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the Duke's men before the union of 1682.⁹ Hence the production must have taken place after this date, unless it took place out of London, beyond official control. This, indeed, is quite possible, having regard to the internal evidence: the cutting of certain parts and the doubling of others points strongly to the possibility of a company going on tour. Moreover *Macbeth* was not popular in London at the time, except in the Dryden-Davenant operatic version. But it was far more likely to appeal to Scottish tastes, and hence it is just possible that the production took place in Edinburgh some time in 1679 when a band of King's men went to Scotland and remained until sent for. Their names are Thomas Gray, Cardell Goodman (either of whom might be Mr. G), and Thomas Clarke, though there is no evidence that Carlile was one of the number.

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THE COMPOSITION OF "SCOTS WHA HAE"

Dr. James Currie, in his *Life of Burns*,¹ 'quotes' an account by John Syme, one of Burns' intimate friends, of a tour he made with Burns through Galloway. The original manuscript² from which Currie made up his version has recently come to light, and a comparison of it with Currie clears up a long-standing uncertainty about the composition of *Scots Wha Hae*, besides illustrating further Dr. Currie's literary vanity and his inclination to change documents when they conflicted with his theories.

His revision of an early paragraph of Syme's letter is an example of both these faults. In describing a ride across the moor in a storm, Syme says:

⁹ For this, and other information about the names of actors, I am indebted to Mrs. Eleanore Murrie.

¹ Currie, James, *The Works of Robert Burns*, London, 1801. I, 250 ff.

² A letter from Syme to another of Burns' friends, Alexander Cunningham, dated August 3, 1793. I am much indebted to the Trustees of the Alloway Cottage Museum, and their Secretary, Col. T. C. Dunlop, of Ayr, for permission to copy and use Syme's original letter. The letter, and Currie's version of it, are set up in parallel columns in my Cornell University thesis, *Robert Burns As Seen by His Contemporaries, A Source Book of Fact and Opinion*.

I took him the moor road where savage & desolate regions extended wide around—The sky turned sympathetic with the wretchedness of the soil and treated the poor travellers to the full flood of misery—For 3 hours did the wild Elements ‘rumble their bellyful upon our defenceless heads—O, ho, twas foul’—

This adequate description Currie enlarges as follows:

I took him the moor-road, where savage and desolate regions extended wide around. The sky was sympathetic with the wretchedness of the soil; it became louring and dark. The hollow winds sighed, the lightnings gleamed, the thunder rolled. The poet enjoyed the awful scene—he spoke not a word, but seemed rapt in meditation. In a little while the rain began to fall; it poured in floods upon us. For three hours did the wild elements *rumble their bellyful* upon our defenceless heads. Oh, Oh! ‘twas foul.

Syme continues, “We were utterly wet and we got vengeance at Gatehouse by getting utterly drunk.” Currie gives this innocent passage an insidious twist by altering it to read, “We got utterly wet; and to revenge ourselves, Burns insisted at Gatehouse on our getting utterly drunk.”

According to Syme, “the wetness had rendered it an impossible task to get on” a pair of “jimmy” boots which Burns had bought for the journey. Burns’ extreme annoyance at this “whiffing vexation,” and his headache following the evening at Gatehouse, made him a most irritable companion the next day, until Syme pointed out to him the seat of Lord Galloway, whereupon, “he expectorated his spleen against the aristocratic elf, and regained a most agreeable temper.” Dr. Currie here condenses Syme’s account fairly enough, but omits the following quatrain against Lord Galloway, “struck up” upon Syme’s remark that “it was rash to crucify Ld. G— . . . for tho he might not receive any favours at his hands, yet he might suffer an injury.”

Spare me thy vengeance G—ay
In quiet let me live;
I ask no kindness at thy hand
For thou hast none to give.³

Syme reports that, upon reaching Kirkcudbright, “Burns

³ The editors of *The Centenary Burns*, entitle this epigram, “On The Same [The Earl of Galloway], On The Author Being Threatened With Vengeance.” Syme’s letter makes it evident that the threat was only an imaginary one.

obstreperous independence would not dine but where he should as he said, eat like a Turk, drink like a fish, & swear like the Devil." This violent but characteristic phrase becomes, in Currie, "But Burns was in a wild and obstreperous humour, and swore he would not dine where he should be under the smallest restraint." In the evening, when Burns had partly "regained the milkiness of good temper," he and Syme went to call upon Lord Selkirk at St. Mary's Isle, just outside Kirkeudbright, where they found Urbani, the singer.

Currie reproduces in substance Syme's record of the evening but expands his brief description of the return trip to Dumfries and adds a story of the composition of "Scots Wha Hae" not found in Syme's letter at all. Currie's account follows:

The poet was delighted with his company, and acquitted himself to admiration. The lion that had raged so violently in the morning, was now as mild and gentle as a lamb. Next day we returned to Dumfries, and so ends our peregrination. I told you that in the midst of the storm, on the wilds of Kenmore, Burns was rapt in meditation. What do you think he was about? He was charging the English army, along with Bruce, at Bannockburn. He was engaged in the same manner in our ride home from St. Mary's Isle, and I did not disturb him. Next day he produced me the following address of Bruce to his troops, and gave me a copy for Dalzell.

The romantic story here palmed off on an unsuspecting public has long puzzled editors, who have known the letter of late August [30?], 1793, in which Burns sends the song to George Thomson, and speaks of having composed it in his "yesternight's evening walk":

I shewed the Air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it & begged me to make soft verses for it; but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for Freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, *not quite so ancient*, roused my rhyming Mania.⁴

Burns had met Urbani at St. Mary's Isle on the Tour with Syme, July 31 or August 1. As he seems not to have met him for a considerable time previous to that occasion, it is probable that they discussed the air then, and that Burns mentioned it to Syme. But if Syme said nothing of the matter to Currie, whence Currie's

⁴ J. DeLancey Ferguson, *The Letters of Robert Burns*, Oxford, 1931, ii, 195-6.

brazen interpolation? The answer is to be found in the following note in Cunningham's hand between the signature and the postscript of the letter: "Either on this ride to Dumfries or next day Burns I believe composed Scots wha hae with Wallace bled—the sublime address of Bruce to his troops.—Burns sent it soon after to J. Dalzell. He shewed it next day to J. S. [John Syme] in the stamp office."

Currie had not invented the story. He had merely expanded Cunningham's suggestion and forged it to Syme's letter. The history, then, of "Scots Wha Hae" seems to be that Burns began turning the song over in his mind on the ride from Kirkcudbright to Dumfries—not on the ride from Kenmore to Gatehouse through the storm. He showed Syme an early version of it shortly after their return, and sent Thomson a finished draft at the end of the month. But in his editing of this letter Currie's desire to improve his sources, and his well-meant but slipshod editing, have raised an unnecessary problem, and have caused his friend's ⁵ word to be called in question.

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A NOTE ON HAWTHORNE'S REVISIONS

Professor Randall Stewart has pointed out in his edition of *The American Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne*¹ that Mrs. Hawthorne, in editing her husband's notebooks, omitted everything which was objectionable to her on moral grounds or which presented Hawthorne in what she considered an unfavorable light. It is the purpose of this paper to suggest from certain revisions² which Hawthorne made in reprinting after 1842 tales published previously, that his wife began to exercise a similar "purifying" influence on Hawthorne's writings soon after their marriage. The

⁵ Syme was Currie's law agent and factor.

¹ New Haven, 1932, pp. xiii-xxi.

² Critics of Hawthorne agree that he made but few revisions. See *Hawthorne's Works*, ed. R. H. Lathrop and H. E. Scudder, Boston, 1900, iv, xv-xvi; xviii, xii; also Hawthorne, Julian, *Hawthorne Reading*, Cleveland, 1902, p. 86.