

THE WORLD'S CLASSICS

JOHN GALT

*Annals of the Parish*

OR THE

*Chronicle of Dalmailing*

DURING THE MINISTRY OF

THE REV. MICAH BALWHIDDER

*Written by himself.*

*Edited with an Introduction by*

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## INTRODUCTION

FABLES, says Galt, 'are often a better way of illustrating philosophical truths than abstract reasoning; and in this class of compositions I would place the *Annals of the Parish*.'<sup>1</sup> The minister of Dalmailing writes as a 'witness to the work of a beneficent Providence, even in the narrow sphere of my parish, and the concerns of [my] flock'. This book and its companion, *The Provost* (1822), were not designed as novels; and in their reception as such,<sup>2</sup> to Galt's regret,

they have both suffered, for neither of them have, unquestionably, a plot. My own notion was to exhibit a kind of local theoretical history, by examples, the truth of which would at once be acknowledged. . . . As stories they are greatly deficient. In the composition of [both] I followed the same rule of art . . . namely, to bring impressions on the memory harmoniously together. . . .<sup>3</sup>

—an application of Aristotle's dictum that literary art is 'something more scientific and serious than history, because [it] tends to give general truths while history gives particular facts'.<sup>4</sup>

Recent critics have given only qualified approval to Galt's attempts at 'local theoretical history'.<sup>5</sup> Ian Jack complains that the *Annals* run on into 'Galt's own observations and

<sup>1</sup> *Literary Life* (1834), i. 155-6.

<sup>2</sup> About 1,000 copies of the *Annals* were sold in Edinburgh and London in the first week; of *The Provost*, 2,000 in a fortnight. For comparative sales figures see David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People 1680-1830* (1961), pp. 297-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Literary Life*, i. 226, 228.

<sup>4</sup> *Poetics*, ix.  
<sup>5</sup> Dugald Stewart had applied the term to a 'species of philosophical investigations . . . *Theoretical or Conjectural History*; an expression which coincides pretty nearly . . . with that of *Natural History*, as employed by Mr Hume, and with what some French writers have called *Histoire Raisonnée*' (*Works*, 1854-60, x. 32-34).

reflections, set down without regard for the limitations of the narrator's understanding<sup>1</sup>—though you never quite know with ministers. David Craig, on the other hand, objects that Galt shows 'no particular attitude to the way of life he imitates, no effort of art [in] the selection of events'; 'because everything is felt through [the minister's] mentality, all other possible life is diminished to his kind of understanding.'<sup>2</sup> Galt would have regarded this as the more serious criticism. He was born into what Hume had called 'the historical age and . . . the historical nation'; and he was attempting a new kind of history on the ancient complementary principles of instruction and delight.<sup>3</sup> My wish, he said, 'is to be estimated by the truth of whatever I try to represent'; 'if there is any merit in any of my sketches it is in the truth of the metaphysical anatomy of the characters'.<sup>4</sup> The minister himself acknowledges, with gratitude, the limitations of parish life. If it is true, he says—addressing the third Mrs Balwhidder in the tones of Sir Thomas Browne—that 'we live, as it were, within the narrow circle of ignorance, we are spared from the pain of knowing many an evil; and, surely, in much knowledge, there is sadness of heart'. But knowledge of the great world is not a condition of wisdom; and 'I have, in the afternoon of life, been enabled to foresee what kings and nations would do, by the symptoms manifested within the bounds of the society around me', for what happened in my parish was but a type and index to the rest of the world'. The human drama of Dalmailing had been an index not only—by a familiar and complacent assumption—to political and social change: . . . we had intromitted so much with concerns of trade, that

<sup>1</sup> *English Literature 1815-1832* (1963), p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>3</sup> Craig rightly associates Galt with the Blackwood group who were concerned with writing up provincial Scotland and the national character (pp. 156-7, 219, 312-13); but *Annals of the Parish* is also an expression, at a deeper level, of the Scottish interest in institutions and social change. See Gladys Bryson, *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century* (1945).

<sup>4</sup> *Literary Life*, i. 231; letter to Blackwood, 12 April 1826.

we were become a part of the great web of commercial reciprocity, and felt in our corner and extremity, every touch or stir that was made on any part of the texture'.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that social alterations and national events make strong, simple, irregular impressions on the minister's mind, and on that of his parish. The effect may seem superficial to readers who are accustomed to the much more complex social novels of the Victorians. But this is just how the recent past looks to unsophisticated minds in remote places; and events 'are described, alluded to, or ignored, with a near-sighted lack of perspective that is curiously realistic'.<sup>2</sup> Galt's first readers were quite persuaded by his minister's account of the half-century they had lived through. Blackwood's 'worthy old mother' was angry to discover that the *Annals* was only a novel, for 'thus it lost all its charms'. A reviewer in 1821 wanted 'the faithful Annals of this homely and veracious Chronicler' added as an appendix to *The Statistical Account of Scotland*. Many 'thought the old gentleman very silly to publish'. Galt carried this public reaction into fiction in *The Last of the Lairds*: 'That silly auld haversing creature, Balwhidder o' Dalmailing, got a thousand pounds sterling, down on Blackwood's counter, in red gold, for his clishmaclavers; and Provost Pawkie's widow has had twice the dooble o't, they say, for the Provost's life.'<sup>3</sup>

Mr Balwhidder gets a deal of national history as well as parish events into the *Annals*: agricultural improvement, industrialization, domestic economy and rural education, kirk affairs, theological fashions, the Gordon riots, the Irish rebellion, the American and French wars, 'democracy', and utilitarianism. But a good deal is left out. In the world of letters, for instance, the work of the Edinburgh 'literati' may

<sup>1</sup> pp. 137, 175, 186, 197.

<sup>2</sup> Jennie W. Aberdeen, *John Galt* (1936), p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Craig, op. cit., p. 200; Aberdeen, op. cit., pp. 104, 107; Galt, *Works* (1936), ix. 14. There is a dig at Blackwood here; Galt got 60 guineas for the *Annals*, and £300 for *The Provost*, Sir Andrew Wylie, and a number of articles (Craig, op. cit., p. 297).

have been beyond the minister's ken; but he ignores the stir made by Burns's *Poems* in the west country in the 1780s;<sup>1</sup> he cannot have been deaf to the theological scandal of McGill's *Christology* (1786) or to some other local kirk bruilozies;<sup>2</sup> and surely he should have been a contributor to the *Statistical Account* (1791-9). But although the historical content of the book is so much determined by prescription and caprice, Galt exaggerated its formlessness. Its centre is marked at chapter xxvi:

... here was an example plain to be seen of the truth of the old proverb, that as one door shuts another opens; for scarcely were we in quietness by the decease of that old light-headed woman, the Lady Macadam, till a full equivalent for her was given in this hot and fiery Mr Cayenne.

The parallel, real enough to the long-suffering pastor, disguises an essential contrast. The first half of the book is a picture of the old, settled world of the landed gentry (Lord Eglesham, Lady Macadam) and tenantry: an idyll marred only by common personal or parochial troubles, or by the familiar incursions of war. The second half introduces new themes (some typified by Mr Cayenne) of industry and urban settlement, religious anarchy, schism and decline, and the 'decay in the wonted simplicity of our country ways'. The minister who had been long accustomed to preach on the smuggling of tea, fornication, the horror of war, 'the helplessness of them that have no help of man', or Antichrist and 'orthodoxy', now finds his arguments—'which were the old and orthodox proven opinions of the Divinity Hall'—confronted; his new themes are 'the evil and vanity of riches', 'bloody revolution, and the fashionable secular philosophies'.<sup>3</sup> It is only in 1807 that he begins to feel a settling of attitudes

<sup>1</sup> 'Old and young, high and low, grave and gay, learned or ignorant, all were alike delighted, agitated, transported' (R. Heron, *Memoir of Burns*, 1797, p. 17).

<sup>2</sup> For McGill, see Burns, *The Kirk's Alarm* (1789).

<sup>3</sup> pp. 128; 44, 98, 129, 137, 143, 147 ff.

and ways, 'really a birth of grace', and that is partly a mark of oncoming age in himself.

The story is told from the vantage-point of 1810. This enables Galt to write with an economy and concentration that would not have been so credible in a fictitious journal; but it sets him a difficult artistic problem. By 1809 Mr Balwhidder is, in Galt's words, 'garrulous and doited'. He has so little self-criticism left that he feels 'better' at preaching now, able 'to hold forth, in an easy manner, often a whole half hour longer than I could do a dozen years before'. Can Galt maintain the impression of garrulous age; write for the early years a narrative and dialogue which are vivid without becoming incredible; and get his minister to show evidence of interior change? If not, the autobiographical device becomes a burden; the illusion will not work.

The fiction of Mr Balwhidder—old in years, attitudes, and style—is established in the Introduction, his first account of the events of 1810. Narrative and sermon here set a standard style for the book; persuasively, for Balwhidder is a conservative member of a conservative profession, early confirmed in his ways, resistant to change even in his own calling.<sup>1</sup> He justifies the clarity of his early annals for Galt, by remarking that the memory is hazier about the recent past than about the long ago; and for the later chapters, 'being apt to confound the things of one occasion with those of another' nowadays, he has the help of the third Mrs Balwhidder, a woman of 'very clear understanding' and a 'most judicious judgment'.<sup>2</sup> These devices, sustained by a wonderfully even style, take Galt a long way towards credible fiction. But he goes further, and shows his ageing minister, in the annals from 1800 on, casually aware of his maturity. Mr Balwhidder's first school apophthegm had been, prophetically, 'Experience teaches

<sup>1</sup> He is only half-way through his ministry when he is disconcerted by Willie Malcolm's new-style preaching (p. 132).

<sup>2</sup> pp. 201, 188.

fools'; he has lately (1802) found his 'experience mellowing and . . . discernment improving'. (This is psychologically true; a sense of maturity comes slowly to such a man.) He begins humbly to recognize 'the finger of Wisdom'—his usual term is 'Providence'—in events. Religious schism, which so much distressed him, was better than political revolution; his elders had been right to avoid a head-on collision with Popery—against which he had preached at the Assembly—and to this opinion, now that I have had years to sift its wisdom, I own myself a convert and proselyte'. Seeing his elders 'set on an alteration in kirk discipline, he distrusted his own judgement; 'for they were true men, and of a godly honesty'—a lesson, this, for what Balwhidder would have called 'prelatic' clergy, though he is human enough to be a bit prelatic himself towards those who abandon traditional kirk allegiance. As in discipline, so now in divinity; he listens respectfully to his 'theological' elder Mr Siftwell, 'as I have not, at my advanced age, such a mind for the kittle crudities of polemical investigation that I had in my younger years, especially when I was a student in the Divinity-Hall of Glasgow'—the tone and reference, however, preserving his self-respect!

'It is not . . . my design', says the minister, 'to speak much anent my own affairs'; this would be 'a very improper and uncomely thing' in a book intended 'for a witness and testimony of my ministry'.<sup>1</sup> But the tension between social annals and autobiography was recognized from the first in Galt's draft title, 'The Pastor of his Parish or The Chronicles of Dunmailing', and indeed the reader is fascinated far less by events than by Mr Balwhidder's blend of eloquence and garrulity, pathos and humour, simplicity and sense. The main merit of the *Annals* lies, as Galt hoped, in the 'metaphysical anatomy' of the minister.

He displays the necessary virtues of his calling 'to eschew

<sup>1</sup> pp. 175, 204, 185, 184, 193, 186.

<sup>2</sup> p. 46.

evil myself, and to teach others to do the same', walking 'in the paths of simplicity within my own parish'. But blameless lives are, in themselves, not often interesting. We are drawn to the minister as to some of the saints, less by his homespun virtue than by the individual and at times eccentric way he exercises it. The enchantment begins in the first chapter, with his induction. He endures the scorn of his people in dignified resignation, 'compassionating their wilfulness and blindness' (and casually noting the 'clash of glar' in Mr Kilfuddy's eye); but prudence also, at the level of property and politics, 'obligates' him to the indignity of going in and out by the kirk window. Balwhidder has a disarming honesty of mind. He admits that he gave up preaching against tea, not only because it turned out harmless enough but also because Mrs Malcolm took to selling it. Writing the first Mrs Balwhidder's epitaph—in English, for the 'worthy woman . . . did not understand the Latin tongue'—was a solemn duty, but designing her monument became 'a blessed entertainment' in the dreary winter nights. He does not suffer much from self-esteem: though he might fairly, on his own account, have resented Lady Macadam's insult, it was 'surely . . . not a polite thing to say to Mrs Balwhidder, my second wife'. He knows that, to the Searcher of Hearts, he is no saint; but he is modest and open enough to record, without giving offence, that Mr Auld defended him as 'a man of a guileless heart, and a spiritual simplicity, that would be ornamental in a child'. He can, however, be as wise as the serpent. Though he admires the business acumen of Mr Kibbock, and is able to give sound tactical advice to the experienced Mr Cayenne, he knows when not to assert his own rights; he gets the real point of a letter into 'a bit nota bene'; he practises the 'quiet canny way' of reform in his parish. He does not know that his Assembly sermon is in an outmoded style; but intuition, rather than humility and insecurity, tells him that it has been a failure.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> pp. 95, 5, 20, 26-27, 62, 42, 29, 120, 177, 47, 189, 100.

There are flaws in Mr Balwhidder. His morality is narrow, conventional (even cards are 'thriftless and sinful'); and he is resistant to change. (This is not always, however, an uncritical conservatism. His pastoral experience enables him to see the darker side of Glasgow's new prosperity, and to 'discern something like a shadow' in the 'spirit of improvement'.) The impulse of courage is, in him as in most of us, spasmodic. He is ready enough to sound the trumpet for the Napoleonic war, and he can tell Lord Eglesham with some tact to give up his whore; but he is terrified by the infamous Mr Heckle-text, and finds it difficult to face the tantrums of Lady Macadam or rebuke Mr Cayenne's blasphemies.<sup>1</sup> He is, too, casually and engagingly malicious. He passes on the local joke about Lady Macadam and the Douglas cause; vanquished in an unguarded moment by the Enemy, he laughs at the discomfiture of Betty Wudrife 'loud out among the graves'; provoked, he calls Mr Cayenne a 'dying uncircumcised Philistine'; he parodies the schoolmistress. The brazen fornicator Nichol Snipe is humiliated by a bawdy jest *ex pul-pito*, which for once does justice to the realism of the Kirk.<sup>2</sup> Yet, despite these capitulations to the Enemy, the minister is patient and charitable towards Mr Cayenne and Lady Macadam, and above all to that 'engine of industry', the second Mrs Balwhidder. Here affectionate tolerance is enriched by pathos and wit:

Often could I have found it in my heart to have banned that never-ceasing industry, and to tell Mrs Balwhidder, that the married state was made for something else than to make napery, and bittle blankets; but it was her happiness to keep all at work, and she had no pleasure in any other way of life, so I sat many a night by the fireside with resignation . . . really a most solitary married man.<sup>3</sup>

The minister's sense of Providence is fundamental to his character; it gives his history a design. Providence brings

<sup>1</sup> pp. 58, 137, 179, 105, 64, 78, 118, 144.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 58 and note, 77, 191, 128, 30.

<sup>3</sup> p. 138.

good out of evil, working out the 'destined end' of all things with 'accustomed sobriety' (surely a Presbyterian gloss) and sowing seeds which ultimately yield universal increase. To see in the minister's toothache a divine instrument for the exposure of hypocritical lechery is, perhaps, just within the propriety of this view; but there is improbable and sarcastic parody in 'it pleased . . . Him, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, to send at this time among us a Miss Sabrina Hookie'—a woman of 'harmless vanity', 'made up of odds and ends'.<sup>1</sup>

The professional gravity of the clergy has been, at least from the Middle Ages, permissible matter for comedy. Preaching perfection, humanity exposes its imperfections; a religious world-view, interpreted by unsophisticated clerical minds, encourages what the world sees as a lack of proportion; and clerical facility in the language of liturgy and Scripture is easily made into an instrument of satire. This kind of comedy runs harmlessly and delightfully through the *Annals*, and sometimes at least—as in the opening parallel drawn between the minister and the king—seems to be within Mr Balwhidder's own perception. But occasionally Galt exaggerates it mock-heroically and, I think, improperly: in, for instance, the minister's notion that 'all things in this world were loosened from their hold, and that the sure and steadfast earth itself was grown coggly beneath my feet, as I mounted the pulpit' for the Assembly sermon; or when he reduces the idea of parish events as a universal 'type and index' to absurdity, seeing parochial harmony as an omen of national preservation but keeping this to himself 'lest it might . . . relax the vigilance of the kingdom'. Mr Balwhidder's literary dream-vision reads like a parody of the *Spectator*, and is out of character.<sup>2</sup> His romantic posturing in chapter v is not incredible in itself ('I was . . . looking at the industrious bee . . .

<sup>1</sup> pp. 37, 75, 101; 64, 48, 49.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 97, 182, 142.

and the idle butterfly, that layeth up no store, but perisheth ere it is winter'); it is comic enough, especially in the minister's fancy that 'a connect treatise on the efficacy of Free Grace would be more taking' than a poem on original sin 'like Paradise Lost'; but it is wantonly reduced to farce by his throbs, thrills, and transports.

Like Galt's first readers, we easily accept the *Annals* as a brief memoir, and do not ask for the elaborate statement through character, setting, and event, of the sociological novel. We are content, as in reading a journal, to build on hints and fill out characters who are sketched in outline—especially those close to the minister, resolved not to speak much anent his own affairs. People like Lady Macadam, Sabrina, Mr Cayenne, and the Gaffaws are delineated with remarkable economy and force. But the realization of the three Mrs Balwhidders, almost without description or dialogue, is quite as impressive. Of the first we are told only that she was active in good works, settled the minister in his people's affections, and dwined away after the loss of twelve stone of lint. The second is more dramatically portrayed as a resolute woman and an 'engine of industry', but she appears chiefly at 'the down-lying' or 'the wearyful booming wheel'. The third is the well-bred 'relic' of a Glasgow professor, and a woman of judgement and tact.<sup>1</sup> In fact, our sense of the reality of the three wives grows out of Mr Balwhidder's responses and attitudes; they are almost parts of his character. He married the first 'more out of a compassionate habitual affection, than the passion of love', and in this she quietly died. Then he 'placed [his] affections, with due consideration, upon Miss Lizzy Kibbock', and reaped the whirlwind. But if the first Mrs Balwhidder set him in the affections of the parish, the second set him up in the world. He was as dangerously deliberate over the third, bending his brows and looking towards Irville, 'an abundant trone for widows and other

<sup>1</sup> pp. 14, 24; 53, 140; 154, 205.

single women', and carrying out a cautious reconnaissance. A new, unexpected note comes in here, merry if not quite romantic. An understanding is achieved by an indelicate game with chicken legs and 'a kindly nip on her sonsy arm', and a happy old age is assured for Mr Balwhidder. The Glasgow 'relic' is, indeed, the almost silent familiar spirit of the *Annals*; it is unthinkable that the book could have got written during the dominion of the second Mrs Balwhidder. Yet it is one of Galt's subtleties that the woman who most fully engages the minister's feelings is not a wife but the Christian paragon, Mrs Malcolm: she evokes pathetic and even poetical description as none of the three wives does, and remains a romantic, unattainable ideal kept beyond his reach by 'saintly steadiness'.<sup>1</sup>

There is a different kind of romantic feeling in Mr Balwhidder's account of the 'two born idiots' Jenny and Meg Gaffaw. Galt, like Scott, expresses the amusement, affection, fear, and wonder with which his countrymen viewed mental disorder. In what Meg Gaffaw says and does at her mother's death there is pathos, dignity—and a rebuke, unintended but poignant, for the minister who has come out of curiosity and too late: 'What a pity it is, mother, that you're now dead, for here's the minister come to see you. O, sir, but she would have had a proud heart to see you in her dwelling, for she had a genteel turn. . . .' Mr Balwhidder hears this, perhaps defensively, as 'curious maunering'. But he does see her, Scottishly, as 'a sort of household familiar' with 'much like the inner side of wisdom in the pattern of her sayings', and he takes her admonition over the tythe-boll as prophetic. Meg comes to full stature after her rejection by Mr Melcomb, her last tragic words a kind of ballad poetry:

The worm—the worm is my bonny bridegroom, / and Jenny with the many feet my bridal maid. / The mill-dam water 's the wine o' the wedding, / and the clay and the clod shall be my bedding. / A lang night is meet for a bridal, / but none shall be langer than mine.

<sup>1</sup> pp. 9, 31, 154, 156; 46, 154.

'When [Galt] chooses to be pathetic,' said Byron, 'he fools one to his bent.'<sup>1</sup>

Meg is not the only poet in Dalmailing. The minister has his own 'nerve', and an artist's eye for the calm, black-clad figure of Mrs Malcolm 'spinning the finest lint, which suited well with her pale hands'. A preacher of 'moving discourse', he has worked the Bible and the Covenanting tradition into his style: 'we were pre-ordained to fade and flourish in fellowship'; 'where the banner of the oppressor was planted of old, and the war-horse trampled in the blood of martyrs'; 'spinning . . . as if she was in verity drawing the thread of life'; '[this] I made manifest to the hearts and understandings of the congregation, in such a manner that many shed tears, and went away sorrowful'; and (straining our gravity a bit) 'she was removed from mine to Abraham's bosom on Christmas day'.<sup>2</sup> He is addicted to artificial nature-pictures and decorative fancies, in the style of Augustan prose 'meditations'; a poetic simile can bring him to the verge of absurdity. But he has also a natural poetry: 'I saw, as it were, the children unborn, walking in the bright green'; 'it was between the day and dark, when the shuttle stands still till the lamp is lighted'. Sometimes the pattern is complex—made up from peasant speech, Scots poetic tradition, and the language of the preacher—as in the incantations of Meg Gaffaw, or the minister's farewell:

Our work is done . . . and, in the sleep that all must sleep, beneath the cold blanket of the kirk-yard grass, and on that clay pillow where we must shortly lay our heads, may we have pleasant dreams, till we are awakened to partake of the everlasting banquet of the saints in glory.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> pp. 111-12, 160, 125, 160; Byron to the Countess of Blessington, quoted in Aberdeen, *op. cit.*, p. 122. Cf. p. 70, note.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 7; 1, 3, 8, 44, 24.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 28, 46, 56, cf. James Hervey's *Meditations and Contemplations* (1746); 148, 22; 4.

The Scottishness of Galt's style is not fully realized in silent reading. When he is read aloud by a Scot, a distinctive pattern and tone come through—even when, as in the first chapter, the dialect element is slight. This is emphasized by Galt himself. Reviewers had objected that the style of *The Provost* was 'not Scotch, because the words are English,—and not English, because the forms of speech are Scottish'. But, says Galt, 'independently of phraseology, there is such an idiomatic difference in the structure of the national dialects of England and Scotland'—as neat a 'retour' as the phrase 'South Britain'—'that very good Scotch might be couched in the purest English terms, and without the employment of a single Scottish word'.<sup>1</sup> Provost Pawkie records his dialect conversations, but tells his tale in the mannered Anglo-Scots which Galt, in his early essay on John Wilson, calls 'a species of translation'. This is also the minister's basic style, and it makes vernacular phrases and passages in the *Annals* look a bit contrived.<sup>2</sup> Galt was, of course, anxious to sell his work in England, where Burns's 'uncouth dialect' often 'spoiled all',<sup>3</sup> and his Scots is unnaturally light. He uses the vernacular for special effects, and indeed risks weighting it a little in the 1822 edition.<sup>4</sup>

It is 'the common language of the country', says Galt, 'in which [a Scotsman] expresses himself with most ease and vivacity, and, clothed in which, his earliest and most distinctive impressions always arise to his own mind': a vehicle of realism, wit, and feeling. Mr Balwhidder's Scots is marked in his reports of peasant speech and, by a natural extension of the principle, in bits of genre-painting—the portrait of Nanse

<sup>1</sup> Postscript to *Riagan Gilhaize* (1823); *Works* (1936), viii, 325.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Craig (*op. cit.*, p. 261) on Lady Grippy in *The Entail*, 'often no more than a vehicle for displays of language'.

<sup>3</sup> Cowper to Samuel Rose, 27 August 1787: 'Poor Burns loses much of his deserved praise in this country, through our ignorance of his language. . . . His candle is bright but shut up in a dark lantern.' (*Works*, 1836, vi, 56-57).

<sup>4</sup> See Textual Notes.

Banks, the village's farewell to Charlie Malcolm, and the descriptions of the carlins' secret tea-drinking and the 'pay-wedding'.<sup>1</sup> Dashes of dialect, for Galt and still for Scotsmen with a traditional turn of wit, add comic spice to an 'English' narrative: in, for instance, 'the very parrot . . . was a participant, for the beast gied a skraik that made my whole head dirl'; or in the portrait of the dancing-master, which deserves comparison with the Edinburgh etchings of John Kay. Scots is—and remains today—a ready tool for sarcasm: the 'inditer' of Breadland's Latin epitaph, says Mr Balwhidder, 'could no have been the young laird himself, although he got the credit o' on the stone, for he was nae daub in my aught at the Latin or any other language'.<sup>2</sup> Most important of all, Galt uses the vernacular to evoke strong feeling:<sup>3</sup> in the minister's 'touching discourse' of 1776, the plaint of Nanse Banks, the contrived and unconvincing monologue of the widow Mirkland, and the much truer pictures of the sorrows of Mrs Malcolm and Meg Gaffaw.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Essay on John Wilson (1863); *Annals*, pp. 13, 18, 12-13, 196.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 22, 15, 25.

<sup>3</sup> 'This is perfectly true to the broad Scots for professional pathos which we know to have been used by . . . advocates in court at that time' (Craig, op. cit., pp. 157-8; cf. p. 290).

<sup>4</sup> pp. 81-82, 43, 86-87, 109, 111-12.

## NOTE ON THE TEXT

THE text is printed from the British Museum copy of the first edition (12°; 1821), collated with that of 1822. Both editions were published at Edinburgh by Blackwood—and for him, at London, by Cadell. Both were printed in Edinburgh; 21 by James Ballantyne, and 22 by Neill. The title-pages are almost identical. The texts have the same make-up (A1r-S2v; pp. 1-400). In 22, however, the title-leaf is followed by two new preliminary leaves. The first carries a dedication 'To John Wilson, Esquire, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh; as a small expression of the Author's regard for his worth and talents'; the second, an advertisement for two other novels by Galt—*The Ayrshire Legatees* ('lately published') and *The Provost* ('in the Press'). An additional leaf at the end of 22 advertises new books from Blackwood.

A number of substantive alterations were made in 22. Since the printer was following the paging and lineation of 21, and had to accommodate these changes, they may be safely ascribed to Galt himself. Some of them eliminate cacophonous repetition or improve the ~~rythm~~ of the prose; a few show Galt, like Burns in revision, ~~weighing~~ the Scottishness of his language. A larger group of variants corrects obvious errors in printing, and what were apparently misreadings of a difficult manuscript. But although Galt revised his work for 22, he probably did not read the new edition in proof: it introduces as many new errors (both substantive and accidental) as it corrects, and a number of variant spellings unlikely to be Galt's. I have therefore followed the text of 21, incorporating changes in 22 which have apparent authority. All departures from 21 are recorded on pp. 211-13.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Galt's second letter to Blackwood, *infra*, p. 207.