Mother', Malloch in 'The Grenadier' and Brandane himself on occasion do attempt to deal with contemporary Highland problems.

Where the real failure comes is in the plays concerned with the rest of Scotland, which is seen as a rural backwater totally unaffected by the twentieth century. What is worse, it is only rarely that there is any penetration below the surface of rural life. Obviously, one cannot expect this of light-hearted comedies, but one could do with more plays like 'The Mannoch Family' and 'Soutarness Water', which, whatever their deficiencies, do convey a sense of real experience. What is being criticised here is an absence, not an existing body of work.

There is not a predominance of history in the plays we have considered, apart from those set in the Highlands. In fact, apart from plays set in the Highlands, there is little historical drama save Gordon Bottomley's attempts to create a kind of Celtic drama, which have a certain intensity but do not seem to have any particular relevance to the present day.

One problem, in which these writers did not become bogged down, is that of language. The renaissance in Scottish poetry this century was bedevilled by arguments as to whether to use English or Lallans or some other form of Scots. The problem is not likely to be so acute in the drama for the simple reason that it is a theatrical convention that the characters speak for the most part in a fashion that is approximately like that used by their real life counterparts. As many plays are set in areas where dialect was still spoken at the time of writing, it was possible to use the Scots of the particular area, and this may be another reason why dramatists preferred rural settings. They were able to use Scots without producing the ludicrous situation where contemporary characters speak in archaic language. The rural setting, because dialect could be employed, possibly seemed to them by that much more Scottish than the urban one, though there was nothing to prevent a writer from rendering, for example, the Glasgow dialect on the stage.

Casting one's mind over the plays performed by the S.N.P., one remembers few outstanding plays or characters, but a large number of undistinguished plays and all too many stereotypes. This is all one can expect from a drama, which, one cannot emphasize too often, was only beginning and has yet to come to fruition.

The basic criticism of the S.N.P. itself is not that they took a long time to make up their minds about manuscripts or were squeamish about particular plays, but that few of the plays they put on reflected accurately the life of Scotland, and fewer still were any good. The question still arises - did the Players in any way prevent the growth of a genuine and truthful Scottish drama? In a further attempt to answer this question it will be useful to examine contemporary discussion of the Scottish theatre in the twenties and thirties. Few writers are in any dohbt about the lack of a Scots Drama. As Dot Allan comments (82) 'Scotland alone of European countries has no real drama of its own'. (However Miss Allan's comment on the Glasgow Rep. - 'Truth to tell there was more of death than of life in those days at the Royalty' makes one wonder what exactly she means by 'real drama'). Many reasons are given for the lack of a Scottish theatre - the Puritan tradition is a favourite, the lack of a national theatre building is frequently mentioned (Tyrone Guthrie blamed the failure of the S.N.P. partly on the lack of a suitable permanent building) (83), as is the loss of Scotland's independence.

> 'Theatrically, we are, and have been for over two hundred years, a conquered nation, a subject race. All our ideas, all our habits of writing, acting production and interpretation derive diredtly from the English theatre and are inspired by the traffic of the English stage' (84)

There is some truth in what is being said here. Indeed, it can be argued that the development of the kailyard school was due to a crisis in the Scots identity. When Scotland ceased to be an independent country, Scottishness was asserted by emphasising those aspects of Scottish life obviously different from the life of England. At the same

time nostalgia for a lost identity and a desire to escape from industrial slums led writers into treating these aspects of Scottish life in a dishonest sentimental fashion.

Neil Gunn in an article published in 1938 sympathises with the views quoted above but remains sceptical. We cannot, he says, expect a drama like the Irish one.

> ' ... there has been neither a sense of national conflict nor of national travail; there has not been that high movement of the country's spirit out of which great drama is made ... How then, can endowed theatre in Scotland be of any real use to us, apart of course from providing those so-called artistic satisfactions? Where dramatic conflict is lacking how can real drama emerge? What do we want a national theatre for if there is nothing in ourselves, nothing national, to express there?' (85)

Gunn is right. Drama springs from a vigorous national life and this cannot be guaranteed either by building national theatres, setting up academies and cultural committees or declaring independence. It is something which happens, and only when it does can dramatists take advantage of it. It does not of course follow that if there is no great conflict or trauma in a nation's affairs that there is nothing to write about. One can still write plays which accurately reflect the life of the people in the nation or region - post war English drama has largely been regional drama. Pious hopes were expressed that such plays would be forthcoming.

> 'In our new Scots theatre we have already much promise, and also some fine achievement. There is a treasure of matter in past and present, in every type and setting. Let us only avoid a hysterical mysticism, as bad in its way as the sentimentality of the 'kailyarders' and the wonder and poetry of the Celt will surely create glorious new work. Our history is full of characters and situations that beg for dramatic treatment.
>
> Above all, it may be repeated, our national

> temper, and that heritage of creed that, even if intellectually rejected, becomes almost as intimate as personality, are the hidden metal to be refined into the pure gold of a masterpiece. It is a sweeping statement, but I believe that while the greatest Scottish fiction must in the main be humorous, our supreme drama will be a tragedy, and probably Aeschylean' (86)

What, one wonders, have 'the wonder and poetry of the Celt' to do with Lowland Scotland and its industrial experience.

The problem resolved itself into one of definition - what could be distinctively Scottish in the drama?

> 'It has been a criticism pertinently levelled at Scots drama so far that it has found no distinctive form, but manifests itelf simply as provincial variations on the established forms of the British stage. It does not reflect, fundamentally, whatever it may do superficially, the profound differences in psychology between Scots and English' (87)

Some writers were of the opinion that this was a matter of technique. Notable among theorists of a Scottish theatrical technique was R.F.Pollock who worked with the Dumbarton People's Theatre and other amateur companies.

> 'The Scot is largely a being of subtleties, of suppressions. It is not what he says that counts but what he thinks. He seeks expression not in episodes and incidents, but in thoughts and feelings. To portray these features on the stage in terms of the conventional theatre is impossible. In order to do so there must be a carefully planned scale of time, force and pitch, the fundamental properties of all expression governing movement as well as voice. Thoughts and feelings, in the process of being worked out, could thus be translated to the restrictions and conventions of the stage. Then as between the actors there must be

> related display of gesture and facial expression, adjusted to presage a crucial point, balanced to create a crisis, by emphasis, contrast and speed of action' (88)

The Scot's characteristics, says Pollock, are intensity and brevity; he feels a great deal but does not express himself volubly; he is imaginative, analytic, individual, starkly realistic, utterly independent and highly self conscious.

> 'The form of drama he could therefore understand and enjoy would be more a commentary on an action, just like the ballad, than an episodic account of an action. Dialogue would be directed towards revealing psychological truth, rather than recounting incident. The aim would be so to portray thoughts and feelings, rather than episodes and actions' (89)

What Pollock - obviously influenced by Stanislawski - appears to be saying is that what a Scot says is indicative of much more below the surface than is the case with other nationalities, and that this characteristic is fundamental to a Scottish theatrical technique. He refers particularly to the Scot's use of monosyllables, and emphasises that an actor needs a particular approach to convey the full force of their meaning on the stage. Pollock is right to insist on the peculiar qualities of Scottish expression, but these of course could only be properly exploited in a play designed for the purpose, in the same way that Stanislawski's methods as he himself said, were only really of use with a particular type of drama, the poetic naturalism of Chekhov. Without Scottish plays which call for it, a Scottish technique as advocated by Pollock, is of no use, indeed it is a handicap.

Many commentators, a large number of whom were themselves playwrights, discussed the types of play they should like to see on the Scottish stage. Of the S.N.P. dramatists, Joe Corrie was one of the most forthright (90). In 1936 there appeared in 'The Scottish Stage' an article by N. McLeod entitled 'The Great Scots Play. Shall we see

it in 1936?' (91) in which the writer suggests various themes - the Clearances, the slum problem and various other industrial themes. We are still waiting. Jack House in an article in the same magazine argued that a theatre of the left was necessary in Scotland (92).

It is very important to realise that not everyone was in favour of the type of play suggested by the writers whose views have just been alluded to. The views of Hal D. Stewart the anti-highbrow crusader in the S.N.P. have already been referred to.

'Too many contributors have already sought
to point the amateur to the highbrow path.
I will not add to this number' (93)

Stewart's battle cry is taken up. Gordon Wright in an article entitled 'There's Gold in Them Thar Plays' declares he is quite happy about kitchen comedy and refers to the 'highbrow yelp for "serious contributions to the theatre" ' (94).

One must beware of exagerrating the importance of Stewart and his like, but nevertheless they must have represented a considerable body of opinion in the amateur movement as a whole, and at least a section of opinion in the S.N.P., an amateur club. It does not of course follow that this body of opinion in the S.N.P. prevented the growth of a serious Scottish drama, but its presence may have discouraged potential dramatists who felt that kitchen comedies were preferred to anything more ambitious. Beyond this, on the available evidence, one cannot go.

One should not forget in considering the work of the S.N.P. and the amateur movement of which it was a part that it served as a training ground for Scottish actors, something which was badly needed in the days before the College of Drama in Glasgow. The S.N.P. did a rather different job from the college since, as it was presenting mainly Scottish plays, its actors, one would imagine, must have developed a style suitable to the material. The Drama College, on the other hand, has to train its actors with the English stage and English television largely in mind.

Enquiries among surviving members of the S.N.P. regarding acting style have not produced very definite conclusions. Some cannot remember anything peculiarly

Scottish about the acting style, while one member feels that the styles used in Highland plays and Lowland comedy were distinctively Scottish. The style in the former, he feels, was similar to that employed in the Abbey Theatre, while in Lowland comedy a 'truth to nature' style was used. This last comment, read alongside remarks made by others of the Players, leads one to conclude that in Scottish plays there was employed a naturalism which differed from what one might find on say the English or Russian stages quite simply because the English and Russian peoples are different from the Scottish people.

What the S.N.P. did towards developing a Scottish school of acting, should not be belittled. There can be no national drama unless there are actors geared to presenting it. Although the S.N.P's actors were trained on largely mediocre material, that training could have been put to good use in plays of merit, as it has been since, not least on the several occasions when a Scottish cast, including many former members of the S.N.P. and the other groups such as the Curtain Theatre, presented Sir David Lindsay's 'The Three Estates' at the Edinburgh Festival.

It is not proposed to embark on a consideration of why the S.N.P. ultimately ceased to exist. The difficult theatrical situation which was discussed in the previous chapter on the Royalty theatre still prevailed when the Players were operating, and they suffered the consequences. Perhaps if they had turned professional or had had a permanent home in Glasgow they might have survived longer. Better plays might have helped too - they might have had the opposite effect! In the end, however, the Players would have gone under like every other non-commercial unsubsidised theatre in Scotland.

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CHAPTER VI

JAMES BRIDIE

Any account of the Scottish theatre must of necessity deal with the contribution of Osborne Henry Mavor (1888 - 1951) who wrote under the pen-name of James Bridie. Bridie's contribution to the Scottish theatre is twofold - his plays which can be regarded as an attempt to create a Scottish drama, and his untiring work to establish the theatre firmly in Scotland.

His plays have been subjected to several critical analyses notably by Helen L. Luyben in her 'James Bridie: Clown and Philosopher' (1) and Ursula Gerber in her 'James Bridie's Dramen' (2). Winifred Bannister's 'James Bridie and his Theatre' (3) contains an extremely useful account of Bridie's work for the Scottish theatre, but as far as critical analysis is concerned, it lacks weight. What follows will be a discussion of Bridie's plays, but in view of Mrs. Bannister's contribution, there will be little said about his work for the Scottish theatre. With regard to the plays, the method will be to survey Bridie's work as a whole and, in the course of this survey, to consider in more detail some of the weightier of his plays. The ultimate aim will be to evaluate the contribution of Bridie's plays to Scottish drama. (I should perhaps say here that I find some of Miss Luyben's analysis disconcertingly abstruse. It seems more the adaptation of printed texts to a theory, than the response to what are principally blueprints for theatrical performance. This is not to deny the usefulness of much of what Miss Luyben says, merely to suggest that she reads into Bridie's plays a structure of meaning which is greated out of hints and asides, not by the dramatist, but by the critic, and which is unjustifiable).

It would be foolish to pretend that every play of Bridie's has something to say. He was, as he often emphasised, an entertainer, diverting an audience for a couple of hours.

'A play is a method of passing an interval of time. A stage play is a method of passing an interval of time by putting an actor or actors on a platform and causing them to say or do certain things. If it is amusing, that is to say if it succeeds in making the spectators unconscious of the passing of time, it fulfills its function and has merit. If, on the other hand, the spectators are conscious of the passing of time, of the dreadful progress of the Universe, towards destruction and nothingness, the play has failed and has no merit, or at least, no merit as a play. Other qualities of a play - its educative, its thought provoking, its exciting, its poetic qualities - are not basic' (4)

One notes here Bridie's emphasis on the theatrical aspect of drama. He does not however regard the theatre as a 'mean or frivolous activity'.

'A play makes us believe that we are taking part in a fuller kind of life than that in which we live with its long, unbearably flat passages and languours' (5)

It would be foolish to accept Bridie's own judgement of himself as a mere entertainer. Many of his plays do comment on human experience, at the same time as they divert or amuse. But his constant reluctance to make any very substantial claims for his work is important, and it can be argued that this was Bridie's way of protecting himself against a society whose response to artists is indifference or derision. As Christopher Small has commented -

'no one is more exposed to the uncomprehending laughter of his fellows than the artist, and nowhere more, perhaps, than in the solidly, one may say almost impenetrably Philistine society of middle-class Glasgow when Bridie was young. He was an artist, he couldn't help it; but he could ward off laughter by getting his laugh in first, both at others and at himself' (6)

The theme which recurs constantly in Bridie's work - it is almost a moral - can be stated quite simply. Man as a species should accept his cosmic limitations, and individual men should accept their personal limitations. One can easily see how a society which derides claims to something better than the humdrum produces this attitude in a writer. In a sense it is a reflection of that society's attitude but it is also a refuge for the exposed artist as Bridie felt himself to be.

Acceptance of one's limitations can be a very negative attitude and Bridie would appear to have been dissatisfied with it, for in many of his plays he is constantly trying to justify this attitude of acceptance, sometimes with the help of divine intervention! Bridie needs to prove that the not particularly significant man, the man who does not have what would be regarded in that part of society from which Bridie came as pretensions, is a man to be rated as highly as, ifnot more highly than, the greatest and most spectacular of men. In these plays of course he is not merely talking about his characters and their rather drab lives, he is talking about himself and his own reluctance, even fear, to go too far, to attempt the grandoise or magnificent.

What is being argued here then is that this theme in Bridie's work, the expression of which in his plays will now be examined, is very largely a product of middle-class Glasgow and indeed middle-class Scotland. In some ways it is the most Scottish thing about Bridie.

In three of his plays with Biblical backgrounds, 'Tobias and the Angel' (7), 'Jonah and the Whale' (8) and 'Susannah and the Elders' (9), Bridie concentrates his attention on man's limitations. 'Tobias and the Angel', which is based on the story in the Apocryphal Book of Tobit, tells with considerable wit, the story of Tobias, son of the blind Tobit, who travels to Hamadan, accompanied by a servant, Azarias (who is the Archangel Gabriel in disguise). After surviving with Azarias's help, several dire perils including an encounter with a devil called Asmody, Tobias marries a wealthy girl, Sara. On Tobias's return to Nineveh, Raphael/Azarias restores old Tobit's sight, and all look set to live happily ever after, although in Sara's case acceptance of her lot has only come after a struggle. She

has fallen in love with Raphael to whom she insists that she is impatient with the ordinary run of men; she prefers Raphael of whose real identity she is aware. Raphael tells her to treat him as Tobias's spirit or daemon, and refuses to listen to her as she pleads her dissatisfaction with ordinary mortals.

> 'You must cease to be so. Often at odd times in the future, you will see me looking out of Tobias's eyes. But you must look the other way and busy yourself with your household tasks' (Page 68)

Sara must accept the limitations of ordinary people. And so, says Bridie, must we.

'Jonah and the Whale', a slighter play, is a retelling of the Jonah story in witty fashion, full of contemporary allusions. Bridie appears to regard Jonah as a baleful Puritan influence whom the people of Gitta - Hepher are well rid of - Jonah, is no sooner outside the city gate than drinking, singing and dancing break out again within the walls. In the play, Jonah is brought to realise, when Nineveh is not destroyed, 'I am only an ordinary man'. Again the moral is that man should accept his limitations.

The moral is more specific in 'Susannah and the Elders'. Man is highly fallible, and when he falls, should be pitied, not spurned.

As Bridie explains in the preface, in his adaptation of the story, he has placed the emphasis on the elders, for whom he has a great deal of sympathy. They seem to him to represent a kind of person and a kind of sad failure, which are common.

> 'Every now and then some distinguished old man, a respected and wise servant of his country and mankind, does some silly and outrageous act that gets his name into the police-court records and the sniggering sort of Sunday newspaper. Most of us turn away our heads from this heart-breaking thing; but it is as right a topic for a goat-song as jealousy, revenge or any other kind of ignominy, that soils without destroying the nobility of man' (Page 1)

Before the play opens a Reader, dressed as a kind of Court official, sets the scene and enlists our sympathy for the elders before the action itself starts.

'The old story that these judges who did this wickedness were false and evil to the bone; but who knows the heart of a man and what moves in that darkness? And is there any man living who has in him no tincture of goodness, however unhappily he may do in his life? Tonight you are to be the judges of these old Judges. Search yourselves well that you may do justly' (Page 1)

It is therefore clear that this will not be a play where we are confronted with black and white moral situations, but with finer shades of grey.

The action begins in a Babylon court where Kashdak is sitting in judgement. What is immediately clear is the harshness and inflexibility of the law. Cush, an Ethiopian, is remitted to a higher court for an inevitable sentence of death, and Dionysos, a Greek, is only saved from death by the intervention of Susannah with the judge, in this case her Uncle Bill, Kabbittu. Later in the play, Kashdak, on a visit to Susannah, tells her what is to happen to the girl in the Cush affair.

'I felt sorry for her. I adjourned the case for a week so that she could have a bath and clothes and plenty of nourishing food. And I couldn't sleep last night trying to find a way out. But there's no help for it. She will have to be drowned' (Page 42)

Kashdak is shown here to be a charitable man, but there is nothing he can do in the face of the law. Likewise, when it appears that Susannah has been found guilty of adultery neither the pleas of her mother-in-law nor her husband are of any avail. Finally when the two judges are found out, nothing stands between them and a horrible death.

Bridie obviously feels that rigid and harsh laws are inhumane. They fail to take account of the human weakness, with which he is concerned in the play. Kashdak and Kabbittu are sympathetic characters whose weakness is common to all mankind. All men, Bridie seems to be saying, put on a front

of respectability and morality, but beneath this front most of them have something to hide. The mistake the judges make is that beneath their respectable ageing exteriors lust still exists.

Kabbittu:- .... Well, thank the gods, our fires are out.

Kashdak :- It's a comfortable state.

Kabbittu:- I think old ... well, late middle-age is the happiest time of a man's life. The passions and distresses that seemed so terrible when one was young seem very little and far away. We can laugh at our old agonisings.

Kashdak :- Yes.

Kabbittu:- When the needs of the body have sunk low ... the mind is free. Isn't it, Kashdak?

(Page 16)

As the judges discover all too painfully, they have mistaken the form for the reality. This indeed is one of the central themes for the play, the contrast between appearance and reality. During his trial Dionysos insists to Kabbittu that judges no more believe in the gods he has blasphemed against, than he does.

Kabbittu:- That is beside the point. My duty as a law giver is to give the gods the benefit of the doubt. It is true that within the walls of this city, we are not particularly enthusiastic about the gods. But we have a very distinct impression ... you needn't take all this down, Adani ... a very persistent idda that if we don't treat them with some respect they will go out into the desert and become evil spirits. I don't know whether you have much experience of the desert ....

Dionysos:- I have, your worship.

Kabbittu:- You will know, then, that it is a very different matter out there, where there are no lighted shops and no policemen! It is not pleasant, Dionysos, to have a bad-tempered demon trampling on one's shadow.

Dionysos:- No.

Kabbittu:- The desert is crowded with them as it is. At night they come pressing in against our walls. So we build, for those who remain in the city, nice temples with cosy altars. And we insist that our citizens and our guests treat them properly. Does that seem to you reasonable?

Dionysos:- Very reasonable, your worship.

(Page 8)

What Kabbittu appears to be saying here is that if the forms are observed, then life will proceed in an orderly fashion, and in the case of the judges, in an urbane and civilized fashion in which the proprieties are given their place. (There is an ironic contrast between this graceful living and the savage penal system which Bridie takes pains to avoid emphasising). Kabbittu returns to the theme later in a conversation with Kashdak.

'I'm all for openness and freedom in speech in all sorts of subjects. All sorts of subjects. And I think you will admit I'm as broad-minded as my neighbour. But this modern fashion of speaking about the most - the most intimate subjects as if .... you know I hate hypocrisy, and I like a broad story now and then as well as the next man, but .... there are certain decencies, if you understand what I mean'

(Page 15)

The irony is that the judges are soon to place themselves in a position of the most base hypocrisy. There are hints, as the play progresses, that they are beginning to sense the gap between appearance and reality, particularly in a brief fragment of conversation in the second act.

Kabbittu:- You are a curious fellow, Kashdak. We've been friends and colleagues for over thirty years - in the Army, in business, on the Bench. We've never had a quarrel in all these years. And yet, somehow I don't feel that I know you.

Kashdak :- I don't think that's a very uncommon experience.

Kabbittu:- It's curious. It's very curious. I never know what you're really thinking about.

Kabbittu:- I am thinking that it is bedtime.
Kashdak :- I am thinking about goldfish.
Kabbittu:- In a silver tank. With coral rocks. So am I. We are a couple of sentimental old ruins. I'm going to bed.

(Page 35-36)

The reference to gold-fish takes us back to fanciful talk by Susannah in which she imagines herself a fish swimming in a silver tank with coral rocks, and thus it presages the downfall of the elders when they, unknown to each other, make their way to the garden where Susannah is bathing, while her husband is away on a business trip. They meet at the garden.

Kashdak :- There is no good anywhere left at all. Since we parted I have been walking in the sun, on and on with gongs beating in my head. Since I told her she might bathe in the garden, I have been possessed and compelled with the desire to see her. Only to see her like a white nymphaea in the pool - only that. Why should it be so terrible?
Kabbittu:- It would be dishonourable.
Kashdak :- Dishonourable. Honour is a sham. What are you doing in the garden, you hypocrite?
Kabbittu:- I am here because I cannot help it.
Kashdak :- You said we could laugh now, at our agonisings. You said when the needs of the body had sunk low the mind was free.
Kabbittu:- We look like it, don't we?
Kashdak :- The mind <u>is</u> free. We are soldiers of Nabuchodonosor and judges of Babylon. We can take what we like and no man dare call us to account.
Kabbittu:- I'm not so sure of that.

(Page 53)

Before they enter the inner garden, Susannah rushes out, and when the elders make approaches to her, screams hysterically. Hearing this, Dionysos who is outside, attempts to enter and is killed. The judges' majordomo rushes in to report this, and Kashdak immediately attempts

to retrieve the situation by accusing Susannah of adultery with Dionysos.

The hypocrisy of the judges is pushed to extreme when Susannah faces the death penalty, her vision of life turned sour and wretched.

> 'If I had died yesterday or been drowned in the pool, I should have gone out of this life in happiness, for it would have seemed to me that my life had been filled with kindness and mercy and the love of friends. It would have been a little life, for I am still very young and I have employed myself on little things. But it would have little and perfect, like a jewel. Now it is ugly. Now I know that kindness is a cheat and mercy is a trap and that love is the appetite of brutes'
>
> (Page 58)

By a rather weak twist, Daniel manages to prove the judges' dishonesty and they accept their fate with resignation. In his last speech Kabbittu admits his false-seeming.

> 'All the world has known me as a kindly, just, respectable man. And so I thought myself. For I forgot how the exalted Anu had made us all. What you saw was the head of a man, uttering discreet things, above the robes of a grave and seemly magistrate. Beneath these robes was the body of a goat. The head ensures and cherishes honour, justice, pity, shame and a good conscience; the beast can be tamed, but he knows nothing of any of these things'
>
> (Page 64)

It is not at all surprising that Bridie should choose to concentrate - albeit sympathetically - on the hypocrisy of the Elders - for hypocrisy, while not peculiarly Scottish, is considered a characteristic of our life and our literature. Lindsay was concerned with it in 'The Three Estates', Burns in 'Holy Willie's Prayer' and several of the dramatists dealt with in this study have it as a theme. The contrast between actuality and seeming is found also, in slightly different form, in Stevenson ('Dr. Jekyll and

Mr. Hyde 'Weir of Hermiston') and Hogg ('Confessions of a Justified Sinner'), where the concern is not merely with hypocrisy, but schizophrenia. Susannah herself is not presented as a paradigm of innocence. She is in fact a mixture of characteristics. Her maids find her 'a bit straightlaced' and when Dionysos, the appropriately named Greek, who constantly makes passes at her, talks of the orgies in Corinth, she declares herself disgusted. On the other hand, at one point she tells her mother-in-law -

'I'd like to get into bad company myself, just once, for a change. It must be very interesting' (Page 40)

It is possibly the side of Susannah, which this remark hints at, that attracts Dionysos and, for that matter, partially accounts for the elders' feelings.

Susannah is a little naive perhaps in that she is not on guard against the elders, but at other times she shows a fine perception. When Kashdak is discussing the case of Cush's mistress with her, she indicates an appreciation of Kashdak's situation, although she does not realise just how appropriate her words are.

'Day after day you must do your duty by a book of rules and forget that you are a man at all. And then suddenly your heart says to you 'I am here' and you are astonished and don't know what to do' (Page 43)

Later in much less happy circumstances, her trial, she fastens on an extremely unpleasant aspect of the cruel judicial system (which Bridie does not stress), when she addresses her judge.

' .... Is it possible to murder a woman with decency? Decency? Look into your own heart! You are trembling and fidgeting and the spittle is running out of your mouth, so impatient are you for the sight of my decent death' (Page 58)

In changing the nationality of the judges from Jew to Babylonian, Bridie is able to present Daniel as a fiercely nationalistic figure constantly struggling to keep up his countrymen's resentment of their far from unbearable captivity. Bridie does not seem to care too much for Daniel,

and presents him as a very pompous self-righteous individual -

> ' .... I am a wild animal, in a cage, I am a lion. And they treat me like a bad-tempered pampered little lap-dog. They will not even give me my own name. My name is DANIEL the Judgement of God' (Page 23)

He lectures Susannah on her duty as a wife, and warns her 'Even in old judges the lusts of the flesh take a long time to die' (Page 25). The irony is that despite the fact that he is an unsympathetic character, Daniel is correct in his assessment of the two judges. What is unattractive about him is his cold hatred for Babylonions. It is this hatred that moves him to action at Susannah's trial and explains his lack of interest in Susannah's protestations of gratitude.

> 'You owe me nothing. You owe your life to Jehovah, who, in His inscrutable purpose, spares fools the consequences of their foolishness' (Page 63)

It is also this hatred that explains his enthusiasm for the execution of Kashdak and Kabbittu.

'Susannah and the Elders' is a play of depth where, despite the rather anti-climatic court scene, the dramatic power and the ideas Bridie is concerned with, combine to sustain the audience's interest and provide a moving experience completely undistorted by sentimentality.

The case of 'Daphne Laureola' (10) is similar to that of the three plays discussed above, although the play is set in the modern period. The action takes place in London and the suburbs. It starts in a restaurant in which are dining a curious assortment of people including Ernest Piaste, a romantic young man and a mysterious lady (who turns out to be Lady Pitts), who indulges in long uninspired monologues, full of middle-class angoisse.

> 'Everything has happened before. The Dark Ages have happened before. The apes have beaten us before when we thought they were feeding out of our hands .... Again and again and again we have covered the face of the earth with order and loveliness and a little

justice. But only the face of it. Deep
down below the subterranean brutes have
bided their time to shake down our
churches and palaces and let loose the
little rats to sport among the ruins' (Page 23)

The feeling of decay and degeneration given expression in this speech, pervades not only this play, but much of Bridie's later work and is given its most definite expression in 'The Queen's Comedy' and 'The Baikie Charivari'.

'Daphne Laureola' relates the infatuation of Ernest for Lady Pitts, an infatuation which is not shared by her ladyship who, on her husband's death, marries her chauffeur; Ernest protests that this has shattered his dream of her.

'Has nobody told you the story of the poor
peasant who worshipped a goddess? And
then he found there were no gods and
goddesses, only an empty sky?' (Page 86)

Lady Pitts refuses to be impressed by this talk of despair and tells Ernest that she has merely served as a vehicle on to which he has projected his illusions -

'It never occurred to him that I was a human
being. They're all the same - unless they're
pigs. And the pigs are at least honest with
themselves and with us. I've found that out
now. That's why I've settled down in a nice
clean pig-sty' (Page 88)

The lot which human beings have to accept in this play is gloomier than that of Sara in 'Tobias and the Angel', but the basic message is much the same, though Bridie is here emphasising, as he has not done before, that dreams and fantasies are idle follies which can quickly turn sour.

Several of Bridie's plays are concerned with the personal nd environmental limitations of particular men, rather than with the limitations of man in general. 'The Switchback' (11) tells the story of an obscure medical practitioner called Mallaby who thinks he has made a great discovery, and is exploited by a newspaper proprietor and a wealthy Jewish financier (there is a touch of fashionable anti-semitism about some of Bridie's work), only to be dropped by them when it appears that the discovery is flawed.

He is left a ruined man, struck off the medical register. At the end of the play Mallaby decides to forsake civilisation and spend his time in archaeological work in the East. Bridie is not merely suggesting that Mallaby has personal limitations, - he is not the great inventor he thinks - but also that he would have beenbetter to accept the limitations of his environment, and not expose himself to the viciousness of the world. It would have been better for Mallaby to have stayed a small man.

'Colonel Wotherspoon' (12), is rather a dreadful play about a young man called Archie Kellock (Bridie used this name as a pseudonym later in his career, when he was writing pantomime for the Citizens' Theatre). Archie, although he works in his mother's shop, aspires to be a writer. Despite the assurances of his university girl-friend, Emily, that his work is of no account, he has a great popular success with his first novel. Consequently, he and Emily become involved with the literary set in London and their romance breaks up. However, Archie's second novel is a dismal failure, he resolves never to write another word and returns repentant to Emily. Once more a Bridie hero has had his fingers burnt by the big bad world, and returns chastened to his small good one.

In 'Babes in the Wood' (13), a similar situation is presented. Gillett, the headmaster of a wearisome preparatory school, has great success with a scientific book he has written, and he and his wife are invited by his publisher, Brewer, to join a house-party Brewer is organising. During their stay, Gillett becomes infatuated with Susan Copernicus, another member of the house party, who has left her husband, a wealthy Jewish business man, and is now living with an architect called Strutt. However, before matters advance to a critical stage, Susan's husband appears, quells her by force and goes off with her to America. Margaret Gillett soon puts paid to her husband's notions to follow Susan across the Atlantic and Gillett has to reconcile himself to continuing to live his rather hum-drum life far from the excitements of sophisticated society. It is a play which attempts some discussion of marriage, but this discussion is hampered by Bridie's obvious determination to come down firmly on the side of conventional morality.

The central character of 'The Golden Legend of Shults' (14) is Davie Cooper, an ex-jailbird who, having obtained a post as a commercial traveller for a corsets company arrives in the town of Shults to sell his wares. Davie is so incensed at the humiliating way he is treated by McGlashan, the owner of the emporium, that he resolves to destroy it. He returns, disguised as a central American millionaire and with the help of his equally disguised underworld cronies and counterfeit money, he sets about buying up the town under the pretence of improving it, but with the intention of destroying it. This nemesis never fails on Shults, and the play ends sentimentally, with Davie admitting that he is only a small, lonely man.

> 'If you understand, I've aye been a kind of a stray dog. I've wandered in here and I've wandered in there, and whiles I got kicks and whiles I got scraps. But I never had a place, if ye see what a mean. And there's whiles I wanted a place bad, for I'm a matey kind of a wee block too' (Page 64)

The best expression of Bridie's ideas about the small man and his worth is to be found in 'Mr. Gillie' (15), Mr. Gillie is a village schoolmaster on the West coast of Scotland. A failed man of letters himself, he has nonetheless encouraged many young people to trust to the talents he discerns in them, only to see them come to grief in the outside world. His latest proteges, Tom Donnelly, whom Gillie sees as a brilliant dramatist, and Nelly Watson whom he sees as a violinist, with Gillie's encouragement, marry and go off to London, much to the annoyance of Nellie's father, a selfish old widower.

When Nellie and Tom return, Gillie has lost his job, as a result of the school being closed, and also probably as a result of the influence of Nellie's father with the education committee. Tom has prospered as a film critic, and although Nellie's father is delighted, Gillie feels greatly disappointed at this prostitution of literary talent. At the end of the play he turns his mind to the problem of raising some other local 'genius' to fame.

The play is contained in a heavenly framework in which the "procurator" and the "judge" are discussing whither it

would be appropriate to consign Mr. Gillie, who has died after being knocked down by a pantechnicon. The judge ignoring the procurator's insistence that Gillie's life was a useless one, places him between Lincoln and John Wesley. 'Let us honour the forlorn hope' (page 72) declares the judge, and thus Bridie sums up his theme that the small man"s obscure life, even when apparently a failure, can nonetheless be regarding as being as equally important as other lives lived in the midst of public acclaim.

The other side of Bridie's championing of the small man's integrity and importance and his implication that small men (i.e. most of us in the average audience) should content themselves with their lot, is a somewhat ambivalent admiration for super-men type figures who tend to over-ride, apparently with Bridie's approval, the ordinary demands of decency and morality. As small men in an audience are consoled by a dramatist assuring them that they matter, so they respond to the depiction of men completely free from the bonds of propriety they themselves are so conscious of.

'The Anatomist' (16), is a historical play based on the Burke & Hare case, and it centres its attention on Doctor Knox, the recipient of the body-snatchers' victims. Knox is presented as a man with contempt for lesser mortals, a man so dedicated to what he sees as the truth, that he is apparently unconcerned when he is told that one of his anatomical subjects may have been murdered.

> 'The life of this poor wretch is ended. It is surely a better thing that her beauty of form should be at the service of divine science than at the services of any drunken buck with a crown in his pocket' (Page 47)

Even when he relents somewhat, Knox is determined that he shall be answerable only to God. He is above trafficing with ordinary human beings when it comes to discussing the morality of his conduct. Although Bridie does not explicitly state his agreement with Knox's attitude, there can be little doubt that he has some sympathy for it, and at the end of the play Bridie leaves us with a picture of Knox having triumphed over the mob which threatened to lynch him, lecturing in his usual assertive, domineering manner.

'A Sleeping Clergyman' (17), tells the story of the generations in the Cameron family, and spans the period from the 1860's to the 1930's. Charlie Cameron, the first is a medical student in Glasgow, much admired by Joseph Lister, but an unpleasant young man nonetheless. He behaves abominably to his landlady and friends and only agrees to marry a girl who is pregnant by him when he knows he is dying. The redeeming feature in Cameron's character, Bridie seems to say, is the spark of genius which only grows to fuition in his grandson. Genius is above the ordinary laws of decency and morality.

There co-exist in the characters of Cameron's descendants genius and amorality. His daughter flirts with a servant then casts him off when a richer catch presents itself. When the servant threatens to show her prospective husband the letters he has received from her, she poisons him with prussic acid. Her son, Charlie Sutherland, has the same disregard for others that his mother and grandfather had. For example, during the First World War, when he should have been at a family reunion that had been arranged for his benefit, he spends the night with a prostitute in London. But, twenty years after this, he is in charge of a research establishment at the height of an epidemic which is threatening London and the world. The vaccine that he has developed works and the world is saved! Hence, Bridie seems to be saying, the boorish and amoral behaviour of Charlie and his family is justifiable, since they have genius.

The 'superman' theme has an echo in 'Dr. Angelus' (18), a melodrama about a Glasgow doctor (there really are far too many characters in Bridie's plays who share their creator's profession) who poisons both his mother-in-law and his wife for the insurance money. Angelus attempts to justify himself by arguments similar to these employed by Knox and Charlie Sutherland, but, in this play, Bridie clearly intends us to disregard these, for there is no mitigating genius as far as Angelus is concerned.

So far then, we have seen Bridie's interest in the small man and his complementary interest in the superman. His "message" would appear to be that we should be content with our lot as members of the human race and as individuals, and if we find this a little tedious, we can escape by

identifying briefly with superman who alone can cast aside at will conventional mores.

It is a rather unrewarding exercise to attempt to group all of Bridie's plays under particular headings. Some of them refuse to be classified, but before anything is said about these, it might be as well to look at such of his plays that have not already been dealt with, which can be linked together.

Two of Bridie's early plays 'The Girl who Did Not Want to Go to Kuala Lumpur' (19), and 'The Dancing Bear' (20), are set in the contemporary Glasgow with which Bridie was familiar. 'The Girl who Did Not Want to Go to Kuala Lumpur' is a rather meaningless piece which revolves round a girl, Margaret Unthank, who is unwilling to go east with her parents. The play is filled with various odd artistic characters, a postman from Salen, in Mull, and a man called Smellie (Smellie! ... D'you know who I am? I'm Smellie. Unthank; - I can't help your infirmities'). Margaret falls in love with the postman and is spared Kuala Lumpur.

'The Dancing Bear' is a much wittier play which takes off Glasgow West End aesthetes, amateur theatricals and parish pump poets, inter alia, although the play as a whole does not add up to very much. The plot centres on Kitty Murdoch who is unable to decide whether to marry Betts, an Englishman with remote Scottish connections, or Colin Kilgour, the "poet" who works in the smithy at Duthie Bay where her family spend the summer. Ultimately, she chooses Betts and Colin returns to his true love, Jean the maid. One could perhaps suggest a connection between the conclusion and the general theme that we should accept our lot, which runs throughout Bridie's work.

'Storm in a Teacup' (21), an adaptation of Bruno Frank's 'Sturm in Wasserglass', is also set in the West of Scotland, this time in Bridie's fictitious town of Baikie. The play concerns itself with the fortunes of Provost Thomson of Baikie, whose chances of obtaining a parliamentary nomination are ruined by a young reporter who prints a story about Thomson's callousness towards a dog, which is liable to be put down since its owner has been unable to pay the licence fee. Thomson instigates a court action against the reporter for stealing the dog from a town official, but the action

fails and the reporter goes off with Thomson's wife. The dramatic action is trivial but well-sustained. The play is no more than an entertaining diversion.

'What Say They' (22), could perhaps be set in Glasgow, since it takes place on a university campus. The conflict in the play arises from the relationship between Sir Archibald Asher, the principal, a rather bumbling bachelor, and Professor Hayman, Clerk to the Senate, a Presbyterian bigot and dishonest apparatchik. Asher is supported in his struggle by Ada Shore whom he mistakes for his new secretary. She is really the niece of the college porter who is really the famous Irish poet, Conal O'Grady, in disguise. Much is made of the inane actions of the students. Good triumphs in the end and O'Grady is nominated for the Rectorship. The play does not present a convincing picture of Scots university life, and gives the impression that the author is viewing it through the sentimental spectacles of middle age. Nonetheless, interest is maintained by the turns of the plot, although the conflict between Calvinism and life, implicit in the conflict between the principal protagonists, is not developed.

It is indeed surprising that Bridie does not show any great interest in this conflict elsewhere in his work. 'John Knox' (23), the play in which one might expect it, is a reconstruction of history whose chief interest is the presentation of the action as a series of flashbacks from modern times.

Calvinism is obsessed by the devil and in 'The Amazed Evangelist', a one act play, Bridie gives some attention to the powers of darkness. Will and Aggie, a recently married Glasgow couple, are brought to a house near Dunoon by one of the locals who tells them that they can be put up there. The action turns into a nightmare fantasy involving a witch, the devil and a one-hundred and three year old minister who saves Will and Aggie from the clutches of Satan. Bridie appears to be insisting, in the humourous context of Glasgow Fair (there are a few good Glasgow jokes), that the powers of darkness do exist, despite beliefs to the contrary held by people like Will. The play would have to be very cleverly produced however, if the contrast between couthiness and devilry were not to appear absurd.

'Mr. Bolfry' (24), the one play in which Bridie seriously attempts to come to grips with Calvinism, is set in the Free Kirk Manse at Larach in the West Highlands during the war. Two English soldiers, Cully and Cohen, are billeted here and are bemoaning the rigours of a Calvinist Sunday. Jean Ogilvie, niece of the Rev. Mr. McCrimmon, puts in an appearance and Cohen's spirits rise considerably. They decide to take on her uncle in philosophical debate later in the day. Jean is a young lady who takes a very cynical view of Calvinist pretensions to morality. Of the parish she says -

'It's got the best record for church attendance and the highest illegitimacy rate in the Kingdom' (Page 14)

and of the parishioners -

'They stick to hedges and ditches for their social occasions. Disgusting, superstitious pigs. And they're not only immoral and hypocritical. They're Devil-Worshippers' (Page 15)

The theme of the play has thus been introduced. What is the true nature of Presbyterian Calvinism? Is it the worship of God or of the devil? Bridie's answer, as we shall see, seems to be that in the heart of Calvinism repression stems from a refusal to acknowledge the darkness within. Calvinism, for Jean (and Bridie) is a deadly religion.

'It kills everything that's gay and decent in life' (Page 30)

The debate between Jean and Mr. McCrimmon continues on a supernatural level when Mr. Bolfry, an emissary of the devil, dressed like a minister, is conjured up. Bolfry, an extremely amiable character, insists on the necessity of the devil and hell.

'To put it in simple words we cannot conceive the Universe except as a pattern of reciprocating opposites. Therefore, when I tell you that there are kirks in Hell, I am telling you something that is at least credible' (Page 38)

Mr. McCrimmon attempts to refute Bolfry's argument but to little effect. However, shortly after this, when Cohen

announces that he is bored stiff by the argument, Bolfry and McCrimmon team up in an attempt to save the souls of the others, and to convince them that there is a purpose in the universe. Bolfry goes on to preach a sermon. At first Bolfry extends his earlier arguments about the necessity of conflicting opposites.

'It is a War, not to destroy but to create.
It is like the war between man and woman.
If there were no war God would go to sleep.
The Kingdom of Heaven would wilt and wither.
Death would conquer both Good and Evil and
there would be nothing. It is unbearable
That there should be nothing. The War must
go on!' (Page 51)

However it is soon clear that Bolfry's urbanity is a mask for the forces of darkness.

Bolfry:- You are better than your neighbours, Mr. McCrimmon. They would say that because a truth was sorrowful or distasteful, or inconvenient, it was therefore not a truth. That is why they will not believe what I have come to tell you; that Victory may go the other way.

McCrimmon:- What do you mean?

Bolfry:- That the Gates of Hell may prevail against the armies of the Cherubim. That Disorder may win the day. If that were not possible, why do you wrestle and pray?

McCrimmon:- God forbid that it should be so.

Bolfry:- God forbade Adam to eat an apple.

Jean :- What will happen if you win this War?

Bolfry:- Man's genius will burst its bonds and leap to meet the sun. The living, glorious animal in you will riot in the fields and the soul will laugh for joy, naked but not ashamed. Your Self will be triumphant. When I win, Man will be an individual, You may love your neighbour if you like, but all that is highest in you tells him to keep his distance. You don't know him. You will never know him. You are no longer a thing

in a herd, crouching against your
neighbour's wool to keep you from the
cold. You are a man. You are a woman.
Onward, Christian Soldiers, shuffling
along shouldered with your heavy packs,
and your blistered feet, and the fear of
Hell in your eyes. It's a rocky road to
Zion, and what will you find when you get
there? Your officiers will lash you on
with curses and punishment and flatter you
with Hope. There is no Hope in my country.
No man hopes for what he has.
What are the virtues that keep you going?
Courage? Honesty? Charity? I have them too.
Courage is the reaction to Fear. You are
more afraid than I am. Honesty is the
reaction to lies. Charity is the reaction
to hate and suspicion. My honesty spurns
your superstitions. My charity embraces
both the sheep and the goats.
My flags are the Pride of the Eye and the
Lust of the Flesh. Their other names are
Art and Poetry, and where they wave the
abomination of desolation can never be.
How long, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning,
how long? How long will these fools listen
to the quaverings of impotent old priests,
haters of the Life they never know?
How long will they saddle their strong
limbs in dusty parchments? How long will
they shut out the sky from their eyes with
prisons of cold stone?
I tell you that all you have and all you know
is your Self. Honour your Self and set him
free; for the Soul and the Body are one, and
their only home is the World, and their only
life is the Flesh and their only friend is
the Devil.
Let the wild horses loose! (Page 52-53)

It seems there is a certain confusion here and throughout the play. Bolfry on the one hand can only be taken to represent evil (he claims to have started the Second World

War), but on the other he appears to be stating traditional anti-Puritan arguments. Yet again - he is dressed as a minister and claims to have been ordained - he can be taken to represent Calvinism in essence. The confusion arises, I would suggest because Bridie is in two minds as to what he is trying to do in this play. He seems to have embarked on an analysis of Puritanism and then decided to attempt an analysis of the relationship between good and evil. Bolfry has to fill several roles. He has to be the attractive devil (as in 'Tam O' Shanter') who represents the honest pleasures of the world which the life-denying Puritans spurn. He has also to be the unattractive devil representing not honest pleasure, but pure evil. He also to a lesser extent latterly, has to be an unattractive representative of Puritanism. It is too much to expect a character to fulfil such conflicting roles and it is a pity that Bridie could not have resolved this conflict before writing the play. As it is, Bolfry latterly acts out the role of unattractive devil, representing the evil that is man's heart. McCrimmon recognises this -

> 'If you are, as I think you are, a bad dream
> and the voice of my own heart speaking evil,
> I will tear you from my breast if I die for
> it! ' (Page 53)

and, symbolically, chases Bolfry from his house with a knife. Bolfry leaps over a cliff to his "death".

The next morning all concerned discuss the "bad dreams" they have had, and are on the point of dismissing them when Bolfry's umbrella, which he has left behind, walks out of the house. In a typically witty Bridie touch, Mrs. McCrimmon end the play by insisting, despite this amazing occurrence, 'Drink up your tea'.

'Mr. Bolfry' is a play characteristic of Bridie in that it is witty and toys with philosophy. It is also characteristic in that it is intellectually confused.

Unlike many Scottish dramatists, Bridie did not write over-much about the Highlands, and when he did, largely avoided the bog of romantic cliche into which most of them fall. 'What it Is To be Young' (25), is a farcical play set in the Anglers' Arms somewhere in Perthshire. General Dix, who has come to attend a rally being organised by the local

ex-servicemen's league, discovers that Cochran, the Treasurer, has been fiddling the books. Cochran contrives to escape the general but has to face Macdonald the chauffeur (another native of Salen) and Kelly, the servant, who are determined to deal rough justiceto him on account of his treatment of the General's daughter, Virginia. The play is full of improbable characters and situations, although it has a certain stage-worthiness. It could hardly be described as a sophisticated comedy, operating as it does at the level of a play like John Brandane's 'Heather Gentry'.

In 'The Last Trump' (26), Bucklyvie, a selfish businessman has been sent to a castle in the Highlands to recuperate after an illness. He arouses the hatred of the laird, MacPhater, and his brother-in-law, Schreiner, because he has established in the area a rock-extraction plant which is interfering with Schreiner's work as an astronomer. After much theatrical activity, Scheiner tells Bucklyvie that the world is about to end and Bucklyvie, believing him, makes suitable preparations, only to be bitterly disappointed when the world continues on its way. The truth is that Schreiner had hoped that the shock of his announcement would kill Bucklyvie but the effect is to re-animate him and thus refreshed, he re-embarks on his old selfish course. The only consolation is that the girl, who to Bucklyvie's annoyance wishes to marry his son, has won a large sum of money from him during a card game which they played as they waited for the end, and he now has to honour this debt. The play is extremely slight and the characterisation bad.

'The Forrigan Reel' (27), a historical fantasy about a lad who has magical powers of healing, is lightweight, but it has effective comic touches and charm. It contains some amusing satire on English sensibility.

One could link with the plays just discussed 'Marriage is No Joke' (28), for although it is not set in the Highlands, the central character, John McGregor, is a hot-blooded Highlander (Bridie is coming dangerously near to cliche here). The play relates McGregor's adventures from his entrance into a Roxburghshire pub, the daughter of the proprietor of which he marries, to his exploits during the 1914-18 war, when he almost becomes a sultan, and his work after the war as a minister in London fighting slum landlords. The play ends

with a dramatic flourish when McGregor, on discovering that his chief elder is a slum landlord, throws him out of his house and resigns the ministry. It is a rather episodic play, some of which, for example the coarse treatment of coloured soldiers, would be unacceptable today, and some of which is down-right improbable. There is some righteous emotion at the end of the play, but little else of consequence.

It is interesting to note how Bridie avoids, as far as he can, depicting the Highlands of the present day. Two of the plays dealt with above merely use the Highlands as a background and have very few Highland characters in them. One is historical and the fourth, although about a Highlander, is set elsewhere. It is as if Bridie was aware of the dangers of writing about the Highlands and wisely chose to avoid the subject.

'Holy Isle' (29), is a Swiftian fantasy concerning an island, Ultima Thule, the pristine happiness of whose people is threatened by an expedition from Orkney. The first 'conquerors' are civilised by the islanders and a further expedition which arrives decides to withdraw and leave the islanders in peace. There is some very pointed satire of colonialism in the first act, and the presentation of the islanders abounds in ironic comment on the shortcomings of humanity. Unfortunately the play tends to fizzle out in the third act and turns sentimental. The characterisation is at times inconsistent, but nonetheless it is one of Bridie's better plays, and one in which he exposes with glee the moral limitations of human kind.

'The Queen's Comedy' (30), possibly Bridie's best play, is set during the Trojan Wars and is concerned with the relationship between men and gods, the effect of the actions of the latter on the lives of the former. Bridie has deliberately used an episodic structure to enable him to present the gods and men alternately throughout the action. Furthermore, in his stage directions he asks for a rostrum on which the scenes in heaven are to be acted, and a forestage on which the scenes on earth are acted.

The play opens at the bottom of the sea. Thetis is trying to dissuade Neptune from his policy of helping the Greeks, since she wishes to avenge herself on them for their treatment of her son Achilles. Neptune replies by suggesting

that Thetis should ask her father, Jupiter, to cease supporting the Trojans now that Thetis has had her revenge on Achilles's behalf. She refuses, Neptune stomps off in disgust and Thetis is joined by Jupiter in the guise of an octopus. She upbraids him for the time it seems to be taking him to defeat the Greeks, but he counsels patience. At this point Bridie has Jupiter reflect on the morality of using men as playthings in heavenly quarrels.

'There are quarter of a million men in the Dardanelles all made more or less in my image and capable of rejoicing and suffering, of foresight and afterthought. Sometimes up there on Mount Ida, when I cannot sleep, I try to put myself in their places and wonder what they are thinking'

(Page 4)

The play develops the idea that men are made to suffer needlessly as a result of divine whims. One need not therefore conclude that Bridie is making any comment on religion, but infer that he is using this situation to convey a rather bleak view of the human lot.

In the play Neptune supports the Greeks in various ways. For instance, he stirs up a storm which enables their ships to sail better than they would otherwise have done. Juno, too, is on the side of the Greeks and she does her best to ingratiate herself with Jupiter in the hope of persuading him to abandon support for the Trojans. To this end she dresses herself as attractively as possible and goes to see the father of the gods, taking with her the Cestus, a girdle which causes men to succumb to the charms of the possessor. She partially achieves her aim in that she accepts Jupiter's compromise solution.

'But I'll tell you what I'll do. The Greeks must be chased back to their ships. I've said so, and it is settled. After that, I'll get Thetis - at least, I mean, I'll put Achilles and his men into the battle and give your fellows a really resounding victory. I shouldn't be surprised if I let them sack Troy. Then everybody will be pleased'

(Page 68)

Everybody, of course, except the ordinary human beings who suffer in the process. The ordinary human beings in the play are represented not by the generals who are, of course, very closely involved with the gods, but principally by an orderly, an infantryman, and Hecamede, a nurse. In the first scene of the play both the orderly and the infantryman take a roughly similar view of the gods, namely that they have a 'touch of class' denied the ordinary person, although the orderly considers them a 'lazy lot of pushers'. As far as the war is concerned, the orderly is in favour of pressing on and defeating the Trojans -

'We've got to show them what we're made of. We canna let a lot of Trojan baskets put it across the Greeks. We got an ideal to fight for see' (Page 8)

The infantryman has his doubts.

'Never heard of it. It all come of a bit of square-pushing. One of them there Trojan Gussies pinched a General's Judy. What's you and me and that poor write-off over there got to do with that smooth Cissie and his little bit of Oojah. We never seen either of them! ' (Page 8)

On the next occasion when we meet them, the infantryman shows little sympathy for the orderly's view that the gods are on the Greek side. The orderly has had a vision of 'A popsy about ninety feet high', Juno, who had assured him she would see to it that the Greeks were not defeated.

Several scenes later, the debate about the gods continues between Hecamede and Machaon. Machaon has a pious attitude towards the gods which is not shared by Hecamede.

'Well, it's all very well for them. They have comfortable beds to go to and plenty to eat and drink and no danger. This War is only a pleasant sort of thrill for them. I don't believe they really give a damn' (Page 41)

Machaon argues for the necessity of some kind of gods -

'If there were no gods, it would be necessary to create them' -

but Hecamede replies that it would be better to have a human

replacement who would at least show sympathies for the sufferings of ordinary mortals. The present gods are not merely indifferent to human suffering, they appear to relish it.

> ' - they want to make more birds and stags,
> flowers and people to be trapped and
> trampled and torn. That's really what they
> want. That's what it means. What do they
> care?' (Page 42-43)

The events of the play appear to bear out what Hecamede says.

In the last scene of the play Bridie brings the gods and the mortals together. The scene is set in Olympus where the gods are chatting wittily to each other and Vulcan is telling unfunny stories. Juno makes it clear that she is quite happy about what has happened on earth and is extremely irritated when Minerva asks if she has deserted the Greeks.

> 'You know that everything I do is for the best
> and all that Jupiter does is for the best;
> and if you don't know that, you should certainly
> pretend that you think so. You must not be
> rebellious, darling' (Page 74)

Before Minerva has a chance to reply, the shades of those killed in battle pass through Olympus en route to Hades. Mercury catches a few - Machaon, Hecamede, the orderly and the Infantryman - in a butterfly net. The gods are embarrassed, particularly Juno, when she is reminded by the orderly of the promise she gave him in his dreams. The orderly insists on telling the gods what he thinks of them, before he is returned to the convoy.

> 'Well ... There you are. You're the push
> we've been praying to. "Hess Daddy and
> Mummy and make Jack a good boy". Now I
> seen you I know what's wrong. You sit up
> here in your gold settees with a noggin
> of nectar at your elbows, tearing on us
> poor devils like we was terriers and rats.
> You great, stupid, lazy, good-looking
> sticks of barley sugar! They say you send
> us the rain and the sunshine and the wheat

in the fields. Well, get on with it and leave us alone! ' (Page 78)

It is clear that Bridie's sympathies are with the orderly and Hecamede. The gods have behaved abominably. Their only supporter, Machaon is a pious ass. But Bridie gives Jupiter the chance to defend himself -

Jupiter :- I soon found that it was easier to make a universe than to control it. It was full of mad meaningless, fighting forces. I got most of them, bound and fixed and working to rules and all of a sudden I felt lonely. I felt that I would rather my mother had given me a puppydog or a kitten. But I should not have made the puppydog or the kitten, so I thought of something else. I found that if I arranged the forces in a certain way, I got a thing called Life. Life is very interesting. I am still working on its permutations and combinations .... But our poor Shades have long ago missed their convoy. I shall make them into three Stars, I think. I shall call them the Rebels. They will be very interesting to astronomers in a few thousand years.

Hecamede:- You have not answered us.

Jupiter :- Were you asking questions? I am afraid I shall have to refer you to somebody who understands such matters. I don't pretend to understand them myself.

(Page 79 - 80)

Jupiter's answer is, however, unsatisfactory. He admits he himself does not know the answers. There are, Bridie is implying, no answers to the problem of human suffering, only the reality of suffering itself, in the face of which stoicism is the only defence.

The play can be taken on a metaphysical level. It can also be taken on a more-literally-down to earth level. The gods and the generals can well be compared to the generals in any war, particularly one might suggest, the First World

War. Indeed Bridie's attitude to the generals and gods in 'The Queens Comedy' is remarkable similar to the attitude to the generals in 'Oh What a Lovely War', namely they are upper class amateurs out of touch with, and indifferent to, human suffering. Agamemnon, for example, at one point comments that a man on a stretcher is lying very still to be told that the man is dead, whereupon he replies -

'They ought bury him. Depressing object for a hospital' (Page 16)

But the best evidence for this line of interpretation is to be found in the speech of the orderly already quoted at length, when he complains about the number of people whom he has taken orders from because he has had to, and to some extent because those who were giving the orders were supposed to know what they were doing. But he has been disillusioned, and has lost all his faith in the 'ideals' he believed he was fighting for, not least because of the pretentiousness of the generals.

'and I'd have been on the mat if I'd as much as spoke about Agamemnon. He was supposed to know how to fight battles. Well here I am and a lot of other poor perishers too'
(Page 78)

The callousness and the indifference to human suffering so obvious in the gods is shared by the generals. The similarities between the gods and the generals is reinforced by Bridie's constant underlining of the fact the generals are related to the gods. One could argue further that Bridie suggests a parallel with the First World War by having Jupiter refer to the Dardanelles where not only the Trojan War, but a major campaign of the First World War, took place.

'The Baikie Charivari' (31), dates from the same period as 'The Queen's Comedy' and has a not dissimilar outlook. Sir James Macarthur Pounce-Pellot, home from administering Junglipore, has taken up residence in Baikie on the Clyde, determined to make a new start in life. On the naturalistic level Pounce-Pellot is given advice by an assortment of characters including a Presbyterian minister Dr. Beadle, Communist councillor Jock Ketch, womaniser Joe Mascara, Dr. Jean Pothecary, Mrs. Jemima Lee Crowe, an American lady

with interests in publishing, who tries to persuade Pounce-Pellot to sell her his memoirs, and Lady Maggie Revenant, a run-down aristocrat. At the end of a dinner party which he has thrown for all these would be advisers, Pounce-Pellot is forced to declare -

> 'There is nothing in this I couldn't get in a third class carriage. Have you nothing to tell me?' (Page 72)

On the non-naturalistic level, on which the devil is invoked, much the same conclusion is reached. Pounce-Pellot whom Bridie wishes us to relate to both Pontius Pilate and Punchinello, is left alone with the devil -

Pounce-Pellot :- ... Have you come to take me?

The De'il:- I was wondering.

Pounce-Pellot :- I'm ready.

The De'il:- I'm thinking you've jouked me for the moment. It may be you've jouked me a' thegither. Timewill tell us.

Pounce-Pellot :- Can I wait for time?

The De'il:- I dinna ken.

(He vanishes)

Pounce-Pellot :- If you don't know who knows? Nobody knows. Nobody knows. I've killed all those fools who pretended to know.
And so ... and so ... With the Soothsayers littered about the stage
That I slew in my rage,
Who did not know ... and no more do I ...
I must jest again and await my reply ...
Goodbye.

(Page 84-85)

It is a gloomy pessimistic ending which reflects Bridie's feelings of disorientation in the post-war world. It is, however, rather unsatisfactory as drama; the various levels do not cohere properly, the characterisation is faulty and there are long dreich passages which lose the audience's attention.

Something must now be said of some of Bridie's plays

which have not so far been dealt with. 'Mary Read' (32), which Bridie wrote with Claud Gurney, is a straightforward narrative account set in the 18th century, of Mary Read, a woman who disguises herself as a man, joins the army and ends on a pirate ship. The play lacks depth, though there are some attempts at pathos, which in a better play would have been more successful. The language is rather stilted.

'The King of Nowhere' (33), is a curious tale. Miss Rimmer, a maiden lady who has inherited a fortune, decides to put into motion her plan to change society and the world for the better. Vivaldi, an actor who has had a breakdown, and has stumbled into Miss Rimmer's house after escaping from the mental hospital where he is confined, is groomed to act as a leader of this movement. The plan goes ahead, but Vivaldi, after addressing a mass rally, refuses to go on. The play ends with him presiding over a 'Cabinet' of lunatics in the asylum, and refusing to leave it to head Miss Rimmer's movement again.

The play may well have had significance in 1938 when Fascism was approaching its zenith but today its failure to explore the darker side of Miss Rimmer's plan in any depth, lessens its importance considerably.

'It Depends What You Mean' (34), is a rather unsuccessful piece in which a Brains Trust in an army camp turns into a far from interesting analysis of the participants' private lives.

There can be doubt of the great value of Bridie's work for the development of the theatre in Scotland. About his own writing it is difficult to be so certain. Bridie was an extremely prolific writer, and the proliferation of work often leads to a thinness of texture found in many of his plays. These plays, although they demonstrate Bridie's ability to divert an audience with witty dialogue, or interesting turns of plot, lack depth and have no claim on posterity. On the other hand there are a few plays, 'The Queen's Comedy', and 'Susannah and the Elders' among them, in which Bridie's gifts as an entertainer are combined with an intense concern for his subject matter. There can be little doubt that these plays are of permanent value.

Coming now to Bridie's place in the development of Scottish drama, the first point to be made is that he was the

most successful Scottish dramatist commercially that there has yet been. (Barrie apart and Barrie's base was the English theatre). Although for much of his life he combined writing with medicine, latterly he was able to write full time and earn a living from it. That he was able to do this stems largely from the fact that he did not aim at an exclusively Scottish market. He was aiming at the British or English market and many of his plays had their premiere not in Scotland but in London. Bridie was an astute man and must have realised early in his career that the way to recognition and financial success was to please the metropolitan audience not the provincial one, though of course it would be pleasant to do both.

It might be argued that Bridie sacrificed his Scottishness in the process. If by this it is meant that he did not write in the Doric, a case might be made out, but it is doubtful if Bridie was ever interested in the Doric. He aimed to write urbanely and whatever its merits, the Doric is ill suited to this purpose. No writer can escape his background however, and it has been the argument of this chapter that Bridie's most fundamental attitudes and themes stem directly from his Scottish background.

This is not to say that Bridie always used Scottish backdrops in his plays. It is one of his merits that his imagination is able to operate against a whole range of backgrounds, apocryphal, Scottish, English and Trojan. There is, however, a predominance of Scottish backgrounds and the important point here is that it is the Lowlands of Scotland that Bridie sets many of his plays against, not the Highlands. As has been remarked earlier, Bridie seems to have been aware of the traps which writing about the Highlands posed, and decided to avoid them. Reading his plays set in the Highlands, one is never conscious of a particular background, it could be any one of a number of places.

The same cannot be said of his Lowland backgrounds for here we are in the world Bridie knew and lived in all his life, the world of the Glasgow middle-classes, with a substantial residence in the West End and a house on the ClydeCoast, taken for the season or owned outright. It is a parochial and rather insular world and the combined effects of Glasgow, 'Baikie' and 'Duthie Bay' made such an impression

on Bridie that in his work he returns frequently to these and similar places. Indeed, as has been argued, they represent his fundamental problems as an artist and a man.

At the same time, it must be stressed that although these backgrounds figure much in Bridie's plays, they never render the plays incomprehensible to the outsider. Bridie uses his backgrounds as a series of starting points and the themes that emerge from them are usually generalised. In a sense Bridie could never escape from Scotland in his work, but he never allowed himself to become so bogged down in its minutiae that his work became parochial, as is the case with so many Scottish writers.

This is part of Bridie's achievment. He has used his background without becoming submerged in it. On the other hand it can be argued that his best plays - 'Susannah and the Elders' and 'The Queen's Comedy' for example - benefit from not being set against a Scottish background. It is as if inthese plays Bridie felt a freedom to explore his ideas that was denied him when he was writing against his native background. Thus it can be argued that the Scottish background despite Bridie's skilful use of it, was ultimately a limitation. This is not however to deny his achievment in using the background in such a way as to avoid being overwhelmed by it.

Bridie's achievment rests in his gaining recognition on an international scale, his use of Scottish background and his portrayal of Scottish character. He avoids well the cliches of the stage Scot and gives us a picture of lowland Scottish people - the Glasgow bourgeoisie, the 'wee man' like Davie Cooper, the orderly in 'The Queen's Comedy' - that rings true. Despite the excesses of characters like Dr. Knox and Charlie Cameron, most of Bridie's Scottish characters are acceptable representations of the Lowland Scot.

This might seem of little account, but it must be remembered that Bridie is the first Scottish dramatist with any claim to international attention. That he attained that attention largely by presenting an accurate picture of his fellow countrymen on the stage is an achievment that seems remarkable, when one considers the scant attention given to the task at the time. As far as Scottish drama is concerned, this is the most encouraging thing about Bridie; the most

discouraging thing is that, despite his achievment, and largely because of his Scottish background, he was not as good as he should have been.

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CHAPTER VII

THE WAR PERIOD

The Second World War did not have the same effect on the development of the theatre in Scotland as the First War had. Whereas in 1914 the most promising venture, Wareing's Citizens' Theatre, was stopped dead by the war, throughout the second war existing ventures for the most part continued, and others were started. The theatre in Scotland had obviously acquired a greater impetus in the previous twenty years.

When the war came, in Perth, the players continued running the theatre themselves on a non-profit making basis. The actors did all the work involved in running it and some of them even slept in it. At the end of a week, after theatrical and living expenses were deducted, the residue, varying between shillings and three pounds, was divided among the actors. Despite these privations, in 1941 a Perth Theatre Pageant, which included a visit from Bristol Old Vic, was sponsored with the help of C.E.M.A., and a tour of the West and the Highlands organised. Just as the war ended another drama festival opened in Perth under Bridie's patronage.

In 1939, Robert Thornley, an English producer, looked up a gazetteer in order to find the largest town in the United Kingdom which did not have a theatre. Thus he brought his company of actors to Dundee. In doing so, he brought live drama to a city which the touring companies had by-passed for ten years, and which had had to be content with variety, pantomime and the occasional professional dramatic production at the Queen's or Alhambra Theatres. Financial backing came from the city itself, inthe shape of a £2000 guarantee fund which was raised principally by the efforts of two local businessmen. A non-profit making company was formed and while negotiations to acquire the Foresters' Hall for transformation into a theatre proceeded, plays were performed in the local amateurs' Little Theatre. Foresters' Hall opened as a theatre in December 1939 with a production of 'Hassan'. In the course of the next few years the company required more money, but by 1945 all loans and guarantees

had been paid off.

Thornley was succeeded as producer by Anthony Hawtrey, then in 1942 by A.R. Whatmore who did much to establish the Dundee theatre. Whatmore regarded his theatre as an English repertory theatre, which happened to be in Scotland, and consequently showed no interest in Scottish plays which he believed the Scottish public likewise had no interest in.

The Byre Theatre in St. Andrews, which as the name implies, started life as a cowshed, was let by the Town Council in 1933 to the amateur St. Andrews Play Club, whose members converted the building into a tiny theatre. During the war, for the first time, the Byre, which only held 74 people and had a stage 12 feet square, was occupied by a small professional company, led by Charles Marford who had been stage director at the Old Vic when Lilian Bayliss was running it. Marford tells the story of the Byre during the war in a racily written booklet which captures very well the spirit of improvisation which prevailed. For example, he tells us how he set about writing a play called 'Lade Braes' Mystery' -

> 'Before I could start writing the play I had to take into account who'd do what ... someone to get the audience in and close the doors for instance. This person must perforce remain in front among the audience, for there was no way of sneaking out or going backstage (or upstairs rather, for there is no back-stage). Someone must look after the music, pre-overture and overture and dim the houselights when ready, someone else had to take up the curtain, which is controlled from upstairs AND someone had to be on the stage at the start of the play.
>
> Well, this is how we did it. The two young women, she who was to play Juvenile Lead and the small part woman (the Varsity student) ushered in the audience. I was in the lightbox where the music was played from. When the house was "in", I get the nod from them. One of them would collect the till (programme money and "doors") and drift off, going upstairs by the outside route. The other

would get the doors shut while I dimmed the houselights and faded the pre-overture music.

For this play only Molly started the Overture proper on a portable gramophone on the stage. By the time I'd climbed up the cat ladder from the light box and was traversing the loft on my way down to the stage for I was the absolute beginner, Molly had made her way upstairs and was at her place by the curtain windlass just about the same time as I got into position on the stage. By this moment the record had just about reached a point at which it went into a chorus I could sing, which I did ... not so much what you might call a vocal appeal as plain bawling. When I'd well and truly started, Molly took the curtain up and pegged it safe and was ready to come down at about the end of my bit, to take the record off and start to heckle me about something ... and the play was now "on" ' (1)

It is obvious that Marford and his company thoroughly enjoyed themselves!

In the Glasgow area, although the Curtain closed in 1940, new theatrical ventures continued to appear.

On the 2nd May 1939 there opened in Rutherglen, in a converted church, a repertory theatre known after its founder Molly S. Urquhart, as the M.S.U. repertory theatre. The opening production was 'The Wind and the Rain' by Merton Hodges. The M.S.U. Rep. survived in this form until 1944 when Molly Urquhart joined the Citizens' Company and the theatre closed temporarily. A few months later, however, a fund was started and the Rutherglen Repertory Company was registered with the aim of founding 'a theatre for the development of the drama and dramatic art in Scotland and to encourage a national drama through the production of plays of Scottish life and character'.

The theatre re-opened and in time was able to engage some full time professional staff and on occasion to hire professional actors or, more often, pay its part-timers a wage of some sort.

During the war years its actors were amateurs who were

given a token payment and included besides Molly Urquhart herself, Duncan Macrae and Archie Duncan (who both appeared in the second production), Gordon Jackson and Eileen Herlie.

The M.S.U. Theatre did encourage Scottish writers, though paradoxically its 'resident' writer was an Irishman, Paul Vincent Carroll, some of whose work was performed earlier by the Curtain Theatre, and later by the Citizens'.

In 1940 John Stewart whose father had left him a fortune ammassed by running commercial colleges in Scotland and the north of England, opened the Park Theatre in Woodside Terrace, Glasgow, next door to where the Curtain had been. The theatre, which seated 106, was extremely well equipped and for the seven years of its existence was well supported. Bridie performed the opening ceremony, at which he said 'It may appear daft to start a new little theatre in the middle of the war, but it seems to me to have the right kind of lunatic daft Scots panache about it that deserves the very heartiest encouragement, and I believe it is getting that already'. He also referred to the number of theatrical ventures there had been in Glasgow, and commented that 'anybody who lived in Glasgow must feel a little ashamed, not in the experiments in the theatre that had been made in Glasgow, but at their results' (2).

The Park initially did little for Scottish drama, preferring to concentrate on established successes, but later in its career Scots plays were performed there, including Bridie's 'Jonah 3' and James Shaw Grant's 'Tarravore'. Stewart formulated plans for a new theatre in Glasgow after the war which would present specialised dramatic productions and be open to the public, unlike the Park, which was a club. Until such time as this was built, a full-time professional company was to operate in the Park (in fact during the early years of the Park the actors were amateur, then semi-professional and finally from 1948 until the theatre closed in 1949 they were professional).

In 1947 property adjoining the existing Park was acquired and plans made for a 500 seater theatre, but building restrictions prevented it from becoming a reality. Stewart then turned his attention to realising his other dream of a theatre in Pitlochry.

The two most important developments during the war were

the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre and Unity Theatre.

The Citizens' Theatre was formed with aspirations very similar to previous projects 'with a view to founding the theatre and encouraging a national drama through the production of plays of Scottish life and character' (3). Bridie himself put it in a more practical way -

> 'If we are going to have Scottish plays, or plays by Scottish writers, the Scottish playwright will have to be encouraged. In Scotland today are many novelists, poets and short story writers, and we want to see them turning their attention to the theatre. But unless there is a chance of their plays having a reasonable run in Scotland, they cannot be expected to take a real interest in writing for the theatre, and no one can blame them' (4)

The story of the founding of the Citizens' Theatre has been told in great detail by Wihifred Bannister in her book 'James Bridie' and His Theatre' (5). Suffice to say here that Bridie got together a directorate, consisting of Dr. T.J. Honeyman, the then director of Glasgow Art Galleries, Mr. George Singleton, owner of the Cosmo Cinema, R.W. Greig, chairman of the Scottish Orchestra, Norman Duthie, an accountant, Paul Vincent Carroll, the dramatist and Guy McCrone, the novelist. Bridie himself was appointed chairman and having raised £1500 in donations, secured a guarantee against loss from the C.E.M.A. The Athenaeum theatre, part of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music inBuchanan Street, was chosen as the only suitable hall to begin the venture in, and the name Glasgow Citizens' Theatre, with its recollection of Wareing's earlier venture, chosen as a purely temporary measure.

Bridie approached nineteen different producers before he found one, Jennifer Soumes, willing to come north. On 11th October 1943 Glasgow's first fully professional repertory theatre opened with a production of Bridie's own 'Holy Isle'. The first season had a shaky start since neither 'Holy Isle', a play which opens well, but fizzles out, nor the second production, Goldsmith's 'The Good Natured Man' were very popular, but with the third production, Paul Vincent Carroll's 'Shadow and Substance', the theatre began to establish itself,

and when the season ended, it was found that the company had broken even.

The second season included three Scottish plays, a revival of John Brandane's 'The Treasure Ship' and premieres of Joe Corrie's 'A Master of Men' and Bridie's 'The Forrigan Reel'. The inclusion of these plays in the programme and of a number of actors in the company who had previously worked with one of the smaller amateur or semi-professional companies, e.g. Duncan Macrae and Molly Urquhart (both formerly with the Curtain and M.S.U. Theatres), James Gibson (S.N.P.) and Gordon Jackson (M.S.U.) indicates clearly the debt the Citizens' owed to the ventures of the inter-war period which had encouraged and developed both Scottish writing and Scottish acting.

When the second season ended, the necessity to call up the guarantee from the Arts Council (as the C.E.M.A. had become) had still not arisen. During the season two tours had been undertaken, one of the Continent with 'The Forrigan Reel' and one of the West of Scotland with 'Mr. Bolfry', both plays of course being by Bridie. On the Scottish tour there had been good houses, although support was much better in small towns than in the large industrial ones. Members of the company commented favourably on the effect which the amateur movement had had in building up an interest in drama.

As the popularity of the Citizens' Theatre grew, it was felt that a better theatre was required. By an extremely fortunate coincidence Harry McKelvie, the owner of the 1000 seater Royal Princess's Theatre, which is situated near Gorbals Cross, was finding that his health was no longer up to the ardours of running the pantomime seasons which the theatre was famous for. He offered his theatre on a ten year lease to the Citizens' company at an annual rent of £1000 over that period (he paid the first year's amount himself) provided that the total sum was guaranteed. A gift from Sir Frederick Stewart of £10,000 met these conditions and on the 31st March 1945 the last performance was given in the Athenaeum. The Citizens' opened in the Gorbals the following autumn.

The theatre to which they had gone had been opened in 1878 by Her Majesty's Theatre by one James McFadyen. After an unsuccessful six months with a varied programme, the

theatre closed, but it was re-opened in 1879 by Harcourt Beryl as the Royal Princess's. A programme of melodrama, variety and pantomime proved successful and was continued under Beryl's former assistant, Richard Waldon. As Victorian melodrama died, pantomime took over, and Harry McKelvie, who took over after Waldon's death in 1922, set out to make the Royal Princess's the home of pantomime. Pantomime ran from December to the summer when the theatre closed until the following year's pantomime opened, usually prefaced by a variety show. For years McKelvie and George West, sticking to a very rigid moral pattern, worked together on the pantomimes in which West starred. Obviously the theatre has now changed its nature, but the Citizens' company have endeavoured with varying success to mount a Christmas show which owes something to the theatre's pantomime tradition, at least until recent years.

Unity Theatre came into being in 1941, under the impetus of the Unity Theatre movement elsewhere in Britain and was formed by amateurs from various Glasgow clubs, the Workers' Theatre Group, the Clarion Players, the Transport Players and the Jewish Institute Players. The members of this group sought a more socially committed theatre than existed at the time, and aimed to draw in working class audiences. They included some Communists and Marxists, but it would be wrong to assume from this that Unity was a highly doctrinaire body more interested in politics than theatre. This was not the case, although there was a strong sense of social committment. A dozen productions were mounted during wartime but it was in the post-war period that Unity made its bid for permanence and failed. It is in the next chapter that its post-war development will be considered.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE THEATRE IN SCOTLAND SINCE THE WAR

Because we are now entering the contemporary situation what follows is of necessity an essay in tendencies rather than a detailed account of all that has happened and is still happening in the period under consideration.

The post-war period has been one of growth and decline in the Scottish theatre as it has been in the British theatre as a whole and although it would be idle to pretend that we now have an exceptionally vigorous and flourishing theatre, equally it would be wrong to deny the slow progress that has been made. Progress has, in the main, been in the field of repertory theatres, but before dealing with the reps., some attention must be given to a development immediately after the war which seemed for a time to be about to change the direction of the Scottish theatre, Unity.

Mention was made in the last chapter of the formation of Unity in Glasgow at the beginning of the war. At the end of the war, in an attempt to put their venture on a firmer footing and possible mindful of the failure of the S.N.P. when it did not grasp a similar opportunity, Unity decided to form a professional company of players. Thereafter there were two Unity companies, one amateur, whose productions were mainly directed by Donald McBean formerly of the Transport Players, and one professional under the directorship of Robert Mitchell of the Glasgow Players. The professional company had ten members in addtion to the director and stage-staff, which meant a considerable income was necessary to sustain operations. Although Unity had played in the Athenaeum theatre during the war, since its availability was restricted after the war, the professional company played whenever it could, and in addition toured throughout Scotland.

As one would have expected the main problem was finance. When the professional company was formed, Unity had only a few hundred pounds in the bank, a comfortable position for an amateur club, but hardly a very firm basis for a venture of this kind. Throughout the professional company's

existence the amateur company continued to subsidise it. Other revenue came from the box-office, principally from Robert McLeish's 'The Gorbals Story' which was Unity's best money spinner, and for a time from the Arts Council, but this support was withdrawn as a consequence of what Bridie, who would appear to have had a hand in the withdrawal, called its 'scatterbrained finance' (1). So far as can be judged twenty years later, this charge had substance in it. Unity did not apparently show much business acumen though for a time under the supervision of Oscar Loewenstein, who was employed for a year as business manager, a saner approach to financial matters was employed. But neither this, nor the income from amateur activities, nor the royalties from a film of 'The Gorbals Story' was enough to save Unity. London productions of 'The Gorbals Story' and 'The Lower Depths' were artistically but not financially successful. It petered out, rather than stopped, at the end of the forties and some of its debts have never been cleared. The amateur side of Unity continued for a time but it too petered out in the fifties.

Despite its sad demise, Unity theatre did make an important contribution to theatre in Scotland. In the first place it kept theatre going during the war and extended the range of drama available to the Glasgow public after the war. More importantly it introduced a new dimension in Scottish theatre.

One of the criticisms that has been made of the Scottish National Players in this study is that much of the drama they presented bore little relationship to the lives of the ordinary population of the country, in particular, the urban population. Unity deliberately sought to make up for this failure. The evidence lies in the programmes of work presented, in which Clifford Odets, Sean O'Casey and Maxim Gorki feature prominently. The work of these writers was usually related by the production to a Scottish context. Unity sponsored a visit to Glasgow by the then young 'Theatre Workshop' in 1946. In addition, Unity presented a fair number of new plays by Scottish authors with social themes. 'The Gorbals Story' (1946) (2), which is concerned with the housing problem, is the most obvious example, but there are others. James Barke's 'Major Operation' (1941) (3),

presents the world of the Clyde Shipyard worker and is concerned with the class struggle. The same author contributed 'The Night of the Big Blitz' (1944) (4) and 'When the Boys Come Home' (1945) (5), another play set on Clydeside. George Munro's 'Gold in His Boots' (1947) (6) is concerned with the sordid underworld of professional football. Benedick Scott in 'The Lambs of God' (7) tackled the subject of homosexuality against the background of the Depression.

The best evidence we have for evaluating the ideology behind Unity is the magazine 'Scots Theatre' published by Unity for a short period in 1946 and 1947. Each copy of the magazine bears on the front cover a quotation from Gorki, 'The theatre is the school of the people - it makes them think and it makes them feel ...'. An editorial declares -

> 'Today we have Unity Theatre established as the most vital native cultural influence in Scotland. Its actors, playwrights and technicians have been drawn from the ranks of ordinary working people, whose background and everyday life is identical with the masses who form its audiences' (8)

That many people in Unity were convinced that they were moving the Scottish theatre in a new direction is clear.

> 'In the new Scottish theatre there are two divisions: primarily middle-class repertories and writers whose art is seen in Perth, the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre and elsewhere: and the tougher working-class drama and performances to be seen at Glasgow Unity Theatre' (9)

For Unity, theatre meant commitment. Robert Mitchell declared on one occasion 'one of Unity's main conceptions was that of the theatre marching in line with social policy' (10). One notes in reviews of productions by other companies a certain intolerance of plays which lack social commitment. A review of a production of 'In Good King Charles' Golden Days' sneers at the 'elite' who people this play (11).

It is interesting to note that Unity too, like so many

Scottish theatrical enterprises, looked to the Irish example but with a left wing bias -

' .. we pray for the time when a Scotsman
will emulate the great Irishman (O'Casey)
and produce such plays of the people' (12)

Unity's left wing orientation can be viewed with mixed feelings. On the positive side, it attempted to relate the theatre to ordinary people and seems to have succeeded for a time in doing so. Working people came, though not in the numbers that Unity would have liked, and watched plays which they could relate to their own lives. On the negative side, the left wing commitment of Unity would in the long term have proved a limitation, for to judge by some of the writing in 'Scots Theatre' it might well have blinded its members to the merits of dramatic writing without obvious commitment. This is perhaps to carp and it must be emphasised that it is quite wrong to think that all Unity members were committed socialists; many were simply interested in good theatre.

Several of Unity's actors joined the ranks of the professionals, among them being Archie Duncan, Russell Hunter, Andrew Keir, Roddy McMillan and Marjorie Thomson, and one can still see in the work of some of these actors something of the ability to render on the stage working class people. It was said of Unity that its techniques were those of Stanislawski, but in practice they were based on those of the British stage at the time, with an infusion of proletarian vitality. Reviews of their productions often use such terms as 'sincerity' and 'conviction' (13).

It would be foolish to pretend that Unity's contribution was a great one, but potentially it could have been. Lack of money and financial mismanagement prevented Unity making the contribution that it could have made. Its achievment remains the progress it made towards its self declared objectives of presenting socially aware plays and bringing working class people into the theatre. That it was unable to realise these aims completely is a loss the Scottish theatre has yet to make up.

The post-war period is the era of television, the growth of which in Scotland can be gauged from the following figures -

	Radio Licences	T.V. Licences	Combined Licences	Colour Licences
1952	1,139,927	41,699		
1962	308,584	1,119,824		
1972	-	-	1,517,795	182,594

Whereas previously the radio audience did not appear to be growing at the expense of cinema, the television audience soon began to eat into the cinema audience as the figures given below indicate.

NUMBER OF CINEMAS

	All Scotland	Aberdeen	Dundee	Edinburgh	Glasgow
1950	617	17	25	33	106
1960	476	15	22	26	69
1970	254	12	10	16	36

(Source - Kine Year Books, 1951, 1961, 1971)

Admissions dropped at a corresponding rate. (figures in ooo's)

1950 - 186,590
1960 - 66,769
1970 - 22,634

(Source Department of Trade & Industry)

Whereas radio and cinema did not appear to inflict serious damage on the live theatre, television has done just this.

NUMBER OF THEATRES IN SCOTLAND

	All Scotland	Aberdeen	Dundee	Edinburgh	Glasgow
1950	29	3	1	5	10
1960	22	3	1	5	7
1970	15	1	1	3	4

The theatres that have suffered most are the larger theatres offering variety shows, such as the Glasgow 'Alhambra'. The theatres that have survived and grown are those with which television is in less direct competition, the repertory theatres, but they have only kept alive because of subsidies from public funds that did not exist previously. A further narrowing of the theatre audiences has taken place. Each Scottish city has closed down some of its theatres with the result that Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen are the only cities left with the kind of large theatre that can properly accommodate the big national

companies on tour. This problem has been slightly alleviated by the King's Theatres in Edinburgh and Glasgow and Her Majesty's in Aberdeen passing into the hands of the local authorities, but so far no one has reconciled the need to provide a stage for the national companies with the need to operate these theatres throughout the year without running too large a deficit.

Property developers have not been slow to realise the advantages of the excellent sites occupied by many theatres and in a declining theatrical situation, the pressure for 'redevelopment' has been another factor leading to the closure of theatres by owners who did not consider that they were receiving an adequate return on their capital any more.

Touring, often the mainstay of the larger theatres in the provinces, has also been declining, particularly since the triumph of television. The closure of the Empire in Glasgow in 1963 could be regarded as symbolising the end of variety and light entertainment tours. While plays continue to be toured, either with the support of commercial managements or with the support of the Arts Council, it is an operation which is on the decline, and years now pass when very few tours from London reach Scotland, and of those that do none are from the national companies. As will be recalled, one of the stock criticisms of the Scottish theatrical situation in the past was that it was over dependent on London tours. This criticism no longer applies and there is no doubt that while it is unfortunate that the national companies do not tour very much, it is a distinct improvement that so much Scottish theatrical activity is being generated internally.

One highly acceptable consequence of the growth of television has been the expansion of employment opportunities for Scottish actors and writers. This it can be argued has benefited the theatre in that by providing lucrative employment it enables artists to undertake work in the theatre for considerably less money. It thus acts as a patron. For both writer and actor it is a much more important market than the live theatre.

Turning now to the repertory theatres, the first thing to be noted is that several of the ventures which had started

before 1945 continued their work. In 1946 Perth Rep. became a non-profit making organisation which obtained financial assistance from the Arts Council. It was managed by Marjorie Dence from 1947 till her death in 1966. In 1968 the theatre was bought by Perth Town Council, and is thus now a civic theatre.

The Dundee Repertory Theatre which was established in 1939 has continued to exist, despite the major set-back it received in 1963 when the theatre in Nicoll Street was destroyed by fire. Since that time the company has played in a converted church which is not well-situated from a business point of view. As a result the company has lost part of its audience. It is hoped that a new theatre complex will be built on a site provided by the University of Dundee and that the Repertory Company will be given a home in this complex.

After the war the Byre was taken over by the Play Club who finished the job of converting the old cowshed to a theatre. Since that time the theatre has been occupied from April to December by a small professional company who are responsible for all the work connected with running a theatre-acting, production, making scenery and publicity. The business side of the organisation is attended to by the Byre Theatre of St. Andrews Ltd. (formerly the Play Club). One of the advantages of this system is that young actors and technicians have an opportunity to stretch themselves much sooner than would be possible in a larger repertory company.

The MS.U. Repertory Theatre had closed down in 1944, when Molly Urquhart joined the Citizens' Theatre Company, but in 1945 it re-opened as a result of local fund raising as the Rutherglen Repertory Theatre. It operated with amateur and semi-professional actors and some permanent professional staff until 1958, when it finally closed.

Of the new theatres since the war, the Pitlochry Festival Theatre has perhaps the most unexpected setting. It was the creation of John Stewart, who established the Park Theatre in Glasgow. He aimed to provide a kind of Scottish Malvern and to this end he acquired Knockendarroch House in Pitlochry and drew up plans for erecting a theatre in the grounds. However, he could not obtain building

permission because of post-war restrictions, so on the 19th May 1951 the theatre opened in a tent which sat 500 people, in front of a wide stage. In 1953 a semi-permanent building was put up to replace the rather unsatisfactory tent. It seats 502 people in the open fan-shaped auditorium, again in front of a wide stage, 44 feet across. John Stewart remained director until his death, and then Kenneth Ireland, formerly Stewart's general manager, took over the direction of the theatre.

Pitlochry has been a successful theatre, doubling its attendance figures since 1951 and playing consistently in recent years to almost 70% of capacity. Nonetheless, it too has had its share of financial problems, and was only rescued from a crisis recently by a generous response to a public appeal.

Edinburgh, for so long without a professional repertory company has increased its theatrical amenities considerably since the war.

In 1944 the Home Board of the Church of Scotland received the anonymous donation of a block of property in Elm Row, Edinburgh, which included a theatre then in use as a cinema. The theatre was re-opened as the Gateway in 1946 under the management of the church. For the next few years plays (amateur and professional) and films were presented, some, but by no means all of which, had broadly religious themes. As a result of the difficulties involved, stemming mainly from lack of expertise and the lack of the continuity which a permanent professional company would give, it was decided in 1953 to lease the theatre to an independent company which would be responsible for the presentation of plays and the running of the theatre.

The Gateway company was formed under the chairmanship of Robert Kemp, the church advising on, but not dictating programme policy. The company opened in October 1953 with a production of Bridie's 'The Forrigan Reel', and from then until 1965 provided regular theatrical activity in Edinburgh. The company had problems, not unlike those of the other theatres which have been discussed, principally lack of money and the difficulty of holding an audience for a widely varying programme of plays. The worst crisis seems to have been in 1960 when the theatre came close to shutting down,

but that was surmounted. A crisis of a different kind arose when the company decided to put on Aristophanes' 'Lysistrata' and a board member resigned. The play was not presented.

The most important achievement of the Gateway Company was that it maintained professional repertory theatre in Edinburgh for twelve seasons until the Edinburgh Civic Theatre was set up in 1965. The success of the Civic Theatre at the present moment must be due to some degree of the audience-building done by the Gateway.

In 1965 the Edinburgh Civic Theatre Trust was set up and Tom Fleming appointed director of the venture which was to operate in the Royal Lyceum Theatre. The Gateway Company, having considered the possibility of existing alongside the Civic Theatre, decided that this was not a viable proposition. Since 1965 therefore, repertory has been provided in Edinburgh by the Civic Theatre. The first season was adventurous, but did not attract large audiences to several of its productions. Subsequently Mr. Fleming was replaced by Clive Perry, an Englishman who is largely responsible for building up the Lyceum's audiences and reputation to their present high levels.

The Lyceum's principal problem is the old building in which it operates; when the proposed Opera House is constructed it is expected that some kind of provision will be made for the company, but the project has not yet reached the take-off stage.

Since the end of the war and move across the river to the Royal Princess's Theatre, the story of the Citizens' to which attention must now be turned, has been one of varied fortune.

Audience figures have fluctuated. The advent of television had the same effect that it had all over the country when attendance figures at theatres showed a marked drop. During the early sixties the audiences began to build up again but towards the end of the decade dropped to frightening levels (in one recent year the company was playing to something like 30% of capacity). Many reasons have been advanced for the decline which is not echoed in other Scottish reps. It has been suggested that the theatre's position in an unattractive part of the city has been made worse by the slum clearance round about. The building itself

is under sentence of death and progess towards building a replacement is slow.

There are however other reasons. When the Citizens' began, its links with Glasgow were strong. Local actors and actresses like Molly Urquhart and Duncan Macrae were known and liked by the audiences. Other local talent in the shape of people like Stanley Baxter and John Cairney could be seen to be developing before the eyes. A genuinely Scottish, not to say Glaswegian, company of actors who could play in not only Scots comedy, but in all kinds of play, was being established. Over the years this has come to be less the case. The Citizens' company has few Scottish actors in it, and is in many ways indistinguishable from any English repertory company. Likewise its directors have more and more been Englishmen who, no matter how dedicated, are bound to regard the Citizens as a stepping stone to other jobs, usually in the south.

One can find explanations for this situation. The attractions of the metropolis for the actor have increased greatly since the advent of television. If an actor wishes to make a successful career, he has to make it in London, not on the periphery - perhaps the theatres themselves in Scotland do not for other reasons appear attractive or make themselves attractive enough to Scots actors. Whatever the reason, the link between the Citizens' and its audiences which was provided by a predominantly Scottish company, has disappeared, to the theatre's detriment.

Further, if one examines the Citizens' programmes, over the years, one notes the proportionately smaller place occupied by Scottish plays, particularly new Scottish plays, in recent times. The first season at the Royal Princess's was almost entirely occupied by Scots plays, over half of them premieres. While the proportion of Scottish plays decreased (quite rightly) during the next few seasons, there were still premieres of several new Scottish plays each year. Until the end of the fifties authors such as James Bridie, Robert McLellan, Robert Kemp, Robins Millar, Eric Linklater, Alexander Reid, Alexander Scott, George Munro and James Scotland had plays performed at the Citizens'. In the sixties the pattern began to change. Fewer and fewer Scots plays were presented and fewer and fewer premieres of Scots

plays, until by the end of the decade virtually no Scots plays, new or old, were being presented.

Successive directors have insisted that they are only too willing to present Scottish plays, if good ones appear. What they seem to forget is that new plays do not emerge out of oblivion, but are preceded by mediocre work. One of the principal reasons for the emergence of the Scottish writers whose work was presented at the Citizens' during the first half of its life, was the existence of the largely amateur drama movement between the wars. This movement, which was willing to present plays of little worth, enabled writers to benefit from seeing their own work, and the work of other people, performed. Thus they were able to learn from their mistakes and develop into better writers. No such opportunity exists today, despite the brave but intermittent efforts of odd amateur clubs here and there. It is thus idiotic for theatre directors to expect fully fledged writers to knock on their doors. Only apprentices will present themselves, and if they are never given the opportunity to learn their trade, they will remain apprentices. This fact has been hesitantly recognised by occasional drama workshops (where excerpts from new plays are performed and discussed), arranged by the Scottish theatres.

As far as the Citizens' is concerned, interest in fostering Scottish drama has so far declined that the literary adviser appointed specifically to encourage native talent in the late sixties, resigned. Another connection with the milieu the theatre is in has been severed. Vital theatre must relate to the life going on round about it. The Citizens' (and the same can be said of almost all the Scottish theatres) does not relate closely enough to its environmemt. It is doubtful if it can solve its other problems, if it fails to solve this one.

If one major development since the war is the growth in the number of repertory theatres, the other is the establishment of two club theatres, the Traverse and the Close. 'The Traverse has always been, and will continue to be about what is new' (14). This declaration sums up the nature of the Traverse. It has consistently presented new and experimental work, often of a highly controversial nature.

The Traverse was established in 1963 under the

chairmanship of Jim Haynes, a young American living and working in Edinburgh, in premises near St. Giles Cathedral, formerly a lodging house of dubious repute called "Kelly's Paradise". The room used as the auditorium held sixty spectators on either side of an acting area. In 1969 the Traverse moved to new premises in the Grassmarket, where, in addition to better administrative facilities, the theatre has a multipurpose acting area in which audiences ranging in size from 12 to 120 can be seated.

There can be little doubt that the Traverse has not merely made Edinburgh more interesting theatrically and livened up the Festival with three weeks of frenetic artistic activity, but also made Scotland more aware of what is happening elsewhere in the theatre. The Traverse is not only a haven for experiment, it is a weapon against cultural insularity.

The* Close Theatre Club opened in 1965 'up a close' next to the Citizens' in Glasgow as part of the older organisation, sharing actors and other facilities. The small acting area is surrounded by banked rows of seats on three sides and thus an intimacy between actors and audience, not possible in the Citizens' itself, can be achieved.

Turning now from the growth of theatre buildings, to the growth of native drama, we find that the most consistent attempt to present the plays of living Scottish dramatists in recent years was at the Gateway and included among its authors were Robert McLellan, Robert Kemp, Alexander Reid, A.B. Paterson, T.M. Watson, Ada F. Kay, Moray McLaren and James Scotland. The complete list of productions is given in an appendix and alongside it is set for the purposes of comparison the production of Glasgow Citizens' Theatre over the same period. As Moultrie R. Kelsall has commented -

> 'The fact is that comparatively few of the Scottish plays first produced by the Edinburgh Gateway Company had subsequent professional productions (though some were performed by amateurs) and until there is a better market for them they're likely to remain few and far between. We did our best to create such a market, but with insufficient support from other theatres in Scotland. Possibly they

* destroyed by fire 1973

> weren't always impressed by the plays: possibly they doubted whether they had an audience for them; but the basic reason, I believe, is that they haven't shared to the same extent our missionary zeal for providing a stage on which native drama could grow' (15)

That the Gateway company was aware that it was only through practice that Scottish writers could learn their craft and that it is the Scottish theatre's responsibility to provide the opportunity for that practice is in itself a tribute to it. It is of course no coincidence that Mr. Kelsall was previously associated with the Scottish National Players.

The company encouraged Scottish actors. There was an attempt to build up a Scottish company, capable of presenting Scottish plays. Actors of the stature of Tom Fleming, Lennox Milne, Roddy MacMillan and Duncan Macrae worked for the Gateway. Many young actors began their careers there. The Lyceum initially did not continue the Gateway's policy but recently has shown signs of marking in its direction.

The most noteworthy event in the history of Perth Theatre in recent years was the attempt by Iain Cuthbertson who was director during the 1967-68 season, to mount a programme which contained a very large proportion of Scottish plays and Scottish documentary-type plays. Unfortunately, the season was not a success and a lot of money was lost. Since that time a much more conservative policy has been pursued, with the main emphasis on comedy.

It would be easy to adduce this disaster as evidence that Scottish theatre does not work. A more sensible conclusion would be that to go from one extreme (a modest company not taking too many risks) to another (a company 27 - strong and a very ambitious programme) is foolhardy.

Elsewhere Scottish drama has not fared very well.

At Dundee the company's policy has not changed drastically in recent years, although there have been more attempts to present local material, in particular plays based on the life of William McGonagall.

Since 1951 at Pitlochry there have been annual seasons, during which an average 84 plays have been produced.

Inevitably, since it operates in a tourist centre during the summer, and consequently depends largely on the tourist trade, the theatre has had to maintain a broad appeal. Therefore the lighter kind of play has tended to predominate, though the theatre has also mounted productions of plays by Ibsen, Pirandello, Chekhov, Tourneur, Webster and Shakespeare. Scottish drama has been represented by revivals of plays mainly by Bridie and Barrie, and occasional premieres. Modern drama until recently has been inadequately represented in Pitlochry's programmes.

At the Byre, Scottish plays have been presented fairly regularly, many of them written by the theatre's founder and current managing director, A.B. Paterson. A wide range of drama is to be found in the Byre's programmes.

The policy of the Traverse hasbeen to present plays largely of an experimental nature and being a private club, it has been able to operate without recourse to the Lord Chamberlain (before the abolition of that gentleman's power of theatre censorship). Over one hundred world and British premieres have been presented, including work by Arrabal, Billetdoux, Gunter Grass, Mrozek, Lawrence and Olwen Wymark. The theatre sees itself as a show case for the best of international experimental drama, but it has not neglected Scottish authors. In particular it has nurtured two writers, one an expatriate Scot, Cecil Taylor, and the other an expatriate Englishman working in Scotland, Stanley Eveling. Several plays by both Taylor and Eveling have been premiered at the Traverse and have later gone on to London.

The Traverse has tried to 'relate' to the Scottish environment. As Jim Haynes has put it -

> 'I'm very interested in the theatre having local relevance and when I was in Scotland I think I put on more plays by Scottish writers than possibly any other theatre producer, not because they were Scottish but because their plays had local relevance. I really think the theatre should reflect its environment' (16)

One might dispute Mr. Haynes' personal claims, but not that the attempt to relate was made.

Initially it was thought that the Close would be a Glasgow equivalent of Edinburgh's Traverse, but this was not to be. Although great use had been made of the intimacy

afforded by the Close and writers such as Beckett, Alble and Strindberg have been given productions which would not otherwise have been seen in Glasgow, genuine experimentation has been limited. Indeed, possibly the most experimental production, 'Dr. Faustus', directed by Charles Marowitz resulted, within a few months of the Close opening, in a public uproar started by the management committee of the theatre itself. This revolved round the question of whether the production was insulting to the Queen or not, and like so many of Glasgow's theatrical controversies served only to divert attention from what was actually being attempted theatrically. One need not condemn the Close's committee. It is a reasonable assumption that they were reflecting the views of the membership. What one can conclude is that the Glasgow theatrical public is not so receptive to genuine experiment as the Edinburgh one, and if the Close is to stay in business, the people who run it must always bear this in mind.

The Edinburgh Festival's contribution to Scottish theatre has been disappointing. The emphasis in the festival has always been musical and its achievments in that sphere remain substantial. The plastic arts have played an increasingly subsidiary role.

There have always been a respectable number of plays performed at each festival. Criticism has to be directed at the quality of drama rather than the quantity. There have been few outstanding productions, though many interesting ones. Among the few that could be called outstanding were the productions in 1948, 1949, 1951 and 1959 of Lindsay's 'The Three Estates', but these productions could not be said to have generated any great response from contemporary Scottish writers. The official festival usually presents a Scottish play but all too often such plays are such that they would never have appeared were there not the necessity to put on a Scottish play.

The Festival Fringe has however proved a nursery for some of the most interesting contemporary Scottish writers, and although the productions may have been on occasion inadequate, at least the 'try out' facility, missing for so much of the time in Scotland is available for a few weeks of the year in Edinburgh.

The conclusion from the foregoing must be that the Scottish theatre now offers a wider range of classical and contemporary drama to its customers and this is an obvious gain, but as far as Scottish drama is concerned, it is difficult to be optimistic. Almost all the directors of the theatres in Scotland are Englishmen who employ companies of largely English players. Without wishing to appear parochially nationalistic, one would suggest that it is unlikely that the Scottish theatre can ever relate properly to, and comment meaningfully on, its environment if so many of the people who work for it have little experience of that environment.

It is difficult to pronounce on the standards of theatre production in Scotland, for this is a very subjective matter. The present writer's experience of English theatrical companies, including the two national ones, leads him to conclude that standards are on the whole now high in Scotland and the chances of seeing a thoroughly bad performance in a Scottish theatre are low. This is particularly true of both the Lyceum and the Citizens' companies at their best. It may well be a result of the overproduction of British drama schools and the consequent high unemployment rate among actors, which enables management to pick and choose. Whatever the reasons, one criticism that cannot be levelled at our Scottish theatres is that they mount shoddy productions.

As far as the audiences themselves are concerned, one cannot pretend that the Scottish theatre has a steady audience upon which it can rely. Audiences fluctuate and vary from theatre to theatre, but only about half of our theatres have played to over 50% capacity in recent years and one theatre for a time was doing very badly indeed.

Our theatres are permanently hard-up. But as this is a condition of all artistic ventures in the U.K. it is not worth comment. What is worth remarking on is the pattern of finance. All our theatres depend to some extent on public finance, whether from the Scottish Arts Council or the relevant local authority; Scottish theatres have tended to be subsidised in the 50-60% region by public funds. A comparison with the position in English theatres, shows that Scottish theatres have been drawing less proportionately of

their costs from the trading revenue than English theatres, most of which recover at least 50% of their costs in this way, and some of which draw quite spectacular percentages of their costs from trading revenue, by Scottish standards.

The basic reason for the large dependence on subsidy in Scotland is obvious. The theatres do not play to anything like capacity. The more they approach capacity, as can be seen by looking at the example of Pitlochry, the higher the proportion of costs taken at the box office, and eventually the smaller will be the subvention from public funds. There is one obvious danger in this situation where a theatre is over-dependent on public funds; it is liable to the pressures which occasionally accompany these funds, particularly local government funds. The recent history of the Citizens' theatre, for example, includes several instances of councillors angered by a production (which they may not even have seen) demanding that the Corporation grant be cut, although so far apparently without success.

One can only regard the buildings which house our companies with gloom. The only new theatre to be built in recent years, apart from small arts centre theatres, is at St. Andrews. The Lyceum Company awaits the oft-postponed theatre which is to form part of the proposed opera house. Glasgow Corporation have yet to finally agree on a new site for the Citizens' Theatre, while meanwhile the area round about the present theatre is demolished. Dundee Repertory remains in its converted church, and the Pitlochry company is still in its original 'temporary' building. Obviously, buildings do not make theatres, but the English experience tends to suggest that an exciting new building can provide a focal point in the community and build up audiences considerably.

One major development since the war which must not be omitted is the Glasgow College of Drama, part of the Royal Scottish College of Music and Drama. Largely, the result of James Bridie's determination to set Scottish drama on its own feet, independent of the English theatre, it was opened in 1950 by him not long before his death.

With its bilingual system of training it enables the aspiring young Scottish actor to develop his art in such a way that he can work in either Scotland or England. It is

obviously an economic necessity that the Glasgow-trained actor should have a command of stage English, but it is an artistic necessity that he should have a command of Scots, as spoken now and in the past, and a feeling for Scots characters if Scots drama is to be adequately created on the stage. That graduates of this college do have the necessary command and feeling is one hopeful sign for the future of Scottish drama.

The situation of the writer in Scotland has changed since the war with firstly the further development of radio, and then latterly the introduction of television. What both radio and television offer the dramatic writer is an extension of his market. There is a fairly large demand for scripts of various kinds, not only 'pure' drama written specifically for either medium, but also adaptations of novels and, particularly in television, episodes for the various series, that are constantly being transmitted. Much of this work is potboiling, but to the writer who can establish himself it can ensure a good and regular income. He might feel that he is unable to fulfil himself as much as he could in the theatre, but he does have security. The Scottish writer who establishes himself in this market will find himself contributing to series which may have little to do with his principal artistic concerns, but he will have the pleasure of seeing his work performed, however transiently.

The danger for the theatre is that dramatic writers of worth are lost to it because it cannot offer the same opportunities. As far as the Scottish theatre is concerned, it offers a more limited market than the English theatre. Writers receive scant financial encouragement, and in recent years have received scant artistic encouragement either. The result has been that a playwright, before he reaches his maturity, abandons theatre for television when he writes a different kind of drama. Tom Wright, for example, having written the highly successful 'There Was A Man' for the theatre has turned his attention to television and radio where his work regularly appears. Bill Craig is an example of a successful television playwright who has not worked for the live theatre. One imagines that unless some way is found of rewarding and encouraging young playwrights in the theatre,

there will be more like him in the future, with the consequent loss of necessary talent to a theatre that cannot afford such a loss.

As one looks at the post-war scene, one sees the need for as much talen as possible in Scottish dramatic writing. Several trends can be observed, which we shall now look at.

What one might call the Traditional Scots play continues to be written, that is the play with an overtly Scottish subject, almost always historical, often using some kind of dialect. Exponents of this genre include Robert McLellan, whose work has already been discussed, Alexander Reid, Alexander Scott and Robert Kemp.

The most immediately obvious characteristic of Kemp's writing is that it is mainly writing of the surface; reasonable effective theatrically but lacking in any depth of dramatic motivation. His themes are varied, but there is an emphasis on the historical, particularly on the historical ecclesiastic. Like many Scots dramatists, Kemp seems to feel surer of himself dealing with the past than with the present. It is as if he is more certain of the landmarks of Scottish history and the nature of the historical Scottish identity than he is of contemporary experience and the problems of identity it presents the modern Scotsman with.

Three of Kemp's full length plays, 'Festival Fever' (17), 'The Penny Wedding' (18), and 'The Perfect Gent' (19), do have contemporary settings. 'Festival Fever' is set during an Edinburgh Festival, at the home of a lady of society, Miss Urquhart-Innes, who finds herself entertaining a Russian musician, Gortchakovitch. Gortchakovitch takes a fancy to Annie, Miss Urquhart-Innes's maid, and decides to stay in Scotland, much to the horror of a double-barreled British diplomat who fears a consequent international incident. The day is saved by the appearance of Annie's father from his farm near Ayr, which leads Annie to decide that she will only marry Vasilene as she calls him, if they go to Russia, miles away from her father. It is a slight play, full of rather obvious jokes about art in general and the avant-garde in particular.

Langwind :- It's a fascinating programme of course.
First a little Shostakovitch and Prokovief,
then the second half's entirely devoted to

his own new symphony.

Elizabeth:- (apprehensively) - The entire second half?

Langwind :- A massive work, I believe, it lasts an hour and nineteen minutes.

Elizabeth:- You don't need another ticket?

'Vasilene' of course picks up Scots phrases, which the dramatist has him use for supposedly humorous effect. One would imagine that 'Festival Fever' would be an admirable diversion on the fringe of an Edinburgh Festival, but no more than that.

'The Penny Wedding' is also set in Edinburgh. David Sillar is a prosperous Edinburgh baker whose wife, much to Davie's annoyance, is a great social climber. Furthermore, his firm is threatened by a take-over bid. His son, Archie, has returned from Oxford, a dedicated Scottish nationalist who insists much to his parents' annoyahce, in speaking nothing but Lallans. The play runs its course and ends with the take-over being resisted and Archie joining the family business. Archie, for at least part of the play, has a genuine comic originality as he acts out his self-imposed role as Lallans makar. Kemp secures amusing effects by contrasting Archie's incomprehensible declarations with the amusing comments of his family.

Archie :- Waesucks, I was scunnert at Oxford, I felt scomfished amang the Sassenachs. They're slegie, sleekit, slingeand slughans and nyattery, niffle-naffland nyaffs.

Lizzie :- What on earth is the meaning of that?

Elvira :- He says he isn't very happy at Oxford.

Archie :- It wad be a wanchancy thing if I feenished up a liddence Lickmadowp in some government office or a pregmadainty macaroni in Mayfair.

Bailie :- (appealing) - Lassie!

Elvira :- He doesn't seem to want to settle in the South. He doesn't seem to care for the types there.

Archie :- In fact, to be a waugh wolroun in London wad drive me wud. I had rather any day be a puir whiffinger without a whirly-bed than some whingeand whilliegolecre in yon wabster's wob.

'The Perfect Gent' is a well made, if superficial, play, about a couple of bank robbers, Fingers and the Toff, who, having committed a spectacular robbery, come to the small Highland village of Auchenlochan, masquerading as Colonel Mulligan and his man, Higgins. They become very quickly involved with the local community, in particular by contributing money to various schemes which have been organised to fight the greedy machinations of Lord Brasswath, the local landowner. 'Mulligan' opens the local church fete and 'Higgins' becomes romantically involved with Flora, the maid of the hotel at which the pair are staying. It is suspected by people in the hotel that they are the robbers the London police are looking for and ultimately Bertie Chisholm the brother-in-law of the hotel proprietor and a London detective, who comes up on holiday, discovers the truth and arrests Fingers and the Toff. They are saved by Flora knocking out Chisholm at the station and go off complete with Lord Brasswath's gold plate which Fingers has stolen the previous night. It is a good ending in which Kemp avoids bending the law yet lets go five characters whose generous behaviour in Auchenlochan has engaged the audience's sympathy. The play is well constructed, if a little predictable, and is an amusing unpretentious diversion.

Of Kemp's historical plays four have a religious theme. 'The Saxon Saint' (20) and 'Master John Knox' (21) are pageant pieces about St. Margaret and John Knox respectively, while 'A Trump for Jericho' (22) and 'A Nest of Singing Birds' (23) take light-hearted looks at religious controversy.

The basic criticism of 'The Saxon Saint' which was written for performance in the nave of Dunfermline Abbey, is that it is boring and lacks dramatic conflict. There is a kind of an intellectual conflict between the tradional Scottish ecclesiastical parties and the English way of life which Margaret imparts. She eliminates what she considers to be the heresies of the Scots and has her husband Malcolm instal an Englishman in place of the Scots Archbishop of St. Andrews. Kemp does attempt to discuss the conflict between the English and Scots (in this case Celtic) ways of life but the subject is not explored very deeply. The play is a mixture of prose and undistinguished blank verse, the latter being reserved for the use of the character who links

the action.

'Master John Knox', which was written at the request of the Church of Scotland to mark the fourth centenery of the Reformation, tells its story in a somewhat pedestrian fashion with little depth of characterisation or reinterpretation of any of the principal characters - Knox, Mary, Rizzio or Darnley. The Scots nobles are treated as rather a rascally crew who share a common antipathy towards the French. (One could note that in both 'The Saxon Saint' and 'John Knox' there is a strong undercurrent of nationalistic feeling). An effective device employed by Kemp in this play is the introduction of several Scots mercenaries whose fortunes reflect the changing balance of power.

'A Trump for Jericho' (first performed as 'Walls of Jericho' by the Scottish National Players on their 1947 tour) is a very thin play set in Edinburgh during the Disruption of 1843. Miss Groundwater and her sister Mrs. Sawyers, fall out over the question of patronage, draw a chalk line down the centre of their drawing room and refuse to speak to each other. Into this situation, which is of course resolved in the end, come a series of not particularly believable nor interesting characters, including the Reverend Macmurtrie who has joined the walk out of ministers from the church, much to his wife's annoyance, his daughter Donaldina, who is pursued by a young lawyer, Alan Gillies, and Captain Tom Peploe, an extravagant mariner who is a cousin to Miss Groundwater and Mrs. Sawyers.

Both this play and 'A Nest of Singing Birds' take a light-hearted, if not quite satirical view of religious controversy which, throughout Scottish history, has had far from light-hearted results. The implication of the plays is clearly that such controversy is foolish and better forgotten. It certainly is not worth continuing in the present age.

'A Nest of Singing Birds' is set in Aberdeen in 1753. Professor Meldrum is determined to introduce sweeter Scientific Singing in church. As he says to one of the other characters -

> ' .. I know not whether you are one to frequent the kirk. If you are, you will know that our psalmody is in a very parlous state. Even if you do not frequent the kirk but have only

> passed by the outside of it on a Sabbath morn, the fact may not have escaped you. The Psalms are sung in a drawling and lugubrious manner. The most of the doited asses that make up our congregation imagine that this long-drawn out, doleful wailing is a sign of godliness. It is not! It proceeds from nothing other than a slothfulness that ought to be an abomination in the eyes of God and men! When the precentor bawls out a line and the lave of the self-styled worshippers groan their way after him, they mind me on nothing so much as a pack of over-grown bairns that have been well skelpit by their fathers!

Professor Kellas, his chief opponent in the matter, disagrees. As he says to Meldrum -

> 'You show yourself misinformed upon a vital topic, Professor! John Calvin objected to part-singing because if your thoughts are upon the music, then they cannot be upon the spiritual intention of what is being sung!

Meldrum secures the services of Tim Shannon, a musical Irish trooper, and Gideas Duncan, an equally musical first year student, to help him in his project. Duncan soon realises his position and plays professor against professor to secure his examination passes. He even attempts to bribe Meldrum into letting him marry his daughter Robina - without success. Although the new Scientific Singing arouses the anger of the mob, the play ends with Meldrum highly amused at the tought of Kellas haring along some country road in hot pursuit of Trooper Shannon and his own daughter, Kirsty whom Kellas wrongly believes have eloped together.

'A Nest of Singing Birds' is a slight play which nonetheless emphasises the triviality of much religious controversy.

'The King of Scots' (24), written for performance in the Nave of Dunfermline Abbey in 1951, is a pageant play rather than a play proper. Music, Ballad, and rather inept rhyming verse are all used to relate the story of Robert the Bruce's defeat of the English. Kemp uses the conventions of the chronical play, e.g. having characters who represent all

classes of society - the lower orders speak Scots. The characterisation itself, however, lacks depth.

'The Other Dear Charmer' (25), possibly Kemp's best play, deals with the love affair between Mrs. MacLehose and Robert Burns. Burns ultimately leaves Mrs. MacLehose for Jean Armour not merely because he prefers the country girl, but also because, in the play, she represents the Anglo-Scottish tradition in art and life and tries to fit Burns into it.

Nancie :- I would have you please the critics of taste. You have conquered the people of Scotland, Mr. Burns. Go further and you conquer England too. But that you'll never do without the correctness you despise.

Robert :- (Quietly) Yes ... (He is wrapped in thought) Mistress MacLehose, I'll confess to you that your words trouble me. You see, Ma'am, there have always been the two forces in my life. They are like two horses pulling different roads. To make them work in harmony defeats me! .... You see, Mistress MacLehose, it was my own father that first put me to learning. It was all English learning. Many an hour have I spent poring over the pages of Pope and Shenstone and Addison, and many a day if I were to add it up, have I spent in trying to write like them. And a thankless darg I made of it. But at home, too, we had an old nurse, that could have sung you a different Scots sang for every minute of the day. And the hours I spent listening to her were as lightsome asthe minutes I spent on my English books were langsome! Then there fell into my hands Harry the Minstrel, the poor Rab Fergusson's poems and Allan Ramsay's and I thought my destiny was to be a Scottish bard!

This conflict is contrived throughout the play, not only in the dialogue like that quoted above, but in the

progress of the relationship between Burns and Nancie, or as she prefers to put it in the language of Augustan artifice, between Sylvander and Clarinda. Burns's final declaration against Edinburgh and Clarinda, and for Jean Armour, Scots poetry and the traditional Scots way of life is well prepared for in the play - even while he is in Edinburgh, he has a child by an Edinburgh street girl. The conflict is resolved when Burns tells Nancie that he has bought a farm near Dumfries. Nancie protests but Burns is adamant -

> ' ... What use is your Edinburgh society to me? No, no, I'll be better there, on the moors above Dumfries, with the shades of Fergusson and Ramsay to walk beside me, and the music of country songs in my head, than here among the professors and the ministers and the lawyers ... I'm done with Edinburgh, Nancie! I'm not a white-handed gentleman and never will be. I'm a country farmer and a Scottish bard. And there's one more bit of news I have for you. (A pause). I'm married: I've owned Jean Armour as my wife!

Kemp presents Nancie's fate with genuine pathos and the characterisation throughout, even of the minor characters such as the Puritan bigot, the Reverend Kemp, is far more convincing than in most of Kemp's other work.

'Henrietta M.D.! (26) is set in the late nineteenth century and tells the story of the first women medical students at Edinburgh University. Henrietta Maitland shocks her father, a doctor, by declaring that she intends to enrol as one of these students and it is only when she threatens to take a job as a scullery maid at the Sailors' Home in Leith, that he agrees to pay her fees. When the first five women arrive at their class, the male students interrupt the lecture with balloons, fire crackers and an electric mouse with the result that Professor Macnaughton, who had been against women students and is greatly embarrassed at having to teach them anatomy, is so incensed that the girls are able to win his sympathy by exercising their powers of flattery. Of the five girls who have started the course, one succumbs to a proposal of marriage. Henrietta almost suffers the same fate, but avoids it by agreeing to marry the young

surgeon who has proposed to her only after she has completed her course. 'Henrietta M.D.' is a pleasant play of the surface which dramatises a historical conflict without delving too deeply into it.

Alexander Reid has had success with two plays written in Scots, 'The Lass Wi' the Muckle Mou' (27) and 'The Warld's Wonder' (28), both of which are set in the late Middle Ages. Reid has attempted to write about the modern world, for example, in 'Diana' (29) and 'The Wax Doll' (30); the first deals with a poltergeist in a Highland manse and seeks to explore the darker side of human nature, while the second has as its subject matter faith healing. Neither play is particularly successful and one can only regret that the flair for wit and satirical comedy found in Reid's Scots comedies has never been applied to the contemporary scene.

Alexander Scott has had several plays performed, the best of which is probably 'Right Royal' (31), an amusing period piece revolving round the roguish King Dod of Fife.

Another genre is what we could call the modern Scots play, that is plays set in modern Scotland, which attempt to come to grips with modern Scottish life. There are no outstanding figures in this genre, for none of the writers concerned have ever developed as one might have hoped, and in some cases, still hopes, they will. One of them who merits closer attention is George Munro.

George Munro, a writer whose work is in the process of being exhumed at the moment, was born in Govan in 1901 and died in Ayrshire in 1968. Most of his professional life was spent in London as a journalist, but his plays are very much concerned with the West of Scotland as he knew it as a boy and as a young man. Munro's family was a Christian Brethren one, and in all four of the plays to be discussed here the Brethren figure to some extent. As the West of Scotland is obsessed by religious bigotry and football, the one closely connected to the other, so Munro returns constantly to these subjects.

'Gold in His Boots' (32) the earliest of his plays to be considered was premiered by Unity Theatre. The play tells the story of the rise of Tommy Craig in the world of professional football. Tommy comes from the obscurity of Miners' Row in Clanmarnock, where his father is without a job, and his mother is a dedicated member of the Brethren, but

the world he enters is seen to be a sordid one where players are bought and sold like carcases. Thus Tommy ultimately abandons first class football - after a last marvellous game - to marry his childhood sweetheart.

Munro brings out well both the harshness of life in Miners' Row, where football is an obsession and a potential escape route, and the crude commercialism of the world of first class football. It is an interesting play, although there is too much reliance on contrivance of plot, the characterisation is not always convincing, and there is some irrelevant griping about the relationship of Scotland and England.

'Vineyard Street' (33), premiered at the Citizens' Theatre in 1949, is set in a Brethren milieu in the small west coast town of Nineveh - which shows striking similarities to Ardrossan and Saltcoats.

Mary McIsaac, daughter of a leading light in the local tabernacle, Bethseda Hall, imagines herself visited by the Lord at a Hogmanay meeting. She conceives a child - on Holy Isle, which is off Arran - and insists that it is a child of God, whereas the father is really Heuck Hogarth, a local sailor who has been a suitor of Mary's for a long time. Heuck, whose father is also a member of the Brethren, catches Mary in a spiritual trance, as she offers herself to the Lord - Munro catches very well the overlap of spirituality and sexuality here.

Heuck supposedly drowns and Mary brings up her son, Emmanuel, to be an evangelist. On his twenty first birthday - again significantly Hogmanay - his father, Heuck, returns, contrives to make him drunk, and, it is implied, thus saves him from his fate. Heuck and Mary are rather unconvincingly reconciled.

The strength of the play lies in Munro's ability to convey the claustrophobic feeling of the Brethren world, its narrowness, its meanness, its hypocrisy, and its obsession with hell and death (Moses McIsaac, Mary's father is appropriately an undertaker). He also catches well the petty rivalries of Bethseda Hall, which mock all its pretensions to virtue. The characterisation is not black and white, but much more rounded than in 'Gold In His Boots'. Some of the plot is a little contrived, in particular the

death and return of Heuck. Furthermore, since Munro is dealing with people who take themselves very seriously indeed, there is a risk of bathos at times, which he does not always manage to avoid.

'Mark But This Flea' (34), was never properly finished and was unperformed when its author died. The theme is the destruction wrought by sectarian bigotry. In present day Nineveh Benny Lomax is attracted to a Catholic girl, Nan Brogan, and forsakes his career as a Brethren preacher, as he had previously forsaken football for the Brethren. The play concentrates on the reaction of Benny's family, culminating in ultimate rejection.

As a development of his central theme, Munro shows the havoc sectarianism, and in some ways religion itself, have wreaked in other characters' lives, for example on the life of Valiant, an alcoholic lapsed Catholic, and on the lives of Benny's parents.

The play obviously needed the revision its dying author was unable to give it. It is uneven and rather badly balanced. Munro's faults - turgidness, over-use of literary quotations, a tendency to hector his audience about side issues - are all there, but might well have disappeared in a redraft.

'Gay Landscape' (35), premiered at the Citizens' in 1958, is probably Munro's best play. It ranges over several decades in the life of the Gascoyne family, originally Highland but now belonging to Govan. There are three acts in the play each separated by a number of years. On three occasions - the funeral of their father, the christening of Martha Gascoyne's illegitimate child, and the funeral of their mother - all the members of the family gather and give rein to the hatred which unites them. This hatred appears at first to stem from particular causes but closer examination shows it to be congenital and related to the environment the family have grown up in, Clydeside. At the christening of Martha's child several of the Gascoyne sisters talk about the Clyde -

Martha :- I've walked Clydeside at daybreak and mirkest hour. I've studied it in storm and sun. Buildings and wharves and stocks move into skyline setting for me. I've felt tender

for the tracery of tenements touched by sun or winter cloudbank. But it's an eye below my seeing eye; an alien eye; that's taking it all in.

Anne :- That's your hieland eye. For we're alien. We're no tenement trash. It was glen and mountain side, not close stairs and tenement gullies we were born to tread. (In rage, she goes to the window) That sheuch was never meant to croon our cradle song. Clearer water should've made the lullaby we heard. We opened our eyes to clatter, batter, bash and blistering shriek. (Swings on her heels. Comes down CENTRE almost to the floats) There's times when he's climbing the pulpit ahint the beadle, that I'd like to take a grip of Ian Alastair's coat-tails. (Oracularly) "Ye men of Clyde," I'd say, "Unplug your ears. Strip the blinkers from your eyes. When you chitter nonsense about the bonnie banks o' Clyde, unfankle your teeth; Clyde built! Roamin' in the gloaming! Take another look. You'll maybe tell yourselves the truth then. A stretching stream has worked on you a patriotism that's a world's wonder. If only it'd suck all of you into its maw, calamity'd be complete. From Falls of Clyde to Tail o' the Bank it works nothing but destruction. Destruction. Dirt. Despair. Grappling with it men become Masters of Men. But never Masters of You. Mother Clyde! I hate you.

Slightly bewildered, Anne stares at the others

Katherine :- A kindly current, I used to think. My first minding is of paiddling in it. By Water Raw. Above me, the thatched, weavers' cottages: beyond me, Campsie and Ben Lomond.

KATHERINE, entranced by retrospective mental view, takes ANNE's place down CENTRE

Where the iron palings are now, a path ran below the Auld Kirkyard. You could see green

grass, even. When Alick began courting me, he'd a bit ground for the grazing. His horses were stabled in a bigging. Leased by him, but belonging to the Clyde; for Clydeside rats used floor and loft as a drying dormitory. Alick was Govan carrier then. I'd meet him at the Broomielaw. He'd sit me up on the small parcel kist. Hand me the reins. To the light of moon and lorry candle-lamp we'd come home, cloppity-clop, to Govan. Oh, the smell of the winter stables. Hot mashes! Treacle: black beans: hot chopped hay in the big stone boiler: candles flickering above the stalls: the smell of steaming horses: their bedtime whinnyings: and, outside, the fluting of the Clyde as it flopped against wharf piles. Next, the walk home. Down Hieland lane, to the piping of ferry and tugboat. When it was cold and blustering and big boats coughed fog warning, I wearied for a glimmer of sun and sound that didn't steel the heart in me.

Margery :- That's the word. Steel! Either way you spell it, it stands for the Clyde. It was down by the water's edge I got my only glimpse that below my father's chiselled conceit there was once wonder. I was plunking school. I wanted to watch the big boats going up and down. I'd my bare feet, daring myself to dip them, when he came up on me from the back. "And is this what I pay a penny a week to the Water Row Schule for?" he asked. He'd that pigeon blue in his eyes. I was ready to swim for it. A big fourmaster Norwegian sailing ship truchled in the wake of a tug. "I heard <u>she</u> was coming up", I said. Like a confessing Papist side-stepping Hell. "A wooden ship, Father". He sat beside me.

<u>At this, ANNE's natural scepticism overcomes physical tension</u>

ANne :- Father sat beside you!

Margery :- I nearly slipped into the Clyde. "So? You like the wood, girl?" he asked. I waited for him to dunt me. He didn't. He stared at the wooden boat. "Wood!" he whispered. I might as well've been a water rat.. "Wood!" he said. "Aye, that's the only love. A man can fashion it". His eyes looked through me, and far away. "Wood brought me here, girl", he said. "Wood was the woo'er won your Mother from fat fields above Don. I'd heard tales of tall wooden ships; of the craftsmen who built them - the money and name they made for themselves. I made love-tale of hearsay. We came to this creek in time to see the last of the wood. We met the old woman who launched what she thought would be the first and last iron launching. For, when they told her of iron boats, she flung her fender into the Clyde. 'If my fender floats', she said, 'I'll believe in your iron boats'. Her fender sunk faster than my dreams. For I went on believing in wood. But coffin boats were the order of the day! Iron and steam. Wood and sail became a memory. Or toys for boys. Adze, saw and plane, put to one side: rivet-hammer, steel caulking-chisel and shell-plate taking their place".

Martha :- I know, now, why I hate steel.

Margery :- Oh, I don't know. There's lots of kindness among the black squad, the men who wear moleskin. Sheoris, for instance.

All the sisters have or have had an ambivalent attitude to the Clyde: it has at times seemed to offer promise of happiness; but more often it has meant hardness and misery: for John Gascoyne it has been the failure of the promise it held out to him; it has steeled the heart of all his family. Anne in particular regards the Gascoynes as alien in Clydeside: they belong in the Highlands. Munro is not allowing his character to indulge in rustic escapism here, but attempting to mirror the effects of the migrations to Glasgow from the Highlands that have taken place for the last hundred and fifty years.

Life has turned sour for the Gascoynes, and it is Clydeside that is held responsible by Munro. The exterior landscape is mirrored in the family, not only in the hatred, but in the soddidness of its life. Drunkeness and incest are prominent in the play, reminding the most socially aspirant of the Gascoynes of their true nature.

The style of the play, as can be seen, is dense. Munro uses highly figurative language to heighten feeling, and succeeds most in 'Gay Landscape' in so doing, although at times there is an over reliance on a few devices such as alliteration.

'Gay Landscape' is a grim play but a successful one which makes a powerful statement about the West of Scotland, and recreates that region's life vividly and imaginatively.

Munro's contribution to the Scottish theatre was an attempt to move it towards coming to grips with Scottish experience. The only sad thing about his work is that while one can accept the truth of his vision, nonetheless its narrowness proves a limitation. One can only wish that he had moved beyond his own deeply felt experience of sectarianism and football more often.

George Munro represents the naturalistic approach to the problems of contemporary Scotland, and plays of this kind continue to be written. Outside the scope of this study are the increasing number of plays by Scottish writers which are more interhationally oriented. Whether this new genre will come to dominate at the expense of the old is a question that should be answered in the next few years.

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28. (Alexander Reid - 'The Warld's Wonder'
29. Alexander Reid - 'Diana', unpublished.
30. Alexander Reid - 'The Wax Doll', unpublished.
31. Alexander Scott - 'Right Royal', unpublished.
32. George Munro - 'Gold in His Boots', unpublished.

33. George Munro - 'Vineyard Street', unpublished.
34. George Munro - 'Mark But This Flea', unpublished.
35. George Munro - 'Gay Landscape', unpublished.

APPENDIX ONE

THE PRODUCTIONS OF GLASGOW UNITY THEATRE

1941.		
Jan. 24	'Awake and Sing' - Odets	Lyric
Apr. 24	'Distant Point' - Afinogenov	Athenaeum
Dec. 24	*'Major Operation' - James Barke	"
1942.		
June 24	'Juno and the Paycock' - O'Casey	"
Nov. 25	'Optimistic Tragedy' - Vishnevsky	"
Dec. 16	'One Act Triple Bill 'Where's That Bomb? 'The Undercurrent' 'Kultur'	"
1943.		
Mar. 17	'Golden Boy' - Odets	"
June 11	'Till the Day I Die' - Odets	"
Nov. 8	*'Song of Tomorrow' - J. Kincaid	Queens
1944.		
May 7	'Fuente Ovejuna' - Lope de Vega	Princess's
May 19	*'The Night of the Big Blitz' - J. Barke	"
1945.		
Apr. 12	'The Lower Depths' - M. Gorki	Athenaeum
May 10	'Remembered for Ever' - B. McGinn	"
May 30	'Awake and Sing' - Odets	"
June 21	*'When the Boys Come Home ' - J. Barke	"
July 18	'The Lower Depths' - M. Gorki	London production
Oct. 4	'Juno and the Paycock' - O'Casey	Athenaeum
Nov. 1	*'Starched Aprons' - Ena L. Stewart	"
Dec. 6	'Morning Star' - Sylvia Regan	"
Dec. 27	'Hie-de-Pie' - pantomime	"
1946.		
Jan. 10	'Of Mice and Men' - Steinbeck	"
Feb. 7	'Major Operation' - J. Barke	"
Mar. 7	'The Little Foxes' - L. Hellman	"
Apr. 9	'Purple Dust' - O'Casey	"
Apr. 30	'Ghosts' - Ibsen	"
May 15	*'Her name was Barbara Allen' - J. Barke	"
May 28	'The Good Hope' - H. Heijermann	"

1946 (contd.)

June 11	'Rocket to the Moon' - Odets	Athenaeum
Sept. 2	*'The Gorbals Story' - R. McLeish	Queens
Oct. 7	'Robert Burns' - J. Corrie (Barrhead Players)	"
Oct. 14	'Theatre Workshop in 'The Flying Doctor - Moliere 'Johnny Noble' - E. McColl	"
Oct. 21	Theatre Workshop in 'Uranium 235' - E. McColl	"
Nov. 18	*'Torwatletie' - R. McLellan	"
Dec. 5	'They Came to a City' - J.B. Priestley	Athenaeum

1947.

Jan. 2	'Tomorrow Will be Different' P.C. Magno	"
Jan. 16	'Home of the Brave' - A. Laurents	"
Jan. 30	*'Men Should Weep' - Ena L. Stewart	"
Mar. 6	'Gorbals Story' - R. McLeish	
Mar. 13	'Androcles and the Lion' - Shaw	"
Apr. 21	*'Gold in His Boots' - G. Munro	
May 6	'Starched Aprons' - Ena L. Stewart	Queens
Nov. 3	*'A Piece of Milarky' - R. McLeish	"
Dec. 4	*'Hell and High Water' - H. Saunders	Athenaeum
Dec. 18	'Wee Macgreegor' - J.J. Bell	"

1948.

Jan. 6	'Dragnet for Demos' - R. Woddis	"
Jan. 29	'Desert Island' - A. Defresne	"
Mar. 4	'Heartbreak House' - Shaw	"
May 17	'Gorbals Story' - R. McLeish	Royal
Aug. 16	'Men Should Weep' - Ena L. Stewart	"
Aug. 23	'Torwatletie' - R. McLellan	"
Aug. 26	'Gorbals Story' - R. McLeish	"
Aug. 30	*'The Lambs of God' - B. Scott	"

1949.

Apr. 4	'Sweeney Todd'	Queens

The above list is as complete and accurate as it has been possible to make it by a thorough search of the files of several newspapers. It does not take account of Unity's various tours.

* Premiere

APPENDIX TWO

PROGRAMMES PRESENTED BY EDINBURGH GATEWAY COMPANY. 1953 - 1965

* Premiere

1953-54

The Forrigan Reel	- James Bridie
An Inspector Calls	- J.B. Priestley
What Every Woman Knows	- J.M. Barrie
The Other Dear Charmer	- Robert Kemp
A Christmas Carol	- Charles Dickens, adapted Roger Weldon
Bunty Pulls the Strings	- Graham Moffat
Hame *	- A.D. Mackie
The Herald's Not for Sale	- A.B. Paterson
The Glen Is Mind and Rory Aforesaid	- John Brandane
One Traveller Returns	- Moray McLaren
The Heart Is Highland	- Robert Kemp

1954-55

The Other Dear Charmer	- Robert Kemp
The Dashing White Sergeant	- Charles Campbell Gairdner and Rosamunde Pilcher
Meeting at Night	- James Bridie
The Flouers O' Edinburgh	- Robert McLellan
The Burning Glass	- Charles Morgan
The World My Parish *	- R.J.B. Sellar, adapted from John Galt's 'Annals of the Parish'
Rope	- Patrick Hamilton
The Heart is Highland	- Robert Kemp
The Lass Wi' The Muckle Mou'	- Alexander Reid
Christmas in The Market Place	- Henri Gheon, adapted Eric Crozier
Marigold	- L. Allen Harker and F.R. Pryor, Musical Version by Cedric Thrope Davie and Robert Kemp
Sheena *	- A.D. Mackie
Mr. Gillie	- James Bridie
The Laird O' Grippy *	- Robert Kemp, adapted from Moliere's 'L'Avare'
Family Circle	- R.J.B. Sellar

1955-56

Conspirators ⁂	- Robert Kemp
Beneath The Wee Red Lums	- T.M. Watson
Waiting for Gillian	- Ronald Millar
The Merchant of Venice	- William Shakespeare
Our Maggy ⁂	- D. Heddle
Heather on Fire	- Moray McLaren
Beneath The Wee Red Lums	- T.M. Watson
Bachelors Are Bold	- T.M. Watson
The Boy David	- J.M. Barrie
Susie Tangles The Strings	- Graham Moffat
Come to the Fair ⁂	R.J.B. Sellar
Ghosts And Old Gold	- Reid Kennedy
A Nest of Singing Birds	- Robert Kemp
Hame	- A.D. Mackie
Juno And The Paycock	- Sean O'Casey

1956-57

The Anatomist	- James Bridie
The Open	- A.B. Paterson
Lucky Strike	- Michael Brett
The Man Among The Roses ⁂	- Robert Kemp
Tolka Row	- Maura Laverty
Weir of Hermiston ⁂	R.J.B. Sellar, adapted from R.L. Stevenson
Johnnie Jouk The Gibbet	- T.M. Watson
The Wax Doll ⁂	- Alexander Reid
A Scrape O' The Pen	- Graham Moffat
Muchle Ado	- Moray McLaren
The Tinkers of the World	- Ian R. Hamilton
Machattie's Hotel ⁂	- A.D. Mackie
The Admirable Crichton	- J.M. Barrie
The Playboy of the Western World	- J.M. Synge

1957-58

The Flouers O' Edinburgh	- Robert McLellan
Dr. Angelus	- James Bridie
Drama At Inish	- Lennox Robinson
The Non-Resident ⁂	- Moray McLaren
The Penny Wedding ⁂	- Robert Kemp
Arise, Sir Hector ⁂	- R.J.B. Sellar
When We are Married	- J.B. Priestley
The Wild Duck	- Henrik Ibsen
The Daft Days ⁂	Robert Kemp, adapted from Neil Munro

1957-58 (contd)

All In Good Faith	- Roddy MacMillan
All For Mary	- Harold Brooke and Kay Bannerman
Black Chiffon	- Lesley Storm
The Schoolmistress	- Arthur Wing Pinero

1958-59

Weir of Hermiston	- R.J.B. Sellar, adapted from R.L. Stevenson
Keep in a Cool Place	- William Templeton
Look Back in Anger	- John Osborne
The Warld's Wonder	- Alexander Reid
The Penny Wedding	- Robert Kemp
Boyd's Shop	- St. John Ervine
A Doll's House	- Henrik Ibsen
Miracle at Midnight	- Tom Fleming
The Forrigan Reel	- James Bridie
Lace On Her Petticoat	- Aimee Stuart
Laburnum Grove	- J.B. Priestley
Follow Me	- Tyrone Guthrie
The Heart Is Highland	- Robert Kemp
Muckle Ado	- Moray McLaren
The Open	- A.B. Paterson
Keep In A Cool Place	- William Templeton

1959-60

The Honours of Drumlie	- James Scotland
French Without Tears	- Terence Rattigan
The Keys of Paradise	- Ronald Mavor
Arsenic and Old Lace	- Joseph Kesselring
The Master of Ballantrae *	- R.J.B. Sellar adapted from R.L. Stevenson
The Ghost Train	- Arnold Ridley
The Late Christopher Bean	- Emlyn Williams, adapted from Rene Fauchois's 'Preney Garde a la Peinture!'
Miracle at Midnight	- Tom Fleming
Rob Roy	- Robert Kemp, adapted from Walter Scott

1960-61

Mary Stuart In Scotland	- B. Bjornson, translated Elizabeth Sprigge
The Taming Of the Shrew	- William Shakespeare
Master John Knox *	- Robert Kemp
The Lesson and The New Tenant	- Eugene Ionesco, translated Donald Watson

1960-61 (contd)

The Rainmaker	- N. Richard Nash
Frost at Midnight	- Andre Obey, translated by Warren Tute
Listen To The Wind	- Angela Ainley Jeans and Vivian Ellis
My Three Angels	- Sam and Bella Spewack, adapted from Albert Husson's 'Cuisine des Anges'
The Skin of Our Teeth	- Thornton Wilder
The Comic *	- Maurice Fleming
The Country Boy	- John Murphy

1961-62

Let Wives Tak Tent	- Robert Kemp, adapted from Moliere's 'L'Ecole des Femmes'
Papa Is All	- Patterson Greene
The Switchback	- James Bridie
All My Sons	- Arthur Miller
It Looks Like A Change	- Donald MacLaren
The Man From Thermopylae *	- Ada F. Kay
Foursome Reel *	- Andrew Malcolm
That Old Serpent	- John Prudhoe, adapted from several Cycles of mediaeval Miracle Plays
Don't Tell Father	- Harold Brooke and Kay Bannerman
Hot Summer Night	- Ted Willis
The Sleepless One *	- Vincent Brome
Pygmalion	- George Bernard Shaw

1962-63

Young Auchinleck *	- Robert McLellan
The Good Soldier Schweik	- Jaroslav Hasek, adapted Ewan MacColl
Juno And The Paycock	- Sean O'Casey
The Rivals	- Richard Brinsley Sheridan
The Birthday Party	- Harold Pinter
The Perfect Gent *	- Robert Kemp
Twelfth Night	- William Shakespeare
Noah	- Andre Obey, translated Arthur Wilmurt
The Little Minister	- J.M. Barrie
An Italian Straw Hat	- Eugene Labiche and Marc-Michel, translated Lynn and Theodore Hoffman
Bus Stop	- William Inge

1962-63 (contd)

Othello	- William Shakespeare
The Glass Menagerie	- Tennessee Williams
Waiting For Godot	- Samuel Beckett

1963-64

All in Good Faith	- Roddy MacMillan
The Hypochondriack *	- Victor Carin, adapted from Molière's 'Le Malade Imaginaire'
Ring Round the Moon	- Jean Anouilh, adapted Christopher Fry
I'm Talking About Jerusalem	- Arnold Wesker
Photo Finish	- Peter Ustinov
Treasure Hunt	- M.J. Farrell and John Perry
The Merry Wives of Windsor	- William Shakespeare
Tobias and The Angel	- James Bridie
Charley's Aunt	- Brandon Thomas
Schweyk In The Second World War	- Bertolt Brecht, translated William Rowlinson
Someone Waiting	- Emlyn Williams
Ever Since Paradise	- J.B. Priestley
Arms And the Man	- George Bernard Shaw

1964-65

The Golden Legend of Shults	- James Bridie
The Heart Is Highland	- Robert Kemp
She Stoops to Conquer	- Oliver Goldsmith
The Fire Raisers	- Max Frisch, translated Michael Bullock
Marching Song	- John Whiting
Present Laughter	- Noel Coward
A Midsummer Night's Dream	- William Shakespeare
The Plough and the Stars	- Sean O'Casey
The Scythe and the Sunset	- Denis Johnston
Becket	- Jean Anouilh, translated Lucienne Hill
The Happiest Days of Your Life	- John Dighton
Our Town	- Thornton Wilder
Heartbreak House	- George Bernard Shaw
The Circle	- Somerset Maugham
Journey's End	- R.C. Sherriff

APPENDIX THREE

PROGRAMMES PRESENTED BY GLASGOW CITIZENS' THEATRE. 1953-1965.

* Premiere

1953-54

The Thistle and the Rose	- William Douglas Home
When We are Married	- J.B. Priestley (Scots version by Alexander Reid
The Diary of a Scoundrel	- A.N. Ostrovsky, adapted by Rodney Ackland
The Laird of Torwatletie	- Robert McLellan
Tapsalteerie 'O *	
The Road to the Isles *	- Robert McLellan
Johnny Belinda	- Elmer Harris
Witch Errant *	R.A. Dick
All in Good Faith *	- Roddy Macmillan
The Letter	- Somerset Maugham
Right Royal *	- Alexander Scott
Meeting at Night *	- James Bridie

1954-55

Marriage is no Joke	- James Bridie
The Alchemist's Daughter	- George Scott Moncrieff
Macadam and Eve	- Robert MacDougall
Much Ado About Nothing	- William Shakespeare
The Dashing White Sergeant	- Charles Campbell Gairdner and Rosamond Pilcher
Toom Byres	- Robert MacLellan
Diana *	- Alexander Reid
Tobias and the Angel	- James Bridie
Tam O'Shanter's Tryst *	- Alexander Scott
The Old Foolishness	- Paul Vincent Carroll
The Isle of Women *	- Eric Linklater
The River Line	- Charles Morgan
The Little Minister	- J.M. Barrie
The Deep Blue Sea	- Terence Rattigan
The Sell Out *	- Robins Millar
The Laird O'Grippy	- Robert Kemp

1955-56

The Wayward Saint *	- Paul Vincent Carroll
Witness for the Prosecution	- Agatha Christie
What Every Woman Knows	- J.M. Barrie
Point of Departure	- Jean Anouilh

1955-56 (contd)

The Honours of Drumlie *	- James Scotland
The Gentle Gunman	- Roger MacDougall
Whigmaleeries *	-
Our Maggie	- D. Heddle
Julius Caesar	- William Shakespeare
Misery Me	- Denis Cannan
The Matchmaker	- Thornton Wilder
Beneath the Wee Red Lums	- T.M. Watson
The Apple Cart	- Bernard Shaw
The Original John Mackay *	- Alastair M. Dunnett

1956-57

Mr. Gillie	- James Bridie
These Our Actors *	- J.B. Priestley
Richard II	- William Shakespeare
Carrington V.C.	- Dorothy and Campbell Christie
Ring Round the Moon	- Jean Anouilh, translated by Christopher Fry
Is the Priest at Home?	- Joseph Tomelty
Alice in Wonderland	- Lewis Carroll, adapted by Peter Lambert
Muckle Ado	- Moray McLaren
The Wax Doll	- Alexander Reid
Mary Rose	- J.M. Barrie
Royal Scotch *	- Robins Millar
The Open	- A.B. Paterson
The Burning Glass	- Charles Morgan
The Singing Wood *	- Elizabeth Kyle and Alec Robertson
The Plough and the Stars	- Sean O'Casey
Dr. Angelus	- James Bridie
Romanoff and Juliet	- Peter Ustinov

1957-58

A View from the Bridge	- Arthur Miller
An Italian Straw Hat	- Eugene Labiche and Marc-Michel
The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial	- Herman Wouk
Twelfth Night	- William Shakespeare
The Diary of Anne Frank	- Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett
Major Barbara	- Bernard Shaw
Dial 'M' for Murder	- Frederick Knott
Merry-ma-Tanzie *	

1957-58 (contd)

My Three Angels	- Sam and Bella Spewack
Gay Landscape *	- George Munro
Look Back in Anger	- John Osborne
Of Mice and Men	- John Steinbeck
Truth to Tell *	- Alexander Scott
The Crucible	- Arthur Miller
Bell, Book and Candle	- John Van Druten
Ten Little Niggers	- Agatha Christie
Mrs. Gibbon's Boys	- Will Glickman and Joseph Stein

1958-59

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof	- Tennessee Williams
The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll	- Ray Lawler
She Stoops to Conquer	- Oliver Goldsmith
The Cherry Orchard	- Anton Chekov
Look in the Looking Glass	- Walter Macken
Clishmaclaver *	
The Roving Boy *	- Joe Corrie
The Quare Fellow	- Brendan Behan
The Lass wi' the Muckle Mou'	- Alexander Reid
An Enemy of the People	- Henrik Ibsen, adapted by Arthur Miller
Under the Light	- Iain Crawford
Any Other Business	- George Ross and Campbell Singer
Fear Came to Supper	- Rosemary Ann Sisson
The Solid Gold Cadillac	- Howard Teichmann and George S. Kaufman

1959-60

The Baikie Charivari	- James Bridie
Gigi	- Colette and Anita Loos
The Kidders	- Donald Ogden Stewart
Othello	- William Shakespeare
You Never Can Tell	- Bernard Shaw
The Great Sebastians	- Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse
Babity Bowster *	
The Alchemist	- Ben Jonson
One More River	- Beverley Cross
Walker, London	- J.M. Barrie
Not in the Book	- Arthur Watkyn
Wedding Day *	- Jack Ronder

1959-60 (contd)

The Playboy of the Western World	- J.M. Synge
Sixes an' Sevens * (Revue)	

1960-61

Romulus the Great	- Friedrich Durrenmatt
The Enchanted	- Jean Giraudoux
Hamlet	- William Shakespear
The Lesson	- Eugene Ionesco
The New Tenant	- Eugene Ionesco
Maid to Marry	-Eugene Ionesco
Rollo	- Marcel Achard
Roots	- Arnold Wesker
Aspern Papers	- Michael Redgrave
Gaggiegalorum *	
Lysistrata	- Aristophanes, adapted by Dudley Fitts
Hedda Gabler	- Henrik Ibsen, adapted by Max Faber
Breakdown *	- Stewart Conn
Great Expectations	- Charles Dickens, adapted by Alec Guiness
Murder in the Cathedral	- T.S. Eliot
Under Milk Wood	- Dylan Thomas
A Passage to India	- adapted by Santha Rama Rau (E.M. Forster)
Sixes an' Sevens * (Revue)	

1961-62

Inca *	- Joseph O'Conor
The Doctor and the Devils *	- Dylan Thomas and Donald Taylor
Come Back Little Sheba	- William Inge
Romeo and Juliet	- William Shakespeare
The Durable Element	- Clifford Hanley
The Imaginary Invalid	- Moliere, translated by Miles Malleson
The Righteous are Bold	- Frank Carney
Bletherskeits *	
Altona	- Jean-Paul Sartre
Two for the See-Saw	- William Gibson
A Man for All Seasons	- Robert Bolt
Something Unspoken and Suddenly Last Summer	- Tennessee Williams
The Gentle Shepherd	- Alan Ramsay
The Carmelites	- George Bernanos

(Premiere of English Version)

1961-62 (contd)

Chips with Everything	- Arnold Wesker
Death of a Salesman	- Arthur Miller
The Fire Raisers (English Premiere of full version)	- Max Frisch

1962-63

A Midsummer Night's Dream	- William Shakespeare
A Streetcar Named Desire	- Tennessee Williams
The Good Woman of Setzuan (Premiere of new translation of John Willett)	- Bertolt Brecht
Uncle Vanya	- Anton Chekov
Arms and the Man	- Bernard Shaw
Saturmacnalia *	- Cliff Hanley
Serjeant Musgrave's Dance	- John Arden
The Importance of Being Earnest	- Oscar Wilde
Henry IV	- Luigi Pirandello
The Partridge Dance *	- Ronald Mavor
The Birthday Party	- Harold Pinter
The School for Scandal	- R.B. Sheridan
The Waltz of the Toreadors	- Jean Anouilh
V Minus One *	- John Hubbard
A Resounding Tinkle	- N.F. Simpson
The Love of Four Colonels	- Peter Ustinov

1963-64

Macbeth	- William Shakespeare
The Physicists	- Frederich Durrenmatt
The Circle	- Somerset Maughan
Rashomon	- Fay and Michael Kanin
Pygmalion	- Bernard Shaw
Oh for an Island! *	- Cliff Hanley
The Relapse	- Sir John Vanbrugh
Six Characters in Search of an Author	- Luigi Pirandello
Battle Royal *	- Bruce E. Baillie
Hobson's Choice	- Harold Brighouse
The Pinedus Affair	- Paolo Levi
Much Ado About Nothing	- William Shakespeare
Armstrong's Last Goodnight *	- John Arden

1964-65

The Caucasian Chalk Circle	- Bertolt Brecht
A Sleeping Clergyman	- James Bridie
Saint Joan	- Bernard Shaw
That'll be the Day * (Revue)	
An Ideal Husband	- Oscar Wilde
Dick Macwhitty *	
Dandy Dick	- A.W. Pinero
Five Finger Exercise	- Peter Shaffer
The Merchant of Venice	- William Shakespeare
The Poker Session	- Hugh Leonard
The Harmony Bugle *	- Bruce Baillie

APPENDIX FOUR

PLAYS PERFORMED IN SCOTTISH THEATRES IN THE POST WAR PERIOD

Lists of the plays performed in the various theatres where available are to be found as detailed underneath.

Dundee Repertory Theatre

Not published

Gateway Theatre, Edinburgh

'The Twelve Seasons of the Edinburgh Gateway Company' St. Giles Press Edinburgh 1965.

Glasgow Citizens' Theatre

Twenty First Anniversary Conspectus
Published by the theatre 1964.

Perth Repertory Theatre

Not published in any form

Pitlochry Festival Theatre

Souvenir booklet published by theatre in 1971.

Byre Theatre, St. Andrews

Booklet published 1958. No booklet since.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has been concerned with the attempts to develop theatrical activity and a native dramatic tradition in Scotland. These attempts can be viewed as the assertion of a separate identity; throughout there has been a desire to cut free of the dominance of the English theatre in general, and the London theatre in particular. This desire was articulated on several occasions, for example in the press towards the end of the nineteenth century and by Alfred Wareing when he embarked on the Royalty venture at the beginning of this century.

Coupled with the desire to be free of the dominance of London, there has been a constant desire for 'Scottishness' in the drama. Whether it has been a call-at the end of the nineteenth century - for the dramatic representation of 'the everyday life of Glasgow', or a call - at the beginning of the twentieth century - for the representation of 'middle class town life', or A.P. Wilson's wish for a Doric drama, the longing for a drama that bears some relation to Scottish life is ever apparent, and is to be found in the stated objects of almost all the theatrical ventures we have considered. This longing has not of course been confined to the drama, but is also to be found throughout the arts during the period concerned.

In the drama the Irish experience, a tangible example of what it was hoped could be achieved, was often invoked, by Wareing, by the Scottish National Players and latterly by Unity Theatre. Retrospectively, it can be sadly observed that the achievments of the Irish and Scottish theatres differ greatly in scale.

To be fair, the problems were enormous. The lack of theatrical and dramatic traditions made it difficult both to increase facilities and to develop native talent. In a situation where London dominated, it fell largely to amateur groups to develop the native theatre in Scotland. There can be no denying the effort and enthusiasm of many of the amateurs whose work has been considered in the foregoing, but equally there can be no denying that at times they showed

limited imagination and excessive caution, to both of which characteristics the ultimate failure of the Scottish National Players can largely be attributed.

It would, however, be wrong to underestimate the contribution those amateurs made to building up the theatre in Scotland. Without their pioneering, it is doubtful whether the present pattern of repertory theatres would exist. Without their development of native talent among actors and writers, there would have been nothing to build on.

What then has been achieved in the last sixty years or so?

We now have a reasonable number of repertory theatres presenting varied programmes on a regular basis, although none of them have a financial situation that could honestly be described as healthy. But they survive. The Scottish playgoer is infinitely richer than he was at the beginning of the century.

We also have native actors trained in Scotland and perfectly capable of establishing themselves nationally.

We do not, however, have a very impressive range of dramatic achievment.

In attempting to answer the question as to why there is no thriving drama in Scotland one is involving oneself in the very difficult problem of explaining an absence, which is much harder than explaining a presence. It would be relatively easy to trace the factors which led to the growth of a Scottish drama had there been such a growth; seeking an explanation for its non-appearance is much more tenuous.

However the attempt must be undertaken and what follows summarizes and draws together points that have been made throughout the text.

First there is the problem of economics. We are never going to get large numbers of Scottish writers unless it is possible for them to make a living from the theatre. It is doubtful if that has ever been the case in Scotland. Barrie made his money in London and Bridie, for all that he was based in Scotland, relied very heavily on the West End audience and audiences further afield. If we consider the stage history of the works of three of the major writers in Scotland this century who were writing primarily for the Scottish theatre (see appendices), it becomes clear that none of them could

have made a great deal of money from the stage: Robert McLellan has had his works performed in Scottish theatres but a total of less than twenty professional performances in forty years is disappointing; Robert Kemp, with almost fifty performances, has done better but he had to write twenty five plays to achieve that number of performances; George Munro has done worst of all with each of his plays having had one professional performance only.

If a theatre is going to support writers, then it is imperative that their major works are performed again and again. It is destructive of talent that the only way in which a writer can continue to draw an income is to continually write new plays as Kemp most obviously had to do. Even with an income from broadcasting, writing plays in Scotland this century has not been a very profitable business. If a regional writer is to succeed financially he must aim beyond the region at London, and therein lies the problem, for what might be acceptable in Scotland is not necessarily so in London, a situation seen most clearly in McLellan's work.

Then there is the problem of the models available to writers in the Scottish theatre this century. After Shaw and the play of ideas, the model from south of the border for most of the period under consideration was that of the light frivolous drawing room comedy, a model of no use to writers seeking to come to grips with Scottish experience.

At home there was the model of the music hall sketch and many of the plays we have looked at show evidence of having been based on that model, to their detriment, for a music hall sketch is essentially light and superficial. Furthermore in Scotland it tends to be allied to a mawkish sentimentality personified best in the work of Harry Lauder, a man of undoubted talent and inventiveness whose ultimate influence on the cultural forms of his nation has been baleful nonetheless.

Viewed from the standpoint of the present the obvious model for the Scottish dramatist was Ibsen, for he was writing about a very similar kind of society, an oppressive Puritan one whose essential quality was hypocrisy. Unfortunately the very Puritanism and hypocrisy on which Ibsen thrived may have served to prevent a similar dramatic awakening in Scotland if, for example, we read aright the behaviour of the Scottish

National Players over 'Soutarness Water'. Only a professional theatre would have been strong enough to overcome that kind of diffidence.

So the Scottish dramatist fell back on the music hall sketch as a model, and he fell back on the Irish theatre, oblivious of the fact that the Irish peasant plays arose out of a peasant society completely different from Scottish society which was urban and industrial. The refusal to face up to the industrial experience characterises the drama we have been looking at and it is not peculiar to the drama.

It has been suggested that the kailyard view of Scottish experience grew out of a desire to escape the horrors of the aftermath of the industrial revolution, and expresses a kind of yearning for an arcadian rural society. Certainly it is a view of experience which permeates Scottish culture, high and low. Perhaps also its development owes something to the problem of identity. After all, the best way to express out Scottishness is to assert those aspects of our national identity most different from the identity of the rest of Britain, which very often means the Highland experience, usually embroidered and distorted. So we have the split between the real Lowland/urban experience and the fanciful rural/Highland experience, the classic case of national schizophrenia.

In the drama this schizophrenia was compounded by a fatal tendency to write about the past. Again, if you are unsure of your national identity as part of Britain, it is best asserted by revivifying the past, when the nation was politically independent and people spoke a distinct tongue of their own.

In the inter war period these factors were probably aggravated by the dominance of the Community Drama Movement which, whatever its good points - and these have been referred to - was essentially concerned with generating dramatic activity within communities many of which were relatively small and non urban, and hence more receptive to the couthy play with a rural setting than to the more radical urban play.

Put another way, Scottish writers have been very unsure of themselves and of their own identity. Arguably this is simply a restatement of the problem of the relationship of

the region to the centre of power. If we have a situation where most of the power in the country is concentrated in the south of England, then it is to be expected that the major cultural institutions will be situated there too and will suck in talent on the one hand and propagate the idea that their products are superior on the other. Hence the second rate broadcasting services in Scotland and the second rate press.

This is not necessarily to argue for home rule, but simply to point out that a dominant centre of power has the twin effects of siphoning off talent and of creating a feeling of diffidence, a lack of self confidence, elsewhere in the country. The region stops believing in its own ability to do anything as well as it is done in London. How else can we explain the recent tendency of Scottish theatre boards to appoint English directors, the lamentable consequences of which appointments have been discussed earlier?

In one's darker moments, one fears that the chance of creating a genuine Scottish drama then has been squandered. We are now in a situation where the internationally orientated kind of play to be seen in Scotland at, for example, the Traverse, may well come to dominate. From the point of view of the financially hard pressed author this may be a good thing, but it does mean that the chances of a genuinely Scottish drama now appearing may be remote. International theatre offers the writer a living; Scottish drama does not. The consequences of this situation are extremely important for all dramatic traditions: the strong ones such as the English and the French are in a position to absorb, rather than to be absorbed. Where there is a weak tradition, that tradition is likely to be absorbed and hence to die out.

What we have perhaps been considering is not the exciting and lively birth of a theatrical tradition, but the hesitant birth of a tradition that never properly took on life and may well soon face extinction.

One ends with the hope that this will not be the case, that recent developments alluded to in the preface do herald a more confident, honest and worthwhile Scottish theatre. It is too early to tell for certain one way or the other.

APPENDIX ONE

ROBERT McLELLAN - PREMIERES AND SUBSEQUENT PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCES

Jeddart Justice (one act)	Curtain Theatre, Glasgow	8th Jan. 1934
Tarfessock	Curtain Theatre, Glasgow	12th Apr. 1934
Cian and Ethne	Curtain Theatre, Glasgow	10th Apr. 1935
Toom Byres	Curtain Theatre, Glasgow (in Lyric Theatre)	1st May 1936
King Jamie the Saxt	Curtain Theatre, Glasgow (Lyric)	31st Mar. 1937
Portrait of an Artist	Curtain Theatre, Glasgow (Lyric)	23rd Feb. 1939
The Laird o Torwatletie	Unity Theatre, Glasgow	18th Nov. 1946
Mary Stewart	Glasgow Citizens' Theatre	12th June 1951
The Flouers o Edinburgh	Glasgow Unity Theatre In King's Theatre, Edinburgh	13th Sept.1948
The Road to the Isles	Glasgow Citizens' Theatre	22nd Feb. 1954
Young Auchinleck &	Edinburgh Gateway Co.	20th Aug. 1962
The Hypocrite	Royal Lyceum Co., Edinburgh	3rd Aug. 1967

SUBSEQUENT PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCES

Toom Byres	Glasgow Citizens'	Sept. 1945: Nov. 1954
King Jamie the Saxt	Glasgow Citizens'	Mar. 1947: Mar. 1953
	Henry Sherek Players Edinburgh (Lyceum)	June 1956
	Glasgow (Kings)	July 1956
The Laird o' Torwatletie	Unity Theatre - Aug. 1947 Pleasance Little Theatre Edinburgh	
	Aug. 1948 Theatre Royal, Glasgow	
	Glasgow Citizens' - Nov. 1953.	
The Flouers o Edinburgh	Glasgow Citizens' - Apr. 1952.	
	Edinburgh Gateway - Oct. 1954	
	Edinburgh Gateway - Aug. 1957	

The Appendix One of the Edition of 'Jamie the Saxt' (Calder and Boyars 1971) has been useful in compiling the above although it appears to be inaccurate in some details.

@ Edinburgh Festival Production

APPENDIX TWO

GEORGE MUNRO - PREMIERES AND SUBSEQUENT PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCES

Gold in His Boots	Unity Theatre Co. Glasgow (Queens Theatre)	21st Apr. 1947
Vineyard Street	Glasgow Citizens' Theatre Co.	10th Oct. 1949
Gay Landscape	Glasgow Citizens' Theatre Co.	24th Feb. 1958
Mark But This Flea	Dundee Repertory Theatre	5th May 1971

APPENDIX THREE

ROBERT KEMP - PREMIERES AND SUBSEQUENT PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCES

PREMIERES

Seven Bottles for the Maestro	Dundee Rep.	26th Feb. 1945
Victory Square	Glasgow Citizens'	15th Jan. 1946
A Trump for Jericho (Walls of Jericho)	Scottish National Players at Lanark	4th Apr. 1947
Polonaise	Glasgow Citizens'	21st Apr. 1947
Let Wives Tak Tent (adaptation of Molieres L'Ecole des Femmes)	At Gateway Theatre, Edinburgh	9th Feb. 1948
The Thrie Estaites (adaptation)	Edinburgh Festival Production - Assembly Hall	24th Aug. 1948
The Saxon Saint	Dunfermline Abbey	29th Aug. 1949
A Nest of Singing Birds (The Scientific Singers)	At Gateway Theatre Edinburgh	Oct. 1949
The King of Scots	Dunfermline Abbey	27th Aug. 1951
The Other Dear Charmer	Glasgow Citizens' at Gaiety, Ayr	19th Nov. 1951
Henrietta M.D.	At Gateway Theatre, Edinburgh	27th Oct. 1952
What the Stars Foretell	Glasgow Citizens'	16th Mar. 1953
The Heart is Highland	Edinburgh Gateway	22nd Aug. 1953
The Laird o' Grippy (adaptation of Moliere's L'Avare)	Edinburgh GAteway	28th Feb. 1955
Conspirators	Edinburgh Gateway	20th Aug. 1955
Our Maggy (pseudonym D. Heddle)	Edinburgh Gateway	24th Oct. 1955
Festival Fever	Sherek Players in Lyceum, Edinburgh	4th June 1956
The Man Among the Roses	Edinburgh Gateway	8th Oct. 1956
The Penny Wedding	Edinburgh Gateway	28th Oct. 1957
The Daft Days (adapted from Neil Munro's novel)	Edinburgh Gateway	23rd Dec. 1957
Rob Roy (adapted from Scott's novel)	Edinburgh Gateway	28th Dec. 1959
Off a Duck's Back	Theatre Royal, Windsor	15th Feb. 1960
Master John Knox	Edinburgh Gateway	10th Oct. 1960.
The Perfect Gent	Edinburgh Gateway	30th Oct. 1962
Scotch on the Rocks	Theatre Royal,	6th Feb. 1967

SUBSEQUENT PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCES

Seven Bottles for the Maestro	Everyman Company, Little Theatre, Edinburgh	Nov. 1945
Let Wives Tak Tent	Glasgow Citizens'	May 1948: Nov.1948
@	Edinburgh Gateway	Aug. 1961
The Thrie Estaites	Edinburgh Festival Production	Aug.1949: Aug. 195
A Nest of Singing Birds	Glasgow Citizens'	May 1950
	Edinburgh Gateway	Feb. 1956
The Other Dear Charmer	Glasgow Citizens'	Dec. 1951
	Edinburgh Gateway	Nov. 1953
@	Edinburgh Gateway	Aug. 1954
	Playhouse,Liverpool	Oct. 1958
The Heart is Highland	Edinburgh Gateway	Mar.1954: Nov.1954 May 1957: May 1959 @ Aug. 1964
	Stratford,Ontario	Aug. 1959
The Laird o' Grippy	Glasgow Citizens'	May 1955.
Festival Fever	Sherek Players at King's Glasgow	June 1956
The Penny Wedding	Edinburgh Gateway	Oct. 1958
	Edinburgh Gateway (At Glasgow Citizens')	Nov. 1958
Off a Duck's Back	Lyceum, Edinburgh	Mar. 1960.

@ Edinburgh Festival Production

APPENDIX FOUR

PROFESSIONAL THEATRES IN SCOTLAND DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

It is not claimed that the following list is totally accurate, but it is reasonably so. The list has been produced by combining information from various sources: town clerks, librarians, archivists, chief constables, the 'Stage' Provincial Guide (1910, 1950, 1959-60), the Kinematograph Year Book, police records, newspapers files and associated materials.

Abbreviations:- O.D. - Date of Opening
C.D. - Date of Closing

	O.D.	C.D.
ABERDEEN		
Her Majesty's Opera House/Tivoli	1872	1966
Palace	1898	1929
His Majesty's	1906	-
Beach Pavilion	1928	1961
ARBROATH		
The Theatre	c.1890	1919
A Y R		
Gaiety	1900	-
Pavilion	1911	1933
CLYDEBANK		
Gaiety	pre- 1900	1920
Pavilion	pre- 1900	1919
COATBRIDGE		
Theatre Royal	c.1895	1920
COWDENBEATH		
Empire	1910	1914
DUNDEE		
Her Majesty's	1885	1919
Palace	1893	1911
Alhambra/Tivoli	1898	1929
Empire	1903	1911
Gaiety/Victoria	1904	1928
King's	1909	1928
Queen's	1922	c.1928
Repertory Theatre	1939	-

EDINBURGH	O.D.	C.D.
Gaiety/Operetta House	1875	1906
Lyceum	1883	-
Theatre Royal	1884	1946
Empire	1892	1962
Pavilion/Alhambra	1897	1921
Tivoli/Grand	1901	1920
King's	1906	-
Elm Row/Gateway	1931	1965
Palladium	1933	1966
Traverse	1963	-
FALKIRK		
Grand	1903	1929
Electric/Empire/Roxy	1910	1958
GLASGOW		
Scotia/Metropole	1862	1961
Britannia/Panopticon	1870	1920
Royal Princess/Citizens'	1879	-
Royalty/Lyric	1879	1959
Theatre Royal	1880	1957
Grand	1882	1918
Queen's	1893	1951
Empire	1897	1963
Tivoli/Gaiety	1899	1909
Lyceum	1900	1929
Palace	1904	1947
Pavilion	1904	-
King's	1904	-
Coliseum	1905	1925
Hengler's Circus	1905	1925
Alhambra	1910	1969
Savoy	1911	1916
West End Playhouse/Empress/Metropole	1914	1969
Olympia	1920	1936
Park	1941	1949
Close	1965	1973

	O.D.	C.D.
GREENOCK		
Theatre Royal/Hippodrome	1858	1823
Empire	1903	1958
Alexandria/King's	1905	1928
Palace/Pavilion	1905	1908
HAMILTON		
Hippodrome	1907	1946
INVERNESS		
Theatre Royal	1882	1931
Music Hall	c.1884	c.1912
Empire	1934	1970
KILMARNOCK		
Corn Exchange/Palace	1863	-
King's	1904	1929
KIRKCALDY		
King's	1904	1924
LEITH		
Gaiety	1889	1913
Alhambra	1914	c.1918
MOTHERWELL/WISHAW		
New Century	1901	1913
Electric/Empire Electric	1911	1951
PAISLEY		
Theatre	1893	1959
Hippodrome	1906	1916
PERTH		
Repertory	1901	-
PITLOCHRY		
Festival	1951	-
RUTHERGLEN		
Repertory	1939	1959
ST. ANDREWS		
Byre	1933	-
STIRLING		
Alhambra	1882	1939

NOTES:-

CLYDEBANK

The Clydebank Burgh Library's records do not provide accurate information on this subject before 1912. I have assumed on the basis of what information I have that both theatres existed in 1900.

COATBRIDGE

A recent fire and consequent destruction of Burgh records pre-cludes any more accurate dating.

THE SCOTTISH THEATRE-BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography may not follow the standard pattern but it has been put together in the way that seemed best designed to facilitate further research by the reader and to give him a method of quickly ascertaining which plays are discussed in the text. The bibliography is therefore in two parts, the first being a list of works consulted, arranged by the period with which they deal for easy reference, and the second list of plays arranged alphabetically.

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Throughout I have referred to newspaper files and have been particularly dependent on 'The Glasgow Herald'. 'The Scottish Tradition in Literature' by Kurt Wittig (Edinburgh 1958) has some discussion of Scottish dramatic writing that I have found helpful.

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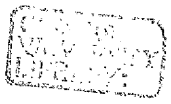

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