

JOHN BUCHAN'S UNCOLLECTED JOURNALISM
A CRITICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC INVESTIGATION

APPENDIX
ANNOTATED ARTICLES

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APPENDIX

ANNOTATED ARTICLES

INTRODUCTION

Despite the growing interest in Buchan's work during recent years, as outlined in the review of Buchan scholarship in Chapter One, relatively little attention has been paid to the uncollected essays represented by his journalism. His biographers, Janet Adam Smith and Andrew Lownie, have used the essays sparingly to illustrate some aspects of Buchan's life, for example his university days ('Oxford and Her Influence' (**K1**) in Smith, *Biography* 48-49; 'Some College Memories' (**C117**) in Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 33) and his time at the *Spectator* ('"Spectator" Memories' (**C119**) in Smith 81 and Lownie 67). Both also use Buchan's first published article, 'Angling in Still Waters' (**N1**), to illustrate his early, rather arty and flowery 'Stevensonian' style (Smith 37-38, Lownie 33), but Smith goes a little further in discussing Buchan's appreciation of Stevenson's 'gospel of life' (33) in his obituary article on Stevenson (Article 1 in this Appendix), his criticism of the Kailyard school (86-87) in 'Nonconformity in Literature' (Article 2), and his war reporting for the *Times*, quoting from 'Ypres To-day' (Article 19) and two of his other *Times* despatches (194-96). However, these are rare and brief instances of attempts to analyse Buchan's journalism; more often, Smith merely quotes from his articles to illustrate Buchan's views on certain topics, such as his support for Lord Milner (133) in 'Lord Milner's High Commissionership: An Appreciation' (**H58**), and his growing interest in Zionism after he became a Member of Parliament (316) in 'Ourselves and the Jews' (**H175**). At one point, after listing some of the topics covered by Buchan in his early articles for the *Spectator*, she is content to provide five long quotations from different essays as examples of his journalism without any further comment (82-83).

Other Buchan critics have tended to adopt a similar approach to Buchan's journalism as his biographers by using his articles to illustrate and support the specific arguments they are making, rather than attempting to analyse the essays themselves or link them with other aspects and themes in Buchan's literary writing. Juanita Kruse follows this approach in her book *John Buchan and the Idea of Empire* (1989). She makes reference, for example, to some of Buchan's articles for the *Spectator* (**H8**, **H48**) and the *Quarterly Review* (**H62**, **H91**) in discussing Buchan's attitudes to racial problems in South Africa and the wider Empire (48-53), and uses two of his *Graphic* articles (**H181**, **H182**) to illustrate his views on the League of Nations (172-73). In the only other full-length studies of Buchan's work, David

Daniell's *The Interpreter's House* (1975) quotes from the same article in appreciation of Lord Milner (H58) as Janet Adam Smith (105), but otherwise makes no use of Buchan's essays; while Nathan Waddell's *Modern John Buchan* alludes only to 'The Most Difficult Form of Fiction' (Article 23) from Buchan's uncollected journalism (82, 85). However, Waddell makes use of several essays from the three published collections detailed in the Bibliography at the end of Part I¹, thus reflecting the general tendency of Buchan critics to confine themselves to these editions as they are more readily available than his uncollected journalism. This trend is followed in the two volumes of critical essays published to date², in which the only significant use of Buchan's uncollected journalism is contained in the essays by Michael Redley and Peter Henshaw in *Reassessing John Buchan* (2009). Redley's essay, 'John Buchan and the South African War', refers to a dozen examples of Buchan's journalism to illustrate his views on South Africa, including racial policy in the gold mines (71-72), citing H19 and H71, and the treatment of native Africans (73-74, citing C113, H85, H139, and H168). Henshaw's essay on 'John Buchan, America and the "British World", 1904-40', refers to five of Buchan's *Spectator* articles (110) which considered America's status as a colonial power and her relations with Britain (H34, H38, H60, H116, H128), and draws attention (110-11) to his reviews for the *Spectator* in 1914 of books about Abraham Lincoln and the American Civil War (C101 and D78).

There are also very few references to Buchan's uncollected journalism in academic sub-disciplines other than Buchan scholarship, or by critics who are not usually regarded as Buchan specialists. Joseph Kestner in his 2000 survey *The Edwardian Detective* links Buchan's definitions of the adventure tale and the detective story in his 'Adventure Stories: From Defoe to Stevenson' (Article 22) with his use of elements from both genres in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (363), later expanding on this in his *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction* (2010) to argue that Buchan's essay on adventure stories 'signals a transition from the adventure text to the spy text' (173) which is exemplified by *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915). The historian David Stafford had earlier referred to Buchan's opinion in the same essay that Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands* (1902) was the best adventure story published in the first quarter of the twentieth century ('John Buchan's Tales of Espionage' 12), while another historian, Colin Storer, references Buchan's 1915 article for *Land and Water* on 'The German Mind' (I 85) in his discussion of 'German Stereotypes in John

¹ Briefly, these are: *Some Eighteenth Century Byways* (1908); *Homilies and Recreations* (1926); and *Comments and Characters* (1940).

² *Reassessing John Buchan* (2009), edited by Kate Macdonald; and *John Buchan and the Idea of Modernity* (2013), edited by Kate Macdonald and Nathan Waddell.

Buchan's *Greenmantle*' (2009: 44-45). JP Parry, in a 1993 article on Buchan's personal philosophies and religious thought, makes good use of a number of Buchan's essays for the *Graphic*, while Bryan Cheyette employs only a single reference to Buchan's *Graphic* article 'Ourselves and the Jews' (H175) in his 1993 study *Constructions of 'The Jew' in English Literature and Society* (69). Finally, Andrew Nash references and quotes from Buchan's attack on Robertson Nicoll's promotion of the Kailyard school in 'Nonconformity in Literature' (Article 2) as part of his detailed 2007 examination of *Kailyard and Scottish Literature* (194-95).

This summary of scholarship to date relating specifically to Buchan's uncollected journalism reveals the limited use which has been made of his essays by biographers, scholars and non-Buchan specialists. Their approach has generally been to search for a small number of essays to provide subsidiary support for certain aspects of Buchan's life or for preconceived views and themes they have found in Buchan's writing. By way of contrast, my approach has been to consider the whole range of Buchan's uncollected journalism, foregrounding the essays themselves, and examining the ways in which they might throw light on his career as a journalist, his roles as a literary critic and cultural commentator, the themes and sources which he employed in his fiction and non-fiction, and inter-textual connections between his essays and his literary writing. The results are set out in Chapters Two to Five in Part I of the thesis. My findings may overlap in certain minor respects with other Buchan scholars, for example in discussing Buchan's early writing style or in considering his career at the *Spectator* or as a war reporter for the *Times*. However, I have endeavoured wherever possible to concentrate on areas not previously covered by Buchan critics. This more open-ended approach has resulted in a number of original findings, such as the connections between 'An Imperial Club for London' and the opening of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (Part I, 82-83) and Buchan's borrowings from John Cuthbert Lawson in *The Dancing Floor* (129-33). These findings emerged wholly from my researches rather than from any preconceived ideas about the topics to be included.

This approach is reflected in my selection of Buchan's essays for detailed examination and annotation. Of the twenty-five essays included in this Appendix, only five have been considered in any significant way by previous critics³. The selection covers the entire range of Buchan's career: the young literary essayist who wrote about 'Robert Louis Stevenson' and 'Nonconformity in Literature' (Articles 1 and 2); the professional journalist at the

³ These are Article 1: 'Robert Louis Stevenson'; 2: 'Nonconformity in Literature'; 19: 'Ypres To-day'; 22: 'Adventure Stories: From Defoe to Stevenson'; and 23: 'The Most Difficult Form of Fiction'.

Spectator commenting on some of the major political and cultural issues of the Edwardian period (the majority of articles selected here); the eye-witness reporter for the *Times* on the Western Front in 1915 (Article 19); and finally the post-war celebrity columnist writing for a variety of magazines such as *John O'London's Weekly*, the *Listener*, and the *Graphic* (Articles 22, 23 and 25). The selections, which are presented in chronological order, illustrate those phases of Buchan's career and the changes in his writing style which are discussed in Chapter Two. His *Spectator* articles predominate because they formed the major part of his writing for magazines and newspapers. About three-quarters of Buchan's total journalistic output was written for the *Spectator*, and this proportion is reflected in the articles selected.

The subject-matter of these articles reflects the critical approach I have taken by concentrating on the various ways in which Buchan's journalism connects with his more familiar literary work, both fiction and non-fiction. Several are related directly to the literary world, such as 'The Celtic Spirit in Literature' (Article 4) and 'Local Colour' (11), while others illuminate his approach to the art of fiction which shaped his own literary work – 'George Meredith' (Article 13) and 'The Poetics of Aristotle' (14). Although Buchan's literary criticism is essentially conservative in nature, two of the essays selected (Articles 20 and 21) reflect his attempt to re-engage with contemporary literature after the First World War. His views on the two fiction genres in which he excelled, the adventure story/spy thriller and the historical novel, are outlined in Articles 22 and 23, and his non-fiction specialisms of history and historical biography are considered in 'History and Life' and 'Montrose' (Articles 12 and 18). Heroism is a dominant theme in Buchan's literary work which is explored in his articles on 'The Practical Mystic' (8) and 'Sir Richard Burton' (9); other recurring themes are evident in 'Robert Louis Stevenson' (1) and 'The Glamour of High Altitudes' (6); and more explicit links to his novels *The Dancing Floor* and *Prester John* are provided by 'Greek Religion and Modern Folk-Lore' (15) and 'African Secret History' (17).

But the literary connections in Buchan's journalism are by no means limited to his literary articles; they are widespread throughout his work, and are represented here by articles on politics (24), imperialism (5), and race (7 and 16). Buchan's work is particularly sensitive to, in his view, the malign effects of modernity. These effects can be psychological, as in 'The National "Malaise"' (Article 3), physical ('England's Changing Face', Article 25), or a combination of the two, as reflected in 'The Urban Sentiment' (10). Indeed, the literary

connections in Buchan's journalism are generally so pervasive that different selections of articles could be made concentrating on topics such as economics, society, foreign affairs, war, philosophy, travel, or sport, which would also contain a significant number of ideas, topics and themes which are reflected in his literary work.

The vast majority of Buchan's uncollected articles and reviews exist only in the printed form in which they were published in the original magazine or newspaper. None of the articles selected here or included in the Catalogue were subsequently reprinted in Buchan's lifetime. Pre-publication versions such as printers' proofs and typescript or manuscript drafts are extremely rare. I have not been able to trace any pre-publication material in respect of the twenty-five articles selected, with the single exception of a typed version of Article 21, 'This Freedom', initialled by Buchan but unamended (NLS Acc.7214 Mf.MSS.328). The article was published in 1922 when Buchan was no longer working for the *Spectator*, so this typed version appears to be a typescript which would have been sent by Buchan to the paper for subsequent printing and publication. During the early part of his career before the First World War, when Buchan was on the staff of the *Spectator* and a regular contributor, he would write the majority of his articles by hand before they were set up in print, and the proofs were subsequently corrected prior to publication. But the *Spectator* has advised me that it now has only printed copies in its archives and has not retained any proofs or manuscript articles from Buchan's period (personal email 22 January 2014). I have not endeavoured to trace any pre-publication material which may be held by the publishers of the other magazines and newspapers represented in the twenty-five articles⁴, as the selection was made primarily for the purposes of this thesis rather than a critical edition, but clearly the preparation of a future critical edition of Buchan's essays would require further research into the possible existence of any additional pre-publication material.

In the absence of any other versions of the essays selected (except for the unamended typescript of 'This Freedom' as noted above), I have taken the original published article in the magazine or newspaper as the copy-text in all cases for the purposes of this thesis. In reproducing the articles I have used the 'diplomatic transcript' method described by DC Greetham in his *Textual Scholarship* (350), which concentrates on the substantive content of the text in preference to a scrupulous fidelity to the appearance of the original, because the essays are presented here as part of a thesis rather than a critical edition. They form an

⁴ These are the *Glasgow University Magazine*, *Glasgow Herald*, *Times*, *John O'London's Weekly*, *Listener*, and *Graphic*.

important source of reference for the arguments and original findings in Part I, and it is for this reason that line numbers have been added to facilitate cross-referencing. As far as the 'accidentals' of the text are concerned, I have followed the diplomatic transcript method of reproducing the exact spelling, punctuation and capitalisations of the originals (Greetham 333, 350), but I have transcribed them into a standard type-face, lineation and paragraph format to provide a uniform presentation of each essay which is consistent with the main thesis and Catalogue. I have also omitted any sub-headings which may have been present in the original articles. This approach would have to be reconsidered in the preparation of a future critical edition, when perhaps a 'photographic reprint' or facsimile of the articles in their original page settings (Greetham 349) might be more appropriate. An electronic or 'hypertext' (Greetham 360) would seem to be unnecessary unless a good deal of pre-publication material in the form of printers' proofs or manuscripts is revealed by further research.

In summary, my overall objective has been to reproduce the texts of the articles in a format which is most appropriate for this thesis. Each text is preceded by a headnote which introduces the article, places it in the context of Buchan's career and contemporary events, and considers any significant features. The text is followed by detailed footnotes which explain points of interest and obscure references. They also provide biographical and bibliographical details of the persons and works mentioned in the article. An asterisk in the text indicates a footnote, which is referenced to the corresponding line number(s) in the text.

ARTICLE 1

'Robert Louis Stevenson'

Glasgow University Magazine 7 (9 January 1895): 141-43. Initialled 'JB'.

Headnote

This article, an obituary of Stevenson who died on 3 December 1894, was written when Buchan was nineteen years old and in his third year at Glasgow University, before going up to Brasenose College, Oxford.

At the beginning of his writing career Buchan was heavily influenced by Stevenson. His manuscript commonplace book 'Promus' from the early 1890s contains his list of 'The 20 Greatest Novels in the World', among them 'The Adventures of David Balfour' (in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*) and *The Master of Ballantrae* (NLS Acc.6542/9). It also has some quotations and longer passages copied from his reading of Stevenson, including 'Fontainebleau', which Buchan selects in this article as among the most charming of Stevenson's essays. In a letter to his friend Charles Dick (5 July 1893) he mentions that he has read *Kidnapped* and *The Master of Ballantrae* for the fourth or fifth time (NLS Acc.7214 Mf.MSS.310).

Stevenson's influence is reflected in this article which is a fulsome tribute and reflects the wide range of Stevenson's literary output – essays, travel writing, novels, short stories and poetry. It was a breadth of writing that the young Buchan sought to emulate, and his memoirs fully acknowledged the debt owed to Stevenson, not only by himself but by his generation: 'Stevenson at that time was a most potent influence over young men, especially Scottish university students' (*MHD* 42). 'As a guide to northern youth in the 'nineties Stevenson filled the bill completely. He was at once Scottish and cosmopolitan, artist and adventurer, scholar and gipsy' (43). These qualities of Stevenson are brought out in this article. Buchan saw himself as something of a 'scholar-gipsy' during this period of his life, linking the world of scholarship at Glasgow and Oxford with his gipsy wanderings over the Border country during the summer vacations (*MHD* 35). The cosmopolitan adventurer came later when he established himself as a barrister and journalist in London before going out to South Africa to assist Milner and his staff in rebuilding the country after the Boer War.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

It is now little more than a month since, in a distant Pacific island, Death claimed its due from one of the bravest spirits who ever laughed at its authority. Suddenly, with no long illness, Mr. Stevenson died, and left to the world a few unfinished works, and a feeling of unavailing regret. The circumstances of his death and burial* form a fitting conclusion to a
5 romantic life, like the tailpiece which one may find at the close of a rare story of adventure.

The time is not yet ripe to praise Stevenson adequately, or to estimate his proper place in the history of our literature. That his place is assured, and that it will be high we all believe, but it rests alone on the judgment of after years. Meanwhile, let one who has long been an enthusiastic admirer offer these few words as a tribute to his memory.

10 There are some writers who demand our respect by their great gifts or their unflinching pursuit of an adopted plan. We must all acknowledge the vast genius of Tolstoi, however

we may dislike its character, and we must not refuse praise to Zola for his laborious creations, though our sympathy with him may be of the scantest. But, apart from such cold-hearted admiration, we feel a warm liking for some men, which makes our respect
15 none the less deep, because it makes it more familiar. It is in this way that we feel towards Lamb and his school of essayists, towards Scott and Dickens let us say, and in a pre-eminent degree towards Stevenson. For these men let us see into their hearts, show us their little store-houses of sentiments and affections, walk with us abroad, and sit with us at home. Every man has a shelf of books, picked from the high and low places of literature, which he
20 holds to till the end of his days, and, if he be sentimental, will have buried with him at his funeral; and these books are of the companionable sort. Now, in this delicate egoism, Stevenson was a past master, for he has the trick of casting a glamour over us, the glamour of his personality, as the old enchanters in fairy stories did to the children they bewitched. But to consider this subjective side is but to note a little part of his genius, for few men ever
25 possessed more entirely the art of self-abnegation in the interests of vivid narrative. His heroes live and die with all the vehemence of real life and death, and there is nothing to mark the conscious effort of creation. Further, few have been so successful in so many provinces of their art. To treat him as a romancist only would be to leave out of account the poet, the scholar, the finished stylist, the moralist, the dreamer of dreams. Here of a
30 truth is one Admirable Crichtoun* in days when narrowness is a virtue, and a man of many interests and capacities is thought to be on a fair way to destruction.

His first success was scored in that most delicate and difficult of literary forms – the essay. He was from first to last an artist who sought to make his manner no less perfect than his matter; so it was right that his first care should be for his tools, the words which must give
35 body to his thought. His essays, both early and later, are to be regarded as experimental, essays in new shades and distinctions of style, attempts to reach perfection in word and phrase. From "Ordered South", which appeared in *Macmillan's* when the author was a boy of twenty-two*, to "A Christmas Sermon", which we may look upon as the last of his great essays, there is the same earnest striving after verbal perfection. There is no trace of
40 violent change; each is a finished jewel of its kind, though the kind is curiously varied. "Des Triplex"* is valiant and high spirited, the "English Admirals" is full of the gusty sea wind, and "Some Portraits of Raeburn"* is a wonderfully happy sketch of the jovial and fitful Edinburgh of past days. "Walking-Tours" and the "Epilogue"* are inspired by a gipsy feeling, whimsical and freakish, and quick to see the extravagant. His reminiscences of
45 boyhood in "A College Magazine" and "Random Memories"* are written with so happy a grace as to be all but unmatched. Then he has his more serious vein, his "*Pulvis et Umbra*" and "Old Mortality," when he moralises over the fleeting and difficult life of man – seriously, but never despondingly, with the air of one who has tasted the bitter and the sweet of life to the full. His literary essays in *Men and Books* belong to a different region.
50 His criticism is very acute, always sympathetic, and marked by much scholarly grace. We have his own confession that he was an idle student, but he must have put his time to rare use in another way; which is but a new instance of the eternal antithesis between literature and dogma. He has been one of Burns' severest critics, and the truest, it seems to me, of the many judges of Thoreau: and I should doubt if better estimates of Charles of Orleans
55 and François Villon* were ever written.

If one were asked to pick the best of this motley crowd, it would be hard to give an answer. To my thinking "Des Triplex,"* "Pastoral," "Old Mortality," and "Fontainebleau," are the most charming, but it is ungracious to choose when all is of the finest. It is wiser to assume the attitude of the eminent specialist towards whisky, who said that "there was no such
60 thing as bad whisky, that some kinds might be better than others, but that it was all good."

His style has not lacked its critics. Its matchless purity has been called rigid, a cast-iron mechanism, the lucidity of crystal rather than of clear water. It is said that writing was with him a game of word-hunting, that we see him picking his phrase, trying many keys. The time-worn maxim about the highest art being the concealment of art has been quoted to
65 him by gentlemen who are not over-burdened with much art of any kind to conceal. To us there seems to be no halting nor labouring, but a worthy attempt to present in our inadequate speech the shifting pageant of life. His style is instinct with emotion, vivid, palpable, which leaps now and then into a happy eloquence. He is the supreme stylist of our age and generation, ranked along with that great man who died scarce half a year
70 before him. Yet we should put Stevenson on a higher plane than Walter Pater*. The latter is too quiet and academic, moving always to a slow music, while the other tells of the strong air, the sea, and the vast and motley concourse of humankind; and this, surely, is the true style of one who would be a critic of life.

Two exquisite little books of travel* came from him almost at the outset of his career –
75 wanderings by the still waters of Flanders and the green slopes and pinewoods of the Cevennes. Sterne is clearly his model, and we find much in both to recall the *Sentimental Journey**; but there are also echoes of Lamb, of Hazlitt, of Thackeray, of Bunyan. We have nothing in our literature that I know of quite like these little books, so full of subtle feeling for nature and man. They make enchanting companions for the gentleman-tramp in these
80 latter days, and I, for one have tried their charm in many odd places, in long fishing journeys, and at the back of a dyke in an April snow storm.

Then came his stories, on which his fame is chiefly founded. *Treasure Island* is the one romance since *Crusoe** which has absolutely taken captive the world of boys. The impossible Jim Hawkins, Silver with his smooth speech and great shining face, Ben Gunn
85 and the Doctor are as certain of life as the mariner of York and his man Friday*. The archaism of the language and the terse narrative suit the tale so finely that, regarded as a work of art, it is nigh perfect. I have heard people say that the book was too juvenile for their taste. For such folk I would devise an elaborate system of punishment. They should be shut up in a loathsome dungeon with no other works than *Hegel*, *Mill's Logic*, and
90 *Butler's Analogy**, that they might get their fill of mature reading.

The Scotch romances – *Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae*, and *Catriona* – form perhaps his greatest claim to immortality. Since Scott, I venture to say, no one has so exactly reproduced the life of Scotland in past days; and Stevenson has, what Scott never had, an eye for finish and execution, which make his books models of workmanship. *Kidnapped* is,
95 perhaps, the best, for we have here the finest perception of character, and the most artistic setting. David Balfour, with his pedantries and whims and brave heart is a sort of apotheosis of the Lowland Scot, with a tinge of gentility in his blood. He is all but unique in fiction; Scott has nothing quite like him; and though in these later days we have had many formed after his model, none hold our heart in the same way. Then there is Alan Breck, the
100 best Highlandman ever drawn, with all his faults and virtues, his womanliness and manliness, his acute childish mind, and rag tag morality. He is the real thing, as unlike the Gael of the ordinary novel and play, as a rough hillside differs from a piece of stage scenery. The wanderings of this modern Ulysses are told in a style which belongs only to Stevenson, half whimsical, and wholly vivid and picturesque. *The Master* is an attempt on a larger
105 canvas, and it is a debateable question whether in this he is altogether successful. The Master himself with his sinister face, the Irish adventurer, the patient unlovable character of the younger brother, and the weakness of the old lord are above praise; but there are sundry weak points in the tale, as, to take an instance, the whole episode of Secundra Dass and the resuscitation of the corpse. The duel scene is memorable, and throughout the

110 story the abiding *grayness* of character and scene is suggested with extraordinary art. *Catriona*, his last great novel, with many defects has vast merits. Alan Breck is as flighty and generous as ever; James Moir is a good example of the worst type of Highlander; the entangled network of legal forms and processes is admirably described; the farewell scene on Gullane Sands is as fine as anything in Dumas; and the ride to Inverary and David's entry
115 into the kirk is a thing so unique in its way that we can only admire the skill of the man who tells it. The progress of true love in Leyden (or is it Utrecht? for this is written far from books)* is artfully managed, surprising us with the revelation of unsuspected powers in the author. The defects of the book are so obvious that it is needless to dwell upon them, but the merits are so great that one is constrained to fling all criticism to the winds and think
120 only of enjoyment.

His shorter stories are more perfectly artistic than his longer, and while they lack the breadth of view, they are often more true in their self-made sphere. "Thrawn Janet" in the *Merry Men* and the "Tale of Tod Lapraik"* in *Catriona* are each worthy to stand beside "Wandering Willie's Tale,"* in their gruesome supernatural power. *The New Arabian*
125 *Nights* is one of the most characteristic of his works, full of that freakish idealism which would find a Bagdad in Leicester Square. *Dr. Jekyll* and the *Dynamiters**, and "Markheim" in the *Merry Men* are of the same order, romances of our own day, revelations of the inexplicable in common things. "Will o' the Mill" is a sweet, placid fable, with all that far-away quaintness which belongs to few books other than Shakespeare's *Comedies* and the
130 *Pilgrim's Progress*.

In all his fiction, in *Prince Otto* as the *Ebb-tide*, in *Island Nights' Entertainments* as in *Olalla*, there is evidenced that quick eye for the romantic in all things, that realism which would count nothing common or unclean, that unconquerable idealism which held to the reality of truth and beauty and human goodness. He is like the great French writer in many things,
135 like Flaubert in his minute care for style, like Bourget* in his startling psychological power, like Maupassant in his gift of brilliant etching in little compass. But unlike them he never bows before the "great goddess lubricity";* he abhors what in his vivid way he calls "that meat-market of middle-aged sensuality,"* as much as the flimsy world of sentiment and convention.

140 A word on his poetry. Imitative it certainly is, but I am much deceived if there is not a rare grace and a fine personal quality in it all. His *Underwoods*, both the Scotch and English verses, and at least one of the *Ballads*, "Treonderoga,"* seem to me to be instinct with that true poetic spirit which owns no school save that universal one which includes Homer and Shakespeare.

145 Of the literary influence of Stevenson it is scarce necessary to speak. The young men and maidens of the *National Observer* and the *Yellow Book** owe more to him than they would care to acknowledge. All our *jeunesse dorée** have felt his benign force, and it would be an interesting study for anyone with leisure to trace the thread of derivation through some half-dozen of the better sort of our living authors. Mr. Henley* owns him as master; Mr.
150 Richard le Gallienne* owes whatever style he has chiefly to him; and Mr. Crockett* by his own confession is but "playing to Sir Walter."

The primary virtue of Stevenson after all seems to lie in his gospel of life. Apart from his great artistic merits, there would appear to be this directly didactic side, in which like Carlyle he seeks to teach his generation. His is the most romantic figure of these latter
155 days, battling to the end with disease, tasting life in its true sense, a scholar among dullards, a "gentleman among *canaille*,"* a gipsy among a race of successful merchants, amongst this crew of metaphysicians and mountebanks, New Women and New

Humorists,* anatomists and impressionists and Heaven knows what! Amongst the
*ignavum pecus** he seems like a mediæval knight who has found himself by some strange
160 chance amid the revelry of a feast of Isis*. The gospel of life, that it is the first duty of man
to serve God and his neighbours, to fight his way through the world, looking upon it as no
continuing city, but at its best a place of pilgrimage, to enjoy the blessings of Heaven with a
thankful heart, to count dishonour worse than death, and to meet the last enemy without a
quiver – this surely is no ignoble creed. He is, and I glory in saying it, the greatest of all
165 English essayists, the best master of romantic narrative since Scott; but it is his highest
worth, which gives him title to the first place among Scotchmen since Carlyle, that in a
querulous age he left us an example of a manly and chivalrous life.

It is idle to praise the great departed, and it is still idler in the case of one who even in his
lifetime put on immortality. The news of his death, I doubt not, brought sorrow to many
170 folk in the four corners of the earth, who had loved his books. We may regret that he has
left unfinished work, and not accomplished all that his heart desired, but in one sense we
must be glad. For he could not have wished to die better than at the summit of his fame, at
the tip-top of his life, at the height of his energy, to pass, in his own beautiful words, "at a
bound to the other side."* The last act was of a piece with the rest, and the curtain goes
175 down among the plaudits of the spectators. And of a truth he has no unworthy resting
place, not as he might have wished in some weather-swept church-yard in the Lothians, but
in that distant seaboard, left, like Browning's grammarian*, on that solitary hill-top, alone
with the stars and the winds and the serene sky.

Footnotes

The titles and dates of Stevenson's works in these footnotes, and quotations from them,
were obtained from the Robert Louis Stevenson Website (6 and 8 November 2012
<<http://www.robert-louis-stevenson.org.uk>>).

4 *The circumstances of his death and burial*: Stevenson died suddenly of a brain
haemorrhage at his estate of Vailima in Samoa. His body was buried on the summit of Vaea
mountain, borne there by the Samoan workers from his estate (Calder 330).

30 *Admirable Crichton*: a phrase used to denote a universal genius, based on the life of
James Crichton (1560-82), whose reputation as a man of exceptional talents was
established by *The Discovery of a Most Exquisite Jewel* (1652), a fantastic account of him
written by Sir Thomas Urquhart (CBD 22 November 2012). Buchan's reference is not to be
confused with a comic stage play, *The Admirable Crichton* by JM Barrie, which did not
appear until 1902.

37-38 *a boy of twenty-two*: 'Ordered South' was in fact published in May 1874 when
Stevenson, who was born on 13 November 1850, was actually twenty-three years old
(Calder 28, 80).

40-41 '*Des Triplex*': misprint for 'Aes Triplex', a Stevenson essay first published in 1878 and
subsequently collected in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881).

42 '*Some Portraits of Raeburn*': the correct title of this essay is 'Some Portraits by Raeburn',
first published in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881).

43 '*Epilogue*': full title 'Epilogue to an Inland Voyage' (1888), collected in *Across the Plains,
with Other Memories and Essays* (1892).

45 *'Random Memories'*: Stevenson wrote two essays with this subtitle: 'Contributions to the History of Fife: Random Memories' and 'The Education of an Engineer: More Random Memories', both published in 1888 and collected in *Across the Plains* (1892).

53-55 *Burns, Thoreau, Charles of Orleans, François Villon*: all the subjects of essays by Stevenson collected in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882).

57 *'Des Triplex'*: a misprint. See note to lines 40-41 above.

70 *Walter Pater*: English academic and critic (1832-94). Buchan acknowledged that Pater, together with Stevenson, was the principal influence on the style of his early essays and short stories (*MHD* 41).

74 *Two exquisite little books of travel*: these are *An Inland Voyage* (1878) relating to Flanders, and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* (1879).

76-77 *Sentimental Journey*: the full title of Laurence Sterne's book is *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768).

83 *Crusoe: The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner* by Daniel Defoe (1719).

85 *the mariner of York and his man Friday*: Crusoe and his servant in *Robinson Crusoe* (see note to line 83 above).

90 *Butler's Analogy*: Joseph Butler's *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (1736).

116-17 *in Leyden (or is it Utrecht? for this is written far from books)*: true love between David Balfour and Catriona Drummond develops in *Leyden* (*Catriona* Chapters 24-28). Buchan's lack of access to books may explain his uncharacteristic errors of detail in this article (see notes to lines 37-38, 40-41, 42, 126, 142, and 173-74).

123 *the 'Tale of Tod Lapraik'*: this is 'Black Andie's Tale of Tod Lapraik' in Chapter 15 of *Catriona* (1893).

124 *'Wandering Willie's Tale'*: this appears in Letter XI of Sir Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet* (1824).

126 *the Dynamiters*: the full and correct title is *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (1885).

135 *Bourget*: Paul Bourget (1852-1935), French novelist, poet and critic (*CBD* 22 November 2012).

137 *the 'great goddess lubricity'*; a quotation from Matthew Arnold's essay 'At the Princess's' in *Philistinism in England and America* (1882), in which Arnold criticises the increasing sexual frankness of French culture: 'their modern drama, like their lighter newspapers, their novels and their art in general, is a worshipper of the great goddess Lubricity' (University of Michigan 1974. 8 November 2012 <<http://www.books.google.co.uk>>).

137-38 *'that meat-market of middle-aged sensuality'*: from Stevenson's essay 'The Lantern Bearers' (1888), collected in *Across the Plains* (1892). Like Matthew Arnold (see note to line 137 above), Stevenson criticises the modern French realist novel, where he notes 'in that

meat-market of middle-aged sensuality, the disgusted surprise with which we see the hero drift sidelong, and practically quite untempted, into every description of misconduct and dishonour' (*Across the Plains* 226). Buchan later used a long extract from 'The Lantern Bearers', which included this phrase, in his published lecture *The Novel and the Fairy Tale* (1931): 15.

142 *'Treonderoga'*: a misprint for 'Ticonderoga: A Legend of the West Highlands' from Stevenson's book of narrative poems *Ballads* (1890).

146 *the National Observer and the Yellow Book*: two of the leading literary periodicals of the 1890s, which sought to publish the best in new writing by young authors. The *National Observer* was edited by WE Henley (see note to line 149 below). The *Yellow Book* acquired a reputation as an avant-garde and rather risqué periodical (Hanson 11). Nevertheless, it published three of Buchan's early short stories: 'A Captain of Salvation' (January 1896), 'A Journey of Little Profit' (April 1896), and 'At the Article of Death' (January 1897).

147 *jeunesse dorée*: young people of wealth, privilege, or fashion (*OED* 22 November 2012).

149 *Mr Henley*: William Ernest Henley (1849-1903), English poet, playwright, critic, and editor. He was a close friend of Stevenson, and is said to have inspired the character of Long John Silver in Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883) (*CBD* 26 February 2014).

150 *Richard le Gallienne*: English writer (1866-1947). Buchan succeeded him as a reader for the publisher, John Lane, in October 1895 (Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 41).

150 *Mr Crockett*: SR (Samuel Rutherford) Crockett (1860-1914), Scottish Free Church minister and popular novelist of the 1890s.

156 *a 'gentleman among canaille'*: a reference to Andrew Lang's *Letters to Dead Authors* (1886) in which, in his letter to Edgar Allan Poe, Lang refers to Poe as 'a genius tethered to the hack-work of the press, a gentleman among canaille'. 'Canaille' in this context means riffraff or rabble (6 November 2012 <<http://www.online-literature.com>>).

157-58 *New Women and New Humorists*: a reference to the contemporary literary fashion of grouping new authors under such epithets. One of the most prominent of the New Women authors of the 1890s was George Egerton, whose short stories often satirised the conventions of the masculine adventure narratives popularised by Stevenson and others (Hunter 38).

159 *ignavum pecus*: meaning 'the lazy herd', taken from Virgil's *Georgics*, Book iv, line 168 (6 November 2012 <<http://en.wikiquote.org>>). Francis Bacon (1561-1626) employs this quotation in his essay 'Of Usury' (6 November 2012 <<http://www.literaturepage.com>>). Buchan had edited Bacon's *Essays and Apothegms* for an edition published in February 1894.

160 *Isis*: a goddess in ancient Egyptian religious beliefs, whose worship later spread throughout the Greco-Roman world (6 November 2012 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

173-74 *'at a bound to the other side'*: slightly misquoted from Stevenson's essay 'Aes Triplex', in which he discusses the subject of death, and here of a man who dies, like Stevenson himself, in mid-career: 'In the hot-fit of life, a-tiptoe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound *on* to the other side' (*Virginibus Puerisque* 183). Buchan later used an expanded version of this quotation in his memoirs as a tribute to one of his friends

from Oxford, Auberon Herbert, who perished in the First World War (*These For Remembrance* 28, *MHD* 74).

177 *Browning's grammarian*: a reference to the poem 'A Grammarian's Funeral' by Robert Browning (1812-89), in which the body of the grammarian is carried, like Stevenson's (see note to line 4 above), to a mountain-top for burial (6 November 2012 <<http://classiclit.about.com>>).

ARTICLE 2

'Nonconformity in Literature'

Glasgow Herald 2 November 1895: 4e-f. Signed.

Headnote

This article was written during Buchan's first term at Brasenose College, Oxford. In an earlier article for the *Glasgow Herald* published two weeks previously under the title 'Oxford and Her Influence' (K1), Buchan had criticised the ease and comfort of the lifestyle at Oxford, which was too isolated from the harsh struggle for existence outside its confines. This, he argued, had produced a culture which was over-refined and aesthetic, completely out of touch with popular favour, interested only in the bizarre and inconsequential, and descending towards a cult of decadence.

Now, in this article, Buchan widens his attack to the contemporary literary scene, which he believes has developed many of the undesirable characteristics he noted at Oxford. Although he has a great dislike for the current decadence, he does not object to the principle of seeking different subjects or new forms of expression in literature, for each generation of writers has attempted to do this in the past. What he criticises most strongly is both the current tendency to celebrate such nonconformity and the trend towards a critical theory which regards newness as the most important attribute of literature to the detriment of traditional standards of criticism. This has led 'some gentlemen of the press' (lines 88-89) to overpraise certain new authors, thus helping to make their books more popular while at the same time raising their critical status far beyond their merit. Here Buchan appears to have in mind the critic Robertson Nicoll, editor of the *British Weekly* and the *Bookman*, who was making a reputation as 'a man who could single-handedly make or destroy a book' (Nash 191). Nicoll was a nonconformist minister of the Free Church of Scotland, as were SR Crockett, the novelist specifically criticised in this article, and Ian Maclaren, the pseudonym of John Watson⁵, another novelist heavily promoted by Nicoll at this time. Buchan's choice of title may be an ironic reference to these ministers, as his article deals with nonconformity in literature rather than religion. His reference to such nonconformity as a 'crying sin' (line 29), which leads to the 'besetting sin' of pride (line 35), also gives an ironic impression.

Crockett and Maclaren were two of the principal novelists of the Kailyard school, which became very popular in the 1890s mainly due to Nicoll's influence. The term, which literally means 'cabbage patch', was first applied to Scottish literature by the critic JH Millar in an article for the April 1895 edition of the *New Review*, in which he attacked Crockett and Maclaren, together with the writer JM Barrie, for their narrow Scottish provincialism (Nash 11-12). Buchan was undoubtedly aware of the emerging criticism of Kailyard, and this article, which represents his own public contribution to the debate, may also have been prompted by his annoyance when his publisher, Fisher Unwin, insisted that the phrase *of the Moors* should be added to the title of his first novel *Sir Quixote* to bring it into line with the popular fashion set by Crockett, whose *Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills* had been published by Unwins the previous year (Smith, *Biography* 90). In the article Buchan argues that what he calls the 'kailyairdie' (line 39) does not represent a new approach to literature – its content and style merely draw on that of previous generations of writers – but it has been pompously over-promoted by Nicoll and others.

⁵ Not to be confused with William Watson, the English poet criticised in Buchan's article.

Janet Adam Smith quotes the section of this article which criticises Crockett in her biography of Buchan (86-87), and notes that it brought a sharp response from Robertson Nicoll in the *British Weekly* of 7 November 1895, in which he reviewed Buchan's own novel *Sir Quixote of the Moors*, which had just been published, criticising it as an inferior imitation of Crockett. Although Nicoll's other literary periodical, the *Bookman*, soon published an appreciative profile of Buchan as one of the 'New Writers' in December 1895, relations between the two men were always to remain cool. The *British Weekly* printed an adverse review of Buchan's next novel, *John Burnet of Barns* (1898), and years later, after Nicoll's death in 1923, Buchan included a satirical portrait of a newspaper magnate, which he admitted was partly based on Nicoll, in his 1930 novel, *Castle Gay* (Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 50, 171; Smith, *Biography* 268).

Buchan never lost his dislike of 'kailyairdie', proposing a motion at an Oxford Union debate condemning the Kailyard school of novelists in December 1897 and thirty years later continuing his disparagement of it in an interview for the *Book Window* in December 1927 (Smith, *Biography* 87, 487). Indeed, both of his biographers believe that the failure of the short-lived *Scottish Review*, which Buchan edited in 1907-08 and attempted to change from a predominantly religious weekly to a more outward-looking cultural magazine, was at least partly caused by the aversion of many of his readers to expanding their horizons 'beyond kirk and kailyard' (Smith, *Biography* 172; Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 103).

NONCONFORMITY IN LITERATURE

If a modern Lucian were to go through our streets to-day noting us as he went, and if an up-to-date "Banquet of Philosophers"* were the result of his observations, we fancy that it would afford as amusing reading as its ancient prototype, or indeed as any work of its kind from Horace to Swift*. For while possessing much that is good and showing many signs of
5 excellence to be, our age has that peculiar blemish that all such periods must have – a desire for the new and impatience under the restraint of the old. This is patent to others beside the *laudator temporis acti**, whose whole interest is centred in the days when Plancus* was consul. In a time when the prosperity of a country is considerable, when no
10 great war is on hand, when no burning questions, social or religious, are stirring its heart and bringing to view hidden powers or hidden weaknesses, when no writers of surpassing greatness are among us, it is no more than natural that the heart of the people should go after strange gods*, and our younger writers vie with one another in seeking for the odd, and, when found, proclaiming its magnitude. And since their work, if judged by the
15 standard by which we try the greater writers of the world, falls far short of the first, they must perforce chafe under these rules and standards, and seek to be a law unto themselves.* So we have every rooster crowing on the top of his own hen-coop, and proclaiming that there truly is the Land of Heart's Desire.*

It is well at the outset to admit the excellence in itself of this spirit of inquiry, for without it we should not advance one whit on the ways of our forefathers, and so the lesson of time
20 would never be learned. It is the part of the writer, as Horace tells us, to find new terms and revive those whose significance is all but lost – *indictis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum, fingere cinctis non exaudita Cathegis*.* As our knowledge of the world grows, it must needs be that literature find a hundred fresh fields for her activity. But at the same
25 time we must remember that work is not great because the theme is a new one or the phraseology striking, that there are certain eternal laws which try all things, whether they be for to-day or for ever, and that these form the final court of appeal, which is not done

away with merely because some youngster declares that he in future will be a law unto himself.

This crying sin of nonconformity lies not so much in the practice as in the theory behind it.
30 We applaud the work of these men and own their excellences. It is only when they begin to theorise about their doings, and raise their very failings into peculiar virtues, that we beg to dissent. Instead of cultivating in peace their own little plot of the great garden, they fall to proclaiming to the world at large that this plot of theirs contains the true secret of the universe, and inviting all and sundry to fall down in hopeless admiration. Indeed the
35 besetting sin of the day is pride. The men of the past did all that our little masters are doing, only they did it modestly and with a due sense of its relative unimportance. There is nothing new under the sun,* and to-day our young men and maidens do what their forefathers did, only in a more pompous way. In those days they were content to delve in a corner of their kailyairdie without exaggerating the importance of the crop of leeks and
40 turnips; they were content to fly their kite without thinking that it was touching the stars, and to carry their balloon without fancying that, like Atlas,* they had got the world on their shoulders.

Of all forms of this nonconformity the most oppressive and obvious to-day is that cult of the decadent and sickly which claims so many votaries. It is not a new thing, being as old as
45 Callimachus, who has given us in an epigram the creed of the decadents of his day. "I hate the cyclic poem, nor do I delight in a road which carries many hither and thither, and I drink not from the fountain; I loathe everything popular."* Their distinguishing feature is a sort of disdain of the things which common men think great and good, and an affected seeking after esoteric beauties and virtues. From Baudelaire* down to, let us say, Mr Arthur
50 Symons* and his comrades, their work is one long string of delicate indelicacies, virtues so cloaked as to be irreconisable, and vices with a touch of paint and a coating of sugar. The one ray of light in the matter for sanely-minded men is the extreme tenuity of their talent, which is too frail either to make for righteousness or its opposite. And yet these are the folk who are the bulwarks to-day of English letters – gentlemen who veil feeble psychology
55 under pretentious words, and hide the thinness of their thought in elaborate Latin rhymes. They claim to represent a new age, a new era, a new hedonism, a new Heaven knows what. "Again a ray of hopefulness is stealing into English poetry," said Mr Zangwill* once in an unguarded moment. We should be sorry to think that our hope for the future of English poetry depended on so slender a basis. Yet these young men in their way are harmless
60 enough, and did not their admirers set them on a preposterous pinnacle and compare them advantageously with the great masters of the past we should have little to say. As it is, we can only regret that men who might some day have done enduring work have been led astray by a facile self-admiration from the path of all sane and lasting production.

A still more curious illustration of our text is that kind of book which is openly vicious,
65 dealing with the seamier side of life and lauding it as the very core of the matter. No man, in the view of the exponents of this school, is worth a farthing for the purposes of literature unless he has revelled in all manner of dirt and evil. The hero of a recent popular novel, when he seeks to win the affections of the lady to whom he is paying court, sets about it by reeling off a long catalogue of his past misdeeds, just by way of showing that he is a really
70 interesting person, a man with a past. With Mr Kipling – alas that it should be so – lies perhaps the blame of first setting this fashion,* but in his case all is redeemed by his frank disavowal of any ethical or didactic purpose. But in the case of subsequent practitioners – terrible spectacled men and women, who, with a Norwegian dictionary and a slight knowledge of the English tongue,* set to the task of converting the world to their own
75 grimy gospel of life – the matter is wholly different. It is not to the presentation of vice,

even in its most repulsive aspects, that we object; it is to the exalting of it into a virtue. Going on the spree is in itself a tolerably plain fact in life, and as such we accept it; but we protest against the exaggerated respect for such conduct which so many makers of novels would like to inspire. Here of a truth is nonconformity. The moral law has been accepted
80 by saint and sinner for many hundred years, and has been the basis of all sound work, artistic or social, which has ever been done. And yet here we have so many presumptuous folk declaring that it is out of date, and setting in its place a substitute manufactured from their own evil desires.

But apart from such avowedly objectionable stuff, the pride of nonconformity reigns in
85 places where one would little expect it. Idylls of humble country life have lately grown upon us thick and fast; charming pieces of literature many of them; nigh perfect in their narrow sphere. We read and admire them as a pleasing relaxation from greater books, and set them on our shelves not far distant from Galt* and Miss Edgeworth.* But some gentlemen of the press, whose interest it is to puff such books, do not let the matter rest
90 here. These unpretentious and delightful volumes are gravely set above work with which they are scarcely even comparable. We are told that the 'deep, serious heart of the country' is to be found in them; that the clatter of hen-wives and the clash of a country street are things of paramount importance; and that he who gainsays this has no feeling for 'nature and man'. So be it. It was not always so, and in our opinion it will not always
95 continue to be. Time is the great leveller of books and men, and we confidently leave the work to him to be placed and valued.

So it is also with the school whose gospel, as opposed to so many of their contemporaries, is that of the 'ultra-sane' and utterly wholesome. These men in a hatred of morbidity fly to what seems to us the opposite extreme, and enter the land of vapidty and prosiness. Let
100 us take two examples from different spheres of production – Mr Crockett* from prose and Mr William Watson* from poetry. Other and more glaring examples are to be found, but these are both men of real original talent, whose faults spring more from wrongheadedness than incapacity. Mr Crockett hates the sickly and the grimy with a perfect hatred. He is all for the wind and the sunshine, hills and heather, lilac and
105 adventure, kisses and fresh-churned butter. And these are all excellent things; far be it from us to deny it. He is clamorous over their beauties; he is all for the great common things of the world – faith and love, heroism and patience. But it seems to us that in this also there is a danger: mere talking about fine things does not make fine literature, and Mr Crockett at his worst is only a boisterous talker. No man, however high his spirits and rich
110 the life within him, can hope to be a great writer save by the restraint, the pains, the hard and bitter drudgery of his art. It is nonconformity of the worst sort to shift the burden of law from your shoulders, and go whistling along with your hands in your pockets, for the whistling which seemed so clear in the morning will at noonday be little better than screeching. Mr Watson, again, is perhaps of the many rhymers of our time the one with
115 most native genius and most serious purpose. He fears the sound and fury which signifies nothing,* like the very plague; and so to avoid it his verses are severely unadorned. But there is danger that, if this method be followed, the virtue of the work will be purely negative. There are no faults of taste, to be sure, no empty jingles, no unmeaning phrases; but, again, there is no greatheartedness, no impetuous music, no lyric outburst, no clear
120 and deep thinking in chosen words. It is an old lesson well worth learning that merely elegant rhymes and correct sentiments do not make poetry and Mr Watson, in spite of the spirit of foolish nonconformity abroad, will, we are sure, be not slow in learning it.

To conclude, our grievance is with both critics and authors; with the first because they exalt the little over the great, puffing not in a genial, haphazard way, but with a hateful

125 assumption of critical authority; with the latter because they refuse to learn more than a
little bit of their trade, and then set to in their pride and take that part for the whole. It is
not, as we have already said, so much a question of practice as of subsequent theorising. It
is this sin of nonconformity which accounts for the desire to preach which to-day is abroad
everywhere. Each little scribbler has his "message," which he must din into the ears of an
130 unhappy public. Critics exult over the message of a writer, not seeing that the fact of his
having any particular message, other than the great one of goodness and truth, is a sign of
failure. It is one of the worst emanations from the prevalent admiration for Ibsen, and,
much as we prize the work of the Norwegian dramatist,* we cannot but think that this
message-bearing is at once a silliness and a presumption. The writer of modern times who
135 seems to us most like the "simple great ones gone,"* Robert Louis Stevenson,* owes much
of his excellence to his modesty in being subject to restraint and his good sense in
burdening himself with no partial doctrines to expound. The root-evil is this nonconformity
which would set every little amateur on a different tack, like Don Quixote, unequipped and
unprovided for; and till this is stamped out we can hope for no production of supreme
140 worth. For republicanism whatever it may be in politics, is the very canker in letters.

Footnotes

1-2 *Lucian... 'Banquet of Philosophers'*: Lucian was a Greek satirist of the second century AD, a period when, like the 1890s, established culture and philosophy were under challenge and the old literature was being displaced by new forms (CBD 22 November 2012). He was particularly sceptical of the rival schools of philosophy, satirising them in a humorous dialogue, *Convivium seu Lapithae*, in which a banquet attended by philosophers of the different schools descends into a violent quarrel (19 November 2012 <<http://www.nndb.com>>).

4 *from Horace to Swift*: Horace, Roman poet and satirist of the first century BC (CBD 22 November 2012). Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Anglo-Irish clergyman and satirist (CBD 20 December 2012).

7 *laudator temporis acti*: meaning 'a praiser of time past', a quotation from Horace, *Ars Poetica* 173, ie a conservative or die-hard who is discontented with the present and prefers things of the past (19 November 2012 <<http://www.blogspot.co.>>).

8 *Plancus*: Lucius Munatius Plancus, Roman senator and consul of the first century BC, who survived during a very dangerous time (the civil war which followed the assassination of Julius Caesar) by constantly shifting his allegiances (19 November 2012 <<http://www.en.wikipedia.org>>).

12 *strange gods*: there are several biblical references to strange gods (see for example Genesis 35.2; Deuteronomy 32.16; Joshua 24.20).

15-16 *a law unto themselves: The Bible*, Romans 2.14 (ODQ 106.2).

17 *the Land of Heart's Desire*: a reference to the play of this title by the Irish poet and dramatist WB Yeats, which was first performed in 1894 at the Avenue Theatre, London (19 November 2012 <<http://www.en.wikipedia.org>>).

21-22 *indictis...Cathegis*: Horace *Ars Poetica* 49-50, slightly misquoted, which has been translated as: 'to explain some abstruse subjects by new invented terms, it will follow that you must frame words never heard of by the old-fashioned Cethegi...' (29 November 2012 <<http://www.poetryfoundation.org>>). In the Latin quoted, 'Cathegis' is a misprint for 'Cethegis'. Buchan's interest in Horace (see also notes to lines 4 and 7 above) later led him

to become a founder-member of the Horace Club at Oxford University, which was formed in March 1898 for members to read their own poetical compositions (Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 48). Several of Buchan's poems for the club were published in *The Book of the Horace Club* (1901).

36-37 *There is nothing new under the sun: The Bible*, Ecclesiastes 1.9: 'there is no new thing under the sun' (ODQ 85.28).

41 *Atlas*: one of the Titans of Greek mythology defeated in their war against the Olympians and condemned to hold up the sky (later interpreted as the world) on his shoulders (19 November 2012 <<http://www.en.wikipedia.org>>).

45-47 *Callimachus....popular*: Callimachus was a noted poet, critic and scholar at the Library of Alexandria in the third century BC (CBD 22 November 2012). The quotation, which Buchan has slightly abbreviated, is taken from JW Mackail's *Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology* (1890), Epigram XXXII (19 November 2012 <<http://www.hotfreebooks.com>>). Buchan later wrote an article for the *Spectator* welcoming a new edition of Mackail's book in 1906 (B14).

49 *Baudelaire*: Charles Pierre Baudelaire (1821-67), French Symbolist poet and critic whose avant garde work, which often dealt in the perverted and the macabre, was prosecuted for impropriety in 1864. However, his work was praised by some critics and had a considerable influence on the decadents of the 1890s and the modernists of the early twentieth century (CBD 22 November 2012).

49-50 *Arthur Symons*: (1865-1945), critic, poet and magazine editor who did much to familiarise the British literary scene in the 1890s with the work of modern French writers such as Baudelaire (see note to line 49 above) (CBD 22 November 2012).

57 *'Again a ray....Zangwill*: Israel Zangwill (1864-1926), was an English playwright, novelist and essayist whose 1908 play, *The Melting Pot*, was a hit in the United States, helping to popularise the phrase which came to describe America's absorption of immigrants (CBD 22 November 2012). His comment is slightly misquoted. It comes from his regular monthly article 'Without Prejudice' in the August 1893 issue of the *Pall Mall Magazine* and reads in full: 'A ray of hopefulness is stealing again into English poetry after the twilight greys of Clough and Arnold and Tennyson' (594a) (11 April 2014 <<http://search.proquest.com/britishperiodicals>>).

70-71 *With Mr Kipling....this fashion*: Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936). It is not clear to which of Kipling's works Buchan is referring here, but it may be his first novel, *The Light that Failed* (1891), in which the hero, Dick Heldar, attempts to win the affections of his childhood playmate, Maisie, after a period of adventure in the Sudan and travels in Africa and the Orient. The novel met with some negative, even hostile criticism on initial publication (18 March 2014 <<http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk>>).

73-74 *terrible spectacled men and women....the English tongue*: a reference to the intellectual and earnest writers who proselytised Ibsen and his ideas during the 1890s following William Archer's five-volume translation of *Ibsen's Prose Dramas* (1890-91) and George Bernard Shaw's *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891). In addition, the early (bespectacled) Norwegian modernist, Knut Hamsun, had received wide acclaim for his psychological novels *Hunger* (1890), *Mysteries* (1892), and *Pan* (1894). Buchan may also have had in mind George Egerton (the pseudonym of Mary Clairmonte), who had learned Norwegian and translated Hamsun's *Hunger*. Her own work, such as *Keynotes* (1893), was

associated with the 'New Woman' fiction of the 1890s which Buchan so disliked (see Article 1, note to lines 157-58) (19 March 2014 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

88 Galt: John Galt (1779-1839), Scottish novelist whose most significant work, such as *The Annals of the Parish* (1821), depicts life in small Scottish towns and villages (CBD 22 November 2012) and has been seen as foreshadowing the Kailyard writers. In 1895 SR Crockett was asked to write introductions to a new edition of Galt's work (Nash 44, 115).

88 Miss Edgeworth: Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849), Anglo-Irish novelist whose principal work, such as *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and *The Absentee* (1812), provides a picture of Irish country life (CBD 22 November 2012).

100 Mr Crockett: see headnote.

101 William Watson: English poet (1858-1935) who published *Odes and other Poems* in 1894 and *The Father of the Forest* in 1895 (CBD 22 November 2012). Buchan reviewed two of his later volumes of poems for the *Spectator* (**B31** and **B51**).

115-16 the sound and fury which signifies nothing: Shakespeare, *Macbeth* V.5.26-28: 'a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing'.

132-33 Ibsen....dramatist: Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), Norwegian social dramatist (see note to lines 73-74 above).

135 the 'simple great ones gone': a quotation from *Maud* (1855) Part I, X.5.390, by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92) (22 November 2012 <<http://www.bartleby.com>>).

135 Robert Louis Stevenson: Stevenson died in December 1894. See Buchan's obituary of him (Article 1).

ARTICLE 3

'The National "Malaise"'

Spectator 84 (3 February 1900): 165-66.

Headnote

This is only the third article that Buchan had written for the *Spectator*. The subject matter of his previous essays published in other journals had been mainly literary topics (**A1-A8**, **B1**), with some education (**K1-K2**), angling (**N1-N2**) and hill-walking (**N3**), but none were of great interest beyond a limited section of the reading public. However, when he began to write for the *Spectator*, his subject matter became of national interest to a much wider readership. His first two articles (see **H1-H2**) dealt with foreign affairs and Russia. Buchan had developed an interest in international politics at Oxford, where his elite circle of friends, among them Raymond Asquith, son of the politician and future Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, had introduced him to the world of politics and country-house society where such matters were discussed. He had often spoken at Oxford Union debates on foreign affairs topics including Britain and Europe, the Far East, and the growing power of Russia since the Crimean War (Smith, *Biography* 59-60, 72; Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 53). The Russian threat to the North West Frontier of India was to form the background to his next novel, *The Half-Hearted*, published in September 1900. Now this third article brought him to a critical matter in contemporary British life – the progress of the Boer War in South Africa and its effect on the national psychology.

The war had begun badly for Britain in the previous October. The Boers had invaded Natal and Cape Colony, laying siege to Mafeking, Kimberley, and Ladysmith. Three counter-offensives had been launched against these attacks, but during the so-called 'Black Week' in December, all three had been repulsed by the Boers. This had been followed by a humiliating defeat at Spion Kop on 24 January 1900 when an attempt to relieve Ladysmith had been bungled by inflexibility and lack of communication among senior British officers. These serious setbacks, together with accounts of the ongoing sieges, were reported daily in the popular press, and the continual bad news shocked the British public. There was considerable criticism of the conduct of the war, and a rising tide of pessimism as to its outcome. There were also fears that Britain's standing as a military power was being diminished as the other great powers of Europe began to indulge in *schadenfreude* at the spectacle of British defeats (Judd and Surridge 118, 134, 304).

This is the background to Buchan's article, in which he argues that the nation is in danger of allowing private grief for those killed or wounded in battle to become public sorrow for the defeats and humiliations of the war. This could develop into a serious loss of national pride and self-confidence. Buchan argues that the country must maintain a sense of perspective, because there are other causes, such as the current famine in India, which are equally deserving. Above all, a sense of optimism and hope is required which sees the setbacks of the war as 'the necessary incidents in all advance' (line 79).

The events of the war soon justified Buchan's optimism. The tide turned in Britain's favour after Lord Roberts replaced General Buller as Commander-in-Chief in South Africa. Kimberley and Ladysmith were relieved later in February 1900, Mafeking in May, while Johannesburg and Pretoria were occupied soon after. By the end of September, the Boers had suffered a series of defeats in conventional battle and turned to guerrilla tactics to prolong the war (Judd and Surridge 129, 304-05).

THE NATIONAL "MALAISE"

In our modern world of telegrams and special editions, when the public nerves are kept in a perpetual tension, and the bird of ill-omen in the shape of the small newsboy hovers about the street, there is a special temptation to a kind of irritable unrest. In other times, when news came slowly and the taking of Calcutta followed close on tidings of the Black Hole,* it
5 was easy to maintain a dignified composure. Then a nation had leisure to consult its philosophy, and, since wars were far away, it learned to wait in patience for their issue. But with our new means of public knowledge there has come an inevitable loss of dignity. We are told that we are keeping cool and showing our dogged spirit, but we are all of us unhappily conscious that the compliment is not wholly merited. The nation has become
10 restless and ill at ease, its interests narrowed to one subject, ever on tip-toe for a piece of fresh news. And all this is right and proper enough, provided we keep it within limits. Many are anxious for their own kin; many, unhappily, are mourning intimate losses. But the others, to whom the war is still a public and not yet a private anxiety, have an awkward feeling that from them also a certain depression and melancholy is required. It is this that
15 we wish to combat, - the false idea of duty which would revel in days of humiliation and preach an unnatural constraint. Heaven knows the business is sad and serious enough for all, but so long as the sadness has no direct personal meaning we cannot see the wisdom of, metaphorically, wearing half-mourning.* For most that is what it means. In ninety cases out of a hundred the extreme gravity is forced and artificial. Young men at the club,
20 who have been prevented from going out, think it right to indulge in melancholy jeremiads* on life. Young women copy the prevalent fashion, and shake their heads at gaiety. It is all very becoming and impressive, but, if we must be honest, it is sometimes not far from a pose. In many cases it is a sheer affectation. A meek and quiet spirit, and a soul humble in the day of the Lord,* are the attributes of a saint, but there is no virtue in a
25 distant emulation of mourning. There is a solemnity which is far different from seriousness, and we are perilously near it. It is a *malaise* we are passing through and not an "awakening," and once we realise the fault we may have the grace to seek a remedy.

We would not have our plea misunderstood. We do not for a moment wish to discourage that high seriousness which is the best and noblest temper which a man can show at this
30 moment, but merely that forced gloom, which is a very different thing. As we have insisted again and again in these columns, a man cannot take the war too earnestly, but this must not prevent him keeping a brave heart and a bold face. Who is the more helpful doctor? Not he who goes about the house or the sick-room with a face of woe, but he who is strong and cheerful, however anxious he may be. Wordsworth has described the true attitude of
35 mind in "The Happy Warrior."* That is the goal to which the nation should strive. Again, there is all the difference in the world between a vulgar frivolity and true buoyancy of heart. The one is the trashiness of soul which makes the world a pantomime and goes out of life with an imbecile laugh. Nero fiddled when Rome was burning,* and he is now rightly consigned by the world's verdict to the lake of darkness.* The frivolous man makes life a
40 stage for his clowning, and life in its turn makes a fool of him in downright earnest at the last. But the princes in the fairy-tales who met the dragons with jests, and the ballad-heroes who died with some old proud song on their lips, are types of one of the rarest and manliest of virtues. When Volker in the *Nibelungen Lied* fights his last fight in the great hall at Worms, every blow he struck with his *Schwert-fidelbogen* was also a note of music,* and
45 Carlyle has preached a noble sermon on the text.* There is a certain fine ardour of the spirit which refuses to bow the head or lower the voice at mere disaster, and seeks to preserve a proud and alert temper in the darkest days. It is not stoicism, but something deeper: the positive resistance rather than the passive submission. We confess to a love of this true light-heartedness in history. When the wretched, bedraggled, incompetent Varro

50 arrived at Rome after Cannae he was met by the Senators at the gate, and thanked for not
having despaired of the Republic.* It may have been the last straw to the man's burden of
humiliation, but it must have been a comfort to the souls of the Roman fathers,* and a true
heartening to the people. And the later doings are still more significant. Assemblages of
the crowd at the gates were forbidden; onlookers and women were sent to their houses;
55 and the time of mourning for the fallen was restricted to thirty days, "that the service of
the gods of joy might not be too long interrupted." The gods of joy, and when the invader's
hand was at the very throat of the State! This we take to be the true "unconquerable
hope,"* the superb self-confidence and pride which is the foundation of the greatness of
nations. And so in lesser matters. The ball at Brussels was no bad preparation for
60 Waterloo,* and there is much to be said for Horace Walpole, when he records with
pleasure that when the eastern sky was bright with fires during the Gordon Riots and every
street in the City was filled with drunken rioters, Lady Ailesbury went calmly to the play at
the Haymarket and his four nieces were with the Duke of Gloucester at Ranelagh.*

For the truth is that the dismal conscientiousness which objects to hunting in time of war,
65 forswears the theatre, and writes drearily in the newspapers, if it means anything beyond a
foolish affectation, is of the nature of cowardice. So far from being a noble or worthy
thing, it is a fault to be carefully avoided. To those, indeed, to whom the world has become
blank, and who have felt the pain of a real loss, a clumsy mimicry of sorrow by others will
bring little comfort. And meanwhile, if the thing grew to the magnitude of a national
70 temper, where, indeed, will be our boasted dignity of the past? We have no concern with
the justification in fact for such nervousness. The darkness may be merely a passing cloud,
or, again, it may be the primeval night; our duty in each case is the same. The wise
insouciance of great nations, which we had fondly believed to be also ours, is a subtle
quality, marvellously compounded. Pride has much to do with it; pride, which is ashamed
75 to show its weakness to the crowd, which cloaks its feelings and preserves its wonted*
demeanour, *si fractus illabatur orbis*.* And more, there is that optimism which, for the
inarticulate mind of a nation, is the equivalent of hope. By a great people with many
interests and a rich and vigorous life, checks and disasters should be borne as the
counterfoil to prosperity, the necessary incidents in all advance. And so in this proud self-
80 confidence we find the true attitude in good and bad fortune alike, the restraint which
alone gives strength, - in a word, a national conscience.

In many cases the other attitude arises from a perverted conscientiousness, a feeling that
composure is criminal in the face of war. There is, indeed, a callousness which springs from
mere ignorance and selfishness which is worse than any irritability. But the state of mind
85 which we have already sketched is far from callousness. We might call it the aspect which
abstention from panic among the populace takes when carried into social life and culture.
It is a rational attempt to preserve the dignity and mental balance, which are the assumed
products of civilisation. The evils of unrest are sufficiently obvious. When it is mere
affectation it is a silly and unworthy fashion. When it is honest it gives rise to a spirit of
90 unintelligent carping which finds scapegoats in preposterous places and hinders capable
men in their duties by amateur intrusions. It fosters perpetual suspicion, malice, and all
uncharitableness. Sometimes, even, it takes effect in action, and then we have one of the
blunders to which men are coerced by panic, happily rare in our national history. It
destroys the quiet of social life, destroys it unnecessarily, for it confers no benefit. It is not
95 patriotism, for it is not a rational belief, but a vague, incoherent emotionalism; nay, it is
often the reverse of patriotic in its issues. It is - let us recognise it clearly - a malady, the
morbid and pathological side of ardour, and it must be met, not by any Quakerish or
pedantic attitude to the war, but by the speaking and thinking of common sense.

100 One issue of this nervousness seems inevitable and much to be lamented. The interests of
the nation have been narrowed down to one subject and one tract of country. We have
subscribed large sums of money for the most urgent of all causes, subscribed it with a
lavish and a prompt generosity which is most creditable. But there are other causes
equally deserving though less romantic, which in our present absorption we seem likely to
forget. Nothing has been more pleasing during the war than the conduct of the "native-
105 born" in India of all sorts and conditions, and at a great meeting of Hindoos and
Mahommedans held last Saturday* in Calcutta, money was subscribed and cordial
assurances of loyalty carried. And now another Indian famine is upon us, which promises
to be as severe as any in the past, and the last telegrams from the Viceroy have contained
news of great and growing distress in Bombay and the Central Provinces.* It seems hard
110 that this country to which we owe every duty should be forgotten in our momentary
excitement, but unless there is a return to composure and common-sense, forgotten it
must be.

Footnotes

4 *the taking of Calcutta...the Black Hole*: following the capture of Calcutta by the Nawab of Bengal in June 1756, the surviving British defenders were imprisoned overnight in a small, badly-ventilated cell (the 'Black Hole') in which a number of them died. When news of this reached Britain, Robert Clive was sent from Madras in October to retaliate. He recaptured Calcutta in January 1757 (6 December 2012 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

18 *wearing half-mourning*: the second stage of the period of mourning in Victorian society, in which the black attire of full mourning was relieved or replaced by such colours as white, grey, lavender, or purple (*OED* 6 December 2012).

21 *jeremiads*: lamentations; writings or speeches in a strain of grief or distress; complaining tirades (*OED* 6 December 2012).

23-24 *a soul humble in the day of the Lord*: Biblical language (see for example Isaiah 58.5; Leviticus 23.4-5; I Corinthians 5.50), though not a direct quotation.

34-35 *Wordsworth... 'The Happy Warrior'*: a reference to William Wordsworth's poem 'Character of the Happy Warrior' (1807), which describes the ideal man in arms (6 December 2012 <<http://www.poetryfoundation.org>>). Buchan makes frequent reference to this poem in his journalism (see for example Article 8, note to lines 57-58).

38 *Nero fiddled when Rome was burning*: according to some secondary accounts, the Emperor Nero sang and played his lyre, but otherwise did nothing, during the Great Fire of Rome in July 64 AD (6 December 2012 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

39 *the lake of darkness*: Shakespeare, *King Lear* III.6.6-7: 'Nero is an angler in the Lake of Darkness', ie he has been consigned to hell. The line is spoken by Edgar who, disguised as a madman after being falsely accused of plotting to murder his father, Gloucester, is warning Lear and the Fool against the devilish descent into madness as they shelter in a farmhouse from the storm on the heath.

43-44 *Volker in the Nibelungen Lied...a note of music*: translated as 'The Song of the Nibelung', the *Nibelungen Lied* is an anonymous German epic poem dating from c1180-1210, but derived from earlier oral sagas about historical events and individuals from the fifth and sixth centuries. It tells of the adventures and murder of Siegfried, and of his wife Kriemhild's revenge, which culminates in a bloody fight in the great hall at Worms. Volker is a nobleman and musician at the court in Worms who takes part in the fight, using his

Sword-fiddlebow (*Schwert-fidelbogen*) to ring out strange music as he clefs the helmets of his enemies before he is eventually killed (6 December 2012 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Buchan likens Montrose to Volker with his Sword-fiddlebow in his 1928 biography of the Scottish general (*Montrose* 394), and he uses the same comparison in his memoirs to describe Henry Newbolt (*MHD* 208).

45 Carlyle....text: Thomas Carlyle's 'noble sermon' on the text is '*The Nibelungen Lied: An Essay*', which was first published in the *Westminster Review* in 1831 (6 December 2012 <<http://www.archive.org>>).

49-51 Varro....Republic: Gaius Terentius Varro was a consul of Rome and joint commander of its forces at the battle of Cannae in 216 BC, which resulted in a decisive Roman defeat by the Carthaginian general Hannibal (6 December 2012 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

52 the Roman fathers: ie the Senators. After the disastrous defeat at Cannae (see note to lines 49-51 above), the Senators refused to despair and negotiate peace terms with Hannibal. Instead, they declared full mobilisation of the male population and took the measures described here by Buchan to restrict the period of mourning after the defeat and restore morale (6 December 2012 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

57-58 'unconquerable hope': from Matthew Arnold's poem *The Scholar-Gypsy* (1853), line 211: 'Still nursing the unconquerable hope' (*ODQ* 28:10).

59-60 the ball at Brussels....Waterloo: the Duchess of Richmond's ball was held at Brussels on 15 June 1815, and was attended by the Duke of Wellington and most of his officers. During the ball news was received that Napoleon's army had crossed the border from France into Belgium. Wellington moved to defeat Napoleon at the battle of Waterloo three days later (6 December 2012 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

60-63 Horace Walpole....Ranelagh: In a letter to the Countess of Ossory dated 7 June 1780, written at the height of the anti-Catholic Gordon riots in London, the author Horace Walpole describes the fires and other details of the riots before concluding: 'Yet I assure your Ladyship there was no panic. Lady Aylesbury has been at the play in the Haymarket, and the Duke and my four nieces at Ranelagh, this evening' (*The Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford*. London: Henry G Bohn, 1861: vol 7, p 388. 6 December 2012 <<http://books.google.co.uk>>).

75 wonted: habitual or customary (*OED* 6 December 2102).

76 si fractus illabatur orbis: a quotation from the *Odes* of Horace (written c23-13 BC), Book III, Ode III, line 7, which has been translated as: 'if the world should break and fall' (6 December 2012 <<http://en.wikiquote.org>>).

105-06 a great meeting of Hindoos and Mahommedans held last Saturday: the *Times* of 29 January 1900 (5e) contained a short Reuters agency report of 'a monster meeting' held in Calcutta on Saturday 27 January at which a resolution of loyalty to the Queen was passed and subscriptions were raised for the war in South Africa. It was accompanied by a longer description of the meeting written by the newspaper's own correspondent (6 December 2012 The *Times* Digital Archive <<http://infotrac.galegroup.com>>).

107-09 another Indian famine....Central Provinces: the *Times* of 30 January 1900 (5e) contained the text of a short telegram on the famine from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India, which reported that 'distress is increasing in Bombay, Central Provinces and Rajputana'. The following day the *Times* published (13g) recent correspondence between

the Secretary of State and the Lord Mayor of London relating to the establishment of an appeal fund for famine relief, which refers to 'the absence of....benevolent help from the mother country' due to 'the great movement in progress throughout the Empire to alleviate sufferings attendant upon the war [in South Africa]' (6 December 2012 The *Times* Digital Archive <<http://infotrac.galegroup.com>>).

ARTICLE 4

'The Celtic Spirit in Literature'

Spectator 85 (28 July 1900): 113-14. Review.

Fiona Macleod. *The Divine Adventure; Iona; By Sundown Shores: Studies in Spiritual History*.

Headnote

'Fiona Macleod', the author of this book being reviewed by Buchan, is the pseudonym of William Sharp (1855-1905), a Scottish poet, novelist and critic. He was a significant member of the Celtic revival, a literary movement of the 1890s begun in Ireland by WB Yeats, who aimed to create a national literature by translating the Gaelic legends and recording in literary form the traditional oral folk tales of the Irish countryside. His work inspired a similar Celtic renaissance in Scotland, and the Kailyard school of popular dialect fiction (see Article 2) was a by-product of this. But its main activity was centred in Edinburgh, where Patrick Geddes produced a quarterly review, the *Evergreen*, in 1895-96, to which William Sharp was a contributor. Many of his writings in the Celtic style were published under the pseudonym of Fiona Macleod, and his contributions to the *Evergreen* appeared variously either under his own name or that of his pseudonym. It was a duality he maintained until his death in 1905, and was known only to a very close circle of friends and relations. An unsigned article in the *Daily Chronicle* on 28 January 1899 suggested Fiona Macleod's real identity, which prompted a disclaimer from Sharp, but Buchan appears to have been unaware of it at the time of this review. It was only confirmed publicly in 1910 when Sharp's widow, Elizabeth, published a biographical memoir which attempted to explain the reasons for the deception (*ODNB* 17 January 2013; Jackson 42, 148-50, 152).

This is one of Buchan's early book reviews for the *Spectator*, and his first of a contemporary work of literature. Although he was well qualified to review such writing, having been a reader for the publishers John Lane and Fisher Unwin, Buchan was rarely given contemporary literature to review at the *Spectator*, as it appears that this was reserved for the journal's more experienced writers. At this early stage in his career he usually covered biography, history, or international affairs and travel. But here his Scottish background and the poetical nature of the book seem to have made it appropriate for him to review. Buchan at this time could demonstrate significant strands of poetry and verse in his literary career. He had published an article on the sport of angling in English poetry (**B1**), which led to his editing an anthology of angling verse, *Musa Piscatrix*, for John Lane in 1896. He had also won the Newdigate prize at Oxford for his poem *The Pilgrim Fathers* in 1898 (previous winners had included John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, and Oscar Wilde). Certainly, many of Buchan's comments on the style of Sharp's book are couched in poetical terms, referring generally to the author's 'very pretty gift of phrasing' and 'emotional picturesqueness' (line 2), and quoting two lengthy passages which are examples of the 'skilful and melodious use of words' (line 52) and 'beautifully said' (line 95).

This article was soon followed by Buchan being given a new volume of verse by WE Henley to review (**B2**). Later, after his return from South Africa, he reviewed new poetry by Hardy and Swinburne (**B3**, **B4**) before becoming a regular reviewer of contemporary verse for the *Spectator* from 1905 until 1915 (**B5 et seq**). Perhaps he had this book in mind when he eventually gave a brief review to Sharp's collected *Poems*, published posthumously under his own name in 1912, and found that his 'prose had infinitely more magic than his verse' (**B50:800a**).

THE CELTIC SPIRIT IN LITERATURE

We have hitherto read Miss Macleod's books with a doubtful pleasure, and have regarded her as the possessor of a very pretty gift of phrasing and an emotional picturesqueness rather than any high creative powers. But this, her latest book, seems to show an advance in one clear direction, and at the same time her very real limitations. It contains two kinds
5 of work: one, the symbolical presentation of a spiritual truth in a kind of romance; the other, the mere weaving together of legends with a romantic commentary. *The Divine Adventure* is a type of the first, and it seems to us to show Miss Macleod at her weakest. In a note she explains its purpose. It is not allegory, she declares, but "a symbolical presentment," which, as we understand it, means that the Soul, the Body, and the Will are
10 not given fictitious names and an artificial existence, but are used as the *dramatis personæ* of a spiritual parable, which is put for the occasion in a corporeal setting. The distinction is merely one of degree; in each case the truth lies behind the symbol, and the degree of irrelevant physical realism with which the symbol is invested is scarcely of the first importance. The meaning of the parable is clear enough and in its way beautiful, but the
15 telling is not art, as we understand it. The writer who would portray a spiritual truth in this mode must select his incidents not only for their illustrative value, but for their romantic inevitableness. There must be something of the ordinary romancer's gift, so that the reader may feel the drama of the thing as well as its spiritual truth. Let us take such an instance as Stevenson's fable of "The Touchstone,"* which Miss Macleod would probably
20 condemn as allegory. There we have the sure invention weaving a romance which captures the fancy, and at the same time the reader has a double joy in each detail, for there is always the profound philosophic interest to illumine from within. But Miss Macleod's fancies are too common, her moral in general too obvious. She says too much, she breaks into little rhapsodies and sermons, and then at the end, feeling that the fable does not
25 carry its own instant interpretation, she is driven to some terrible pseudo-scientific jargon by way of a moral. Could anything be worse than this passage which appears as the crowning thought in *The Divine Adventure*? – "Love, I am come to realise, is the supreme deflecting force. Love 'unloosens sins,' unites failures, disintegrates the act, not by an inconceivable conflict with the immutable law of consequence, but by deflection." To be
30 sure, such words have meaning of a kind, but what a wordy, frothy ending to a parable!

For the remainder of the book we have nothing but praise. She writes of Iona,* that little green Western island, as it has never to our knowledge been written of before. She shows us the old pagan back-world, when the sun-worshippers held the place, and she traces odd survivals far into Christian times. She writes of Columba* and his followers with a
35 wonderful imaginative sympathy, re-telling the old tale with the full comprehension of one who has lived long in that "metropolis of dreams."* "None can understand it," she says, "who does not see it through its pagan light, its Christian light, its singular blending of paganism and romance and spiritual beauty. There is, too, an Iona that is more than Gaelic, that is more than a place rainbow-lit with the seven desires of the world, the Iona that, if
40 we will it so, is a mirror of your heart and of mine." It is in this spiritual interpretation of Nature that Miss Macleod's real power lies, and if one were to distinguish an aspect of this power which she has in perfection it would be the gift of bringing out old mystery from the past and grafting it boldly upon our prosaic present. The story of the man on whom the sea-madness fell is an instance. "He went to the mainland, but could not see to plough,
45 because the brown fallows became waves that splashed noisily about him. The same man went to Canada, and got work in a great warehouse; but among the bales of merchandise he heard always the singular note of the sandpiper, and every hour the sea-fowl confused him with their crying." There are many such tales, but finest of all is the story of Coll the fisherman, which Miss Macleod tells from her own experience. It is too long to quote, but

50 we mention it because here Miss Macleod succeeds in the very form in which she seems to us to fail in *The Divine Adventure*, and because its closing words are an example of her skilful and melodious use of words:-

“He stands for the soul of a race. Below all the strife of lesser desires, below all that he has in common with other men, he has the livelong unquenchable thirst for the things of the
55 spirit. This is the thirst that makes him turn so often from near securities and prosperities, and indeed all beside, setting his heart aflame with vain, because illimitable, desires. For him, the wisdom before which knowledge is a frosty breath: the beauty that is beyond what is beautiful. For, like Coll, the world itself has not enough to give him. And at the last, and above all, he is like Coll in this, that the sun and moon and stars themselves may
60 become as trampled dust, for only a breast-feather of that Dove of the Eternal, which may have its birth in mortal love, but has its evening home where are the dews of immortality.”

The best work in the book is to be found in the short studies at the end. "The Sea-Madness," from which we have already quoted, "Earth, Fire, and Water," and "Barabal," a sketch of an old Highland nurse, are all done with a simplicity and a clearness of outline
65 which show what Miss Macleod can attain to when she banishes the rhetorical vagueness which is the fault of her temperament. For there is all the difference in the world between true mystery as it exists for art, and vagueness, which is a form of incapacity. The indefinable is not the incoherent, and nothing is easier to attain to than a glib dreaminess. That such has been the defect of the Celtic temperament Miss Macleod is quick to
70 recognise. In the essay called "Celtic" she has some admirable common-sense. By "Celtic" we understand a material of myth and folk-tale, differing in character from other traditions, and a manner of presenting it suitable to its nature. It is not a peculiar inspiration, to which the old canons of art do not apply. "It is well that the people of the isles should love the isles above all else, and the people of the mountains love the mountains above all else, and
75 the people of the plains love the plains above all else. But it is not well that because of the whistling of the wind in the heather one should imagine that nowhere else does the wind suddenly stir the reeds and the grasses in its incalculable hour." But in this Celtic culture we may find certain curious qualities, notably a passion for the soil of the homeland, an ever-present sense of the mystery of life, and a power of seeing in the changes of Nature a
80 reflex of the soul's drama. It is because Miss Macleod has seized upon the fundamental truth of this fanciful world that her work at its best has an appeal beyond race-interests. She is the interpreter of her own people, but she is also an interpreter of our common nature. The book closes with a passage which seems to us both true and beautiful, the inward meaning of the forlorn Jacobite sentiment,* which is one of the many impossible
85 loyalties of her own land :-

"In a Highland cottage I heard some time ago a man singing a lament for 'Tearlach Og Aluinn,' Bonnie Prince Charlie; and when it ceased tears were on the face of each that was there, and in his own throat a sob. I asked him, later, was his heart really so full of the Prionnsa Ban, but he told me that it was not him he was thinking of, but of all the dead
90 men and women of Scotland who had died for his sake, and of Scotland itself, and of the old days that would not come again. I did not ask what old days, for I knew that in his heart he lamented his own dead hopes and dreams, and that the Prince was but the image of his lost youth, and that the world was old and grey because of his own weariness and his own grief."

95 That is beautifully said, but after all may we not say, adapting Yorick, 'I can read it as well in my Wordsworth'?* Did not Wordsworth capture the authentic spirit of Celtic poetry once and for all in his –

"Will no one tell me what she sings?
 Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
 For old forgotten far-off things,
 And battles long ago"?

Footnotes

19 *Stevenson's fable of 'The Touchstone'*: one of the stories in Robert Louis Stevenson's collection of *Fables* (1896). 'The Touchstone' seeks to distinguish between the plain truth, which appears on the surface as in a mirror, and the real truth, which lies deep within the heart and soul (8 January 2013 <<http://www.authorama.com>>).

31 *Iona*: a remote island off Mull in the Inner Hebrides of western Scotland, the site of a monastery established in 563 by the Irish missionary St Columba (see note to line 34 below) with the purpose of converting the inhabitants of northern Britain to Christianity (8 January 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

34 *Columba*: missionary and abbot (521-97), born in Donegal, who founded monasteries in Derry and Durrow. The belief that he was responsible for the battle of Culdremhne in 561 led to his excommunication and exile from Ireland. He and his followers then settled in Iona (see note to line 31) and founded a mission there (*CBD* 8 January 2013).

36 *'metropolis of dreams'*: a phrase used by Macleod in the book under review to describe Iona (8 January 2013 <<http://www.sundown.pair.com>>).

84 *the forlorn Jacobite sentiment*: a reference to the political movement based in Scotland which aimed at the restoration of the Stuart monarchy following the deposition of James II in 1688. After two risings in 1715 and 1745, the latter led by James' grandson, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', the Jacobite movement was decisively defeated by English forces at the battle of Culloden in 1746. Thereafter, it was doomed to failure, hence 'the forlorn Jacobite sentiment' (8 January 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

95-96 *adapting Yorick, 'I can read it as well in my Wordsworth'*: this is Parson Yorick in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1760-67). At the end of Chapter XXXI of Volume V, there is a discussion of the relationship between parents and children and a reference to the *Institutes* of the Roman Emperor Justinian on the subject. 'I can read it as well, replied Yorick, in the Catechism' (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983: 313).

98-101 *'Will no one tell me...battles long ago'*: from William Wordsworth's collection *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, 1803* (published 1807): ix 'The Solitary Reaper,' lines 17-20. The third line is slightly misquoted. It should read: 'For old *unhappy* far-off things' (8 January 2013 <<http://www.gutenberg.org>>).

ARTICLE 5

'An Imperial Club for London'

Spectator 91 (14 November 1903): 802-03.

Headnote

In October 1903 Buchan returned to Britain from South Africa, where for two years he had been Private Secretary to the High Commissioner, Lord Milner, and had been closely involved in the reconstruction of South Africa after the Boer War. He had gone there to serve the Empire as a 'passive, unthinking imperialist' (Kruse 66), but Milner's enthusiasm and faith in Britain's imperial role had inspired Buchan, and he returned as a committed imperialist with a positive belief in the British Empire and its civilising mission (Kruse 66; Smith, *Biography* 133). In the years that followed Buchan took every opportunity to promote his imperialist ideas in his journalism (see for example **H42**, **H53**, and **H65**), and to defend Milner's reconstruction work against its critics (see in particular **H62**).

This article begins that process and is among the first that Buchan wrote when he resumed work for the *Spectator* on his return. Its opening observation that the 'air is thick with Empire and the rumours of Empire' (line 1) refers to the various schemes which were being discussed at the time to improve the organisation of the Empire in the light of both the weaknesses which had been exposed by Britain's military difficulties during the Boer War and the wave of anti-imperialist sentiment which the war had generated. One such scheme was for a constitutional federation which would impose an Imperial Cabinet or Council at the head of the Empire. Buchan had initially supported this idea because Milner was one of its chief promoters, but now he was gradually coming to the belief that attitudes had to change before federation or any other form of common government was possible. People had first to feel themselves to be citizens of the Empire, travelling readily from one country to another to live and work (Kruse 85-86). The article proposes an Imperial Club for London as one way of facilitating such a change of attitude and as a step towards 'that practical consolidation of the Empire which must precede any Constitutional experiments' (lines 87-88). Buchan's views on the need for a deeper mutual knowledge and understanding between England and its colonies were supported in a book written by an Australian visitor to England which Buchan reviewed for the *Spectator* in December 1905 (**G26**).

An Imperial Club in exactly the form suggested by Buchan was never set up, although an Over-Seas Club and League was established in 1910 by Evelyn Wrench with the object of bringing Englishmen and Colonists closer together. Buchan mentions this over thirty years later in his review of Wrench's autobiography, his last article for the *Spectator*, in March 1934 (**C127**). In this Buchan recalls first meeting Wrench in (he thinks) 1904, when they had similar views on imperialism and formed a lasting friendship. Wrench later became editor of the *Spectator* (1925-32) in succession to St Loe Strachey (*ODNB* 28 February 2013). His Over-Seas Club continues to this day as the Royal Over-Seas League, with club houses in London and Edinburgh and representation through branches or reciprocal clubs in more than ninety countries (3 September 2012 <<http://www.rosl.org.uk>>).

AN IMPERIAL CLUB FOR LONDON

The air is thick with Empire and the rumours of Empire, and it becomes those who are chary about certain popular methods of union* to ask themselves if nothing can be done in

a humble way to further an end which they desire as ardently as any one else. To those who know the Colonies and the way in which their people look at things it must seem a pity
5 that there are not more facilities for that social union which is as important as the political, and comes home more closely to the ordinary man. An Australian or South African coming to England for the first time looks forward to his visit with eager anticipation. Do not let us imagine that he is impressed with the material greatness of the British Isles; he probably thinks of them as half-decaying States; he fancies his own commercial undertakings far
10 superior to theirs; and we have heard of educated Colonists who imagined that grass might be growing in the streets of London. But he is full of magnificent and generous ideas about the British race, and he is anxious to see its cradle, for to him historical memories have a quite remarkable reality. If he does not idealise us in many things, he is very prone to idealise the charm of a long-established society, and a land where history has concrete
15 forms, - that history in which he and his fellows have a part. He arrives in London eager to make the most of his time. Perhaps he has shown, in the ready way of our oversea peoples, much hospitality to certain wandering Britons, and has been warmly invited to give them a chance of returning it. He hunts up his friends, and finds them immersed in their own affairs, and unable to show him more than a few perfunctory civilities. The
20 whole atmosphere is changed. It is a country where the social organisation does not readily admit a stranger. He finds no sign anywhere that England considers himself and his land of any great importance. He goes to the Mother of Parliaments, and hears long debates on London Education Bills or Irish Land Bills, and perhaps has the pleasure of seeing the Government, which has the administration of the whole Empire in its hand,
25 shipwrecked on some local question. Is he to be blamed if he feels that Britain is an exclusive, self-contained community, to which the Colonies are tagged on as dependencies? And so in the end, thoroughly disillusioned, he wanders from his hotel to the music-halls and back again, counting the days till he can return to a more hospitable place. The only club for the Colonies is the music-hall and a few of the big hotels. There an
30 Australian may meet another Australian, or find some one to talk to who is not shackled by the bonds of British etiquette.

This is hardly an over-coloured picture, and the danger of such a state of things is that in the long run it will impair those ties of sentiment and kinship to which we publicly attach so much importance. No one who knows the ready hospitality of the Colonies but must regret
35 that we cannot, as things now stand, repay it in kind. They do not ask much, but they ask something, and that something we cannot give them. There is one expedient which would remove much of the difficulty. Institutions such as the Imperial Institute* are very good things in their way, but they do not provide that genuine social meeting-ground of Englishmen and Colonists which would go far towards solving the problem. What is
40 wanted is a club, a first-class club, with a good situation and the best management, to which all good Colonial clubs should be affiliated. We do not want a little building in a back street, but a handsome clubhouse in the centre of London. So far as concerned its British membership, it would be as select as any good London club, - a kind of Colonial Travellers',* which would contain all who were interested in the Colonies or who had
45 travelled in them. All respectable clubs in the Colonies, in India, and in other parts of the Empire would, on application and the payment of a small fee, be affiliated to it, and their members on leaving for England would be given a certificate of membership which would entitle them to the use of the Imperial club. In the Colonies clubs are more democratic than at home, and such an arrangement would provide for all the better classes in any
50 Colonial community. An Australian arriving in England would be able, on payment of a small establishment charge, to have a bedroom in the club and to make use of it as a hotel. There would be a room set apart for each Colony, to which local trophies would be sent, and in which a good library of local interest and all the local papers would be found. A man

from Jamaica or from South Australia would go to the West Indian or South Australian
55 room, and make sure of finding the latest news from his country and meeting any of his
countrymen who happened to be in town. He would also meet the large and growing class
of Englishmen who are more interested in the things of the Empire than in the gossip of
Mayfair or Newmarket, and he would learn to realise what he still dimly believes, - that
60 behind the stolidity of the average Briton there is a real sense of Imperial brotherhood and
a genuine love of the new world which his kinsmen have created. In such a club there
would be one stringent rule. Among members there would be no need for introductions,
but a man would speak to his neighbour as if he had known him for years.

An Imperial Club would cost a considerable sum to start, for no expense would have to be
spared in equipment and management. But in a little time it would more than pay its way,
65 and its political value should make any capital outlay seem small in comparison. The
Colonies would readily appreciate the advantage of having a place, endowed, so to speak,
with extra-territoriality, a Consulate for the whole Empire, where they could feel that they
were not strangers in an alien society. But the benefits to Englishmen would not be less
great. If a man wanted first-hand information on any Colonial question, he would only
70 have to go down to the club and get it from the first native of the Colony in question. If a
politician wanted to keep in touch with Colonial feeling, not as transmuted through the
medium of despatches and newspaper reports, but the real article, he would only have to
frequent the club a little more than usual. It would be impossible for this or that statesman
to pose as a specialist in Colonial opinion, for we should all come to be specialists. How
75 much pleasanter, if one wanted to make a hunting trip to the Zambesi or to British
Columbia, to go down to the club and take the advice of some old Rhodesian back for a
short holiday, or a Canadian who knew every corner of the Selkirks.* How valuable would
be the views of citizens of new commonwealths even upon purely English questions, and
how inestimable the chance of collecting and focussing Colonial opinion on Imperial
80 problems. The members would go back to their own lands with a pleasant memory of
England as a place where all the Colonies could resort for discussion, and guidance, and
hospitality. The Englishman at home would have his horizon enlarged, and if he were a
politician, he would learn much of the practical effect of policies which to him are still
arguments on paper, but to the Colonies are insistent problems of their daily life. The
85 scheme, as we have said, would require a substantial sum of money to start it; but, in the
absence of a public-spirited and Imperialist millionaire, we would recommend it to the
consideration of those who desire that practical consolidation of the Empire which must
precede any Constitutional experiments.

At any rate, it is impossible for "the common objector" to produce his usual formula, and
90 say that it is "a delightful idea, but quite impracticable"; for the women of the Empire,
setting the men a most excellent example, have already done what we are talking about.
The Ladies' Empire Club in Grosvenor Street, the offspring of that most useful association,
the Victoria League,* provides for ladies a club such as we desire to see founded for men.
It is smart without being exclusive in the objectionable sense, and it makes its Colonial
95 members, of whom it already has two hundred, at once feel at home and welcome in
London. Why cannot men, who, after all, need a club more than women, go and do
likewise?

Footnotes

1-2 *those who are chary about certain popular methods of union*: see headnote. Here Buchan is positioning himself among those who believe that a fundamental change of

attitude is required, as subsequently explained in the article, before any schemes for political union can be contemplated.

37 *the Imperial Institute*: founded in 1886 to undertake research and related activities of benefit to the Empire, it became the Commonwealth Institute in 1958 with a mission to educate rather than to research. It closed in 2002 and its work is now carried on by a successor charity, the Commonwealth Education Trust (3 September 2012 <<http://www.commonwealth.org.uk>>).

43-44 *a kind of Colonial Travellers'*: the Travellers Club is situated in Pall Mall. It was founded in 1819 for gentlemen who travelled abroad to provide a place where they could meet and offer hospitality to distinguished foreign visitors (3 September 2012 <<http://www.thetravellersclub.org.uk>>). Here Buchan envisages that his Imperial Club would be similar to the existing Travellers Club, but restricted to English gentlemen who had an interest in or travelled to the Colonies, or Colonial gentlemen who were visiting England.

77 *the Selkirks*: a range of mountains in south-eastern British Columbia, named after Thomas Douglas, the fifth Earl of Selkirk, a coloniser who settled emigrants from the Scottish Highlands in Canada (3 September 2012 <<http://www.britannica.com>>).

92-93 *The Ladies' Empire Club...the Victoria League*: the Victoria League, which continues to flourish, was founded in 1901 in reaction to the Boer War, when it was a predominantly female society which aimed to promote imperialism by strengthening the bonds between England and the self-governing Dominions. It established the Ladies' Empire Club as a meeting place for ladies visiting London from all parts of the Empire (Riedi 572,573,578). Riedi's article on the early years of the Victoria League contains a brief section on the Ladies' Empire Club which includes a quotation from Buchan's *Spectator* article (583). It also mentions that Buchan was an auxiliary lecturer for the Victoria League in its programme of Imperial education (589). Buchan himself makes further reference to the League in a 1907 *Spectator* article on women's work in colonisation (**H125**).

ARTICLE 6

'The Glamour of High Altitudes'

Spectator 92 (9 January 1904): 45-46

Headnote

This is Buchan's first article on the sport of mountaineering for the *Spectator*, and many more were to follow in the decade before the First World War (see **N10 et seq**). The sport had been steadily growing in popularity over the previous fifty years since the formation of the Alpine Club in 1857⁶. The highest peaks of the Alps and other mountain ranges in Europe had been climbed, and expeditions were now being organised in attempts to conquer the greatest peaks of more distant continents, such as those in Central Africa, the Andes and the Himalayas. But the increasing popularity of the sport in Europe had brought its own problems. The *Times* had published a leading article on 1 September 1903 (7e) following the recent deaths of an English vicar and a local guide in a fall, which commented on the increasing number of alpine accidents and the reasons for them. This article by Buchan, which may have been prompted by a very recent *Times* report on 5 January 1904 (4a) of another accident to an Englishman in the Alps, discusses the problem of alpine accidents in similar terms to the *Times* leader. The following year Buchan protested against the continuing development of tourism in the mountains of Europe, which he called the 'vulgarisation' of the Alps (see **N14**); and later he commented on the Access to Mountains Bill, which attempted to reach a compromise between the public's right of access and the landowner's right of protection in respect of the hills and mountains of Britain (**N26**).

Buchan's own experience of mountaineering at the time of writing this article was rather limited. He had enjoyed hill-walking in the Borders and Highlands during the holidays of his childhood and youth, but his first serious climb was not until the spring of 1898 when, during a walking tour with his school and university friend, John Edgar, he ascended the same Buachaille Etive that he mentions in this article (Smith, *Biography* 151). However, given his inexperience, their route was almost certainly 'an easy scramble from Glen Etive' (line 52) rather than a difficult direct climb.

After Oxford Buchan did some mountain scrambling in the Drakensburg and the ranges of the Northern Transvaal during his time on Lord Milner's staff in South Africa, but he did not take up the sport seriously until his return to London in October 1903. Then he found that he missed the outdoor life involved in his work for Milner on land settlement after the Boer War. He hinted at the contrast he was experiencing in this article: 'Few sports are more refreshing and invigorating' (lines 41-42), and 'the intellectual *ennui* which the life of cities induces is driven out by such manly absorption' (44-45). He resumed his climbing in Scotland, but his first visit to the Alps was not until June 1904, six months after this article, when he went to Zermatt with his sister Anna. His two articles on the Alps for the *Spectator* in July (**N10**, **N11**) were therefore the first about those mountains which he wrote from personal experience. Two years later he visited Chamonix with Anna and was elected to the Alpine Club. But despite the attractions of the European mountains, his preference was for rock-climbing in Scotland, especially in the Coolin mountains on the island of Skye (Smith, *Biography* 152-53; Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 92; *MHD* 133). He was to use his experience of the Coolins in subsequent articles for *Blackwood's Magazine* (**N18**) and the *Spectator* (**N27**).

⁶ The *Times* published two articles on tourism in Switzerland and the Alps on 23 September 1903 (4a and 7c).

Buchan's serious period of mountaineering lasted until his marriage in July 1907, but he maintained an interest in the sport for the rest of his life, and was particularly fascinated by expeditions to climb the highest unconquered peaks (see **M36**, **M39**, **M53**, **M57**, and **M66**). He even became involved in a proposal for an expedition to Everest, but the outbreak of war in 1914 put an end to the plan. Much later, towards the end of his life, while on a tour of the Arctic in July 1937 as Governor-General of Canada, he climbed Bear Rock at Fort Norman in the North West Territories by the most difficult route (see **M70**) (Smith, *Biography* 339-40, 412-13).

THE GLAMOUR OF HIGH ALTITUDES

Scarcely a month passes without news of some mountaineering fatality, and in the summer and at holiday seasons the number of accidents is yearly on the increase. Not only the higher Alps, but even the more homely hills of our own country, have a share in the melancholy list. The reason is, no doubt, the increased popularity of the sport among all
5 classes. Formerly it was the perquisite of a few, either people whose lot was cast in mountainous districts, or enthusiasts who could afford the money and time to seek a difficult and laborious form of pleasure. And being the preserve of a few, it was pursued with the caution and forethought which pioneering demands. But now that the mountains are better known, and climbing is a recognised science, some of the old caution can be
10 relaxed, and, after the fashion of human nature, too much of it is dispensed with. People light-heartedly undertake ascents, neglecting the most ordinary precautions and forgetting that mountaineering can never be a perfectly safe amusement. Even on the best known peaks, which are despised by eminent climbers as too staled for true sport, there is a chance of a thunder-storm or a fall of rocks, which may be the end of a practised
15 mountaineer, quite apart from the dangers which must always attend those whose nerves or physique are unsuited for the game. But the popularity of mountaineering, in spite of the long tale of casualties, points to something perennially attractive in high altitudes, which makes even timid men forget the perils. It is part of the same attraction that the snowfields of the Arctic Circle possess for explorers, and that such a mountain expedition
20 as Colonel Younghusband's Tibetan Mission* has for everybody with any imagination. Take any dozen young and active men, and ask them where they would prefer to be at this moment, and the odds are that the general answer will be, "On the road to Lhasa."* A mission into lowland jungles or across an African desert, though it might have far greater political significance, would not take an Englishman's fancy like the attempt to enter the
25 highest and most mysterious country in the world. It is part of our Northern heritage, which even the lowlander of the North shares with the mountain-dweller elsewhere. The old cry of Paracelsus* still rings in the ears of youth:-

"Shall I still sit beside
Their dry wells, with a white lip and filmed eye?
30 While in the distance Heaven is blue above
Mountains where sleep the unsunned tarns?*

What is the reason of the fascination? Partly, no doubt, the mere hardness and danger of it, the sense of achieving something by one's own courage and endurance in defiance of Nature, who made the smooth valleys for men to dwell in and kept the hills for herself.
35 Partly, also, that ingrained curiosity of man, which is perpetually seeking to look over hill-tops and discover the "something lost behind the ranges."* Were there no climbing in the technical sense in it, mountaineering would have fewer votaries. There is a type of athlete to whom the climb is everything, and who is equally happy worming his way up some rock

in Cumberland or Skye, where there can be no special object in getting to the top, as in
40 pulling himself up to the needle of Skagastölstind* or surmounting the last snows of
Aconcagua.* There is a great deal to be said for climbing for its own sake. Few sports are
more refreshing and invigorating to the man who has the bodily and mental strength for it.
The senses are quickened, the nerves are at perpetual tension, the whole nature is
absorbed in one task, and the intellectual *ennui* which the life of cities induces is driven out
45 by such manly absorption. There is also in a high degree the pleasure of conquest, which
may be measured by the difficulty of the task rather than by the relative importance of the
summit. But that climbing is not the whole of the fascination of mountains is shown by the
feeling, common to all except a few enthusiastic young men, that a climb is best when it
forms also the only or the chief way to the summit. Otherwise a quarry in Derbyshire,
50 which may give as difficult climbing as the Dolomites,* would have to take rank with a
great peak. The famous Crowberry Ridge on the Buachaille Etive* loses much of its charm
when we remember that the summit can be reached by an easy scramble from Glen Etive;
and Ben Nevis would be a better mountain were there not twenty ways to the top for
those who cannot ascend the steep southern face. The real attraction is the summit, and
55 the higher and lonelier the summit the greater the attraction. It is well if the way up is
hard; but to all save athletes the way up is not the chief thing.

The real glamour of high altitudes is found, not in the means of attaining them, but in their
intrinsic character. There we have Nature pure and primeval, a sphere in which worldly
ambitions and human effort have no part, a remnant of the world as first created. Every
60 healthy man has in him a love of the wilds and the savage elements, a feeling which is not
at war with the pleasure in homely scenes, in towns and gardens and lowland meadows,
but complementary in human nature. It is a relic in civilised man of the primitive creature
who first tried to adapt the earth to human needs, or, it may be, some trace of that infinite
within us which cannot content itself with the work of our hands, and hungers every now
65 and again for the bare simplicity of Nature. High mountains give us Nature in its most
elemental form, - snow, rock, wind, and sky, an austere world in which man counts for
little: and in the realisation of his insignificance there is much refreshment for the human
soul. They have always been the chosen haunt of people who were not quite satisfied with
life, not only estranged hermit souls like the author of "Obermann,"* but sane men who
70 wished to get rid of the incubus of mundane cares and arrive at a clearer perspective. We
have all in our own way written our hymns before sunrise, and –

"Heard accents of the eternal tongue
Through the pine branches play –
Listen'd, and felt ourselves grow young."*

75 But the mountains have not only loneliness, they have height. The world is stretched out
beneath them, with its rivers shrunk to brooks, and its towns little patches of smoke and
colour. In a mountain view the ordinary world of men is brought close to the mind, but
seems small and inconsiderable compared to the august spaces around. It is an illusion,
but a priceless one, for by it a normal, healthy man can attain what the opium-eater gains
80 from his disease, and look down from an immense height upon his fellows and their works,
and achieve a supreme moment of detachment. In every man, as the saying goes, a poet
died young;* and not only a poet, but kings, prophets, and conquerors. But there are
*revenants** from that past, and the most prosaic of men may find them on mountain-tops,
and return with a clearer vision and a sturdier heart. "*Éternité, deviens mon asile*"* was the
85 cry of Senancour. That way madness lies, for no disease so dominates and absorbs the soul
as the disease of "immensity." But to a sane man there is value in that exaltation of the
spirit which high altitudes give, when, so to speak, Nature lifts a corner of the curtain, and
shows us a cosmos in which our life plays but a little part.

Footnotes

20 *Colonel Younghusband's Tibetan Mission*: Francis Younghusband was currently leading a Government mission to Tibet, which entered Tibetan territory in early December 1903 with the aim of re-establishing official relations with the Dalai Lama and curbing the growth of Russian influence. In February 1904 Buchan wrote an article for the *Spectator* (**H32**) on the purpose of the mission, which did not leave Tibet until late September that year. There were later articles by Buchan on the outcome of the mission (**H52, H55**), together with an extended summary article in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (**H56**), and reviews of books written by members of the expedition (**H150** - Younghusband's own account – and **M13, M15, M18**).

22 *'On the road to Lhasa'*: In Chapter XII of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), a native spy sent by the British to meet two Russian agents seeking to gain influence over the northern passes into India tells Kim of his fears of being tortured: 'I remember once they wanted to cut off my head on the road to Lhasa' (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008: 223).

27 *Paracelsus*: the adopted name of Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493-1541), a Swiss-German scientist, medical practitioner and philosopher (CBD 5 February 2013).

28-31 *'Shall I still sit beside....the unsunned tarns'*: a quotation from Part I of *Paracelsus* (1853), a dramatic poem by Robert Browning (1812-89). The speaker, Paracelsus, is rejecting the work of all previous scholars ('Shall I sit beside/Their dry wells....') in his search for true knowledge (17 January 2013 <<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au>>).

36 *'something lost behind the ranges'*: from line 8 of 'The Explorer' (1898), a poem by Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), in which the conscience of a settler in a border station tells him to become an explorer and seek 'Something hidden.../Something lost behind the Ranges' of the surrounding hills (17 January 2013 <<http://www.pitt.edu>>).

40 *the needle of Skagastølstind*: the third highest peak in Norway, part of the Hurrungane range of mountains. It was first climbed by William Cecil Slingsby in 1876 (17 January 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

41 *Aconcagua*: the highest mountain in the Americas, part of the Andes range and located in the province of Mendoza, Argentina. The first ascent was in 1897 by Matthias Zurbriggen, the Swiss guide on an expedition led by Edward Fitzgerald (17 January 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

50 *the Dolomites*: a mountain range in north east Italy, part of the Alps, which has steadily developed as a tourist centre since the 1870s (17 January 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

51 *Crowberry Ridge on the Buachaille Etive*: the Buachaille is a mountain at the head of Glen Etive in the Scottish Highlands. Crowberry Ridge is a rock climb on the mountain graded as severe. It was first ascended direct in 1900 by the Abraham brothers and two other climbers (17 January 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Buchan subsequently reviewed several mountaineering books by the Abrahams (see **N17, N23, N27, N30, N32**).

69 *the author of 'Obermann'*: a reference to the French philosopher and writer Étienne Pivert de Senancour (1770-1846), who left Paris in 1789, the year of the revolution, to seek an alpine solitude in Switzerland, returning to France about 1798. In 1804 he published *Obermann*, a novel in letters supposedly written by a solitary and melancholy person, revising and expanding it for a subsequent edition in 1833 (17 January 2013).

<<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Buchan later reviewed a new English translation of *Obermann* (M48).

72-74 *'Heard accents....grow young'*: lines 125-27 of Matthew Arnold's 1852 poem 'Stanzas in Memory of the Author of *Obermann*' (ie Senancour – see note to line 69), which imagine Senancour in his lonely alpine retreat listening to the night breeze. The last line has been slightly altered by Buchan to fit his meaning here. The original reads: 'Listen'd, and felt *thyself* grow young' (17 January 2013 <<http://www.bartleby.com>>).

81-82 *In every man....a poet died young*: according to the French literary critic Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-69) in *Portraits Littéraires* (1862): 'Each man carries within him the soul of a poet who died young' (7 February 2013 <<http://quotiv.com>>).

83 *revenants*: ghosts or spirits (*OED* 17 January 2013).

84 *'Éternité, deviens mon asile'*: this is the epitaph which Senancour (see note to line 69) composed for himself. It has been translated as: 'Eternity, become my refuge' (17 January 2013 <<http://translate.google.co.uk>>).

ARTICLE 7

'The Life of the Kaffir'

Spectator 92 (14 May 1904): 776-77. Review.

Dudley Kidd. *The Essential Kafir*.

Headnote

In November 1903, very shortly after his return from two years on Lord Milner's staff in South Africa, Buchan published *The African Colony: Studies in the Reconstruction*, the immediate first fruit of his time there and written while he was still in South Africa. The book contained sections on its history, politics and economics, as well as Buchan's descriptions of his travels around the country. Two early versions of these travel notes and a draft of the chapter on Johannesburg had already appeared as articles in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (**M3**, **M4**) and the *National Review* (**H17**). Although *The African Colony* had a mixed reception when it was published, it generated immediate interest in the elite circles of colonial administration, including a long and appreciative letter to Buchan from Lord Cromer, the British Consul-General in Egypt (Smith, *Biography* 148; Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 85). Buchan was therefore in a position when he returned to write with some authority on South Africa and its future, and he did so in many articles for the *Spectator* and, occasionally, the *Times Literary Supplement* and other journals.

In the aftermath of the Boer War, which had revealed deep-rooted problems in Britain's administration and defence of its colonies in South Africa and the wider Empire, much public attention was focussed on Imperial problems and future policies. Buchan's articles and reviews cover a wide range within this discourse – from the theory of colonisation (**H82**) and the problems of other Colonial Powers (for example **H29**, **H33**, **H34**, **H40**), to Imperial defence (**H31**), the specific problems of South Africa and its politics (**H15**, **H16**, **H19**, **H23**, **H43**, **H46**, **H48**, **H50** and many others), the dangers of native uprisings (**H85**, **H92**, **H94**, **H106**, **H107**), and Britain's colonies in tropical Africa (**H42**). He also discussed the role of women in colonisation (**H125**) and the establishment of game reserves (**H98**). Parts of Africa were still being explored and mapped (**M10**, **M31**, **M37**), and there was considerable interest in the ethnology of the various African peoples and the development of colonial policy towards what was generally referred to as 'the native problem' or 'the native question' (see for example **H66**, **H79**, **M6**, **M17**).

Dudley Kidd's book *The Essential Kafir* falls into this latter category. Buchan's review concentrates on the thoroughness of Kidd's data and observations, the psychology of the native mind, the effect of missionary work, and the political future of the native. In a later book, *Kafir Socialism* (1908), reviewed by Buchan in the *Spectator* (**H135**), Kidd examined the clan system of collective ownership and group responsibility in native communities as part of a more detailed consideration of the political aspects of the native problem. Buchan mentions both books in his review 'The South African Native' for the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1909 (**H139**).

THE LIFE OF THE KAFFIR

For a hundred years the South African Kaffir* has been exposed to the study of that portion of the civilised world which is curious about barbarism. Hasty travellers have visited him, politicians have generalised on his views or his virtues, as it suited their policy, and he has been a most convenient stage property to the novelist of adventure. The works of Theal, 5 Bleek, and Callaway,* and the admirable little books of M. Jacottet on the Basutos and M. Junot on the Baronga,* have told us something of his folk-lore. But hitherto no one has attempted a complete portrayal of his life. The valuable collection of papers called *The Natives of South Africa** was in the main political, with the exception of Mr. Scully's chapter on Kaffir life,* which was, however, rather a summary than a study. What has hitherto 10 been lacking was a complete investigation of the several races which make up the Bantu,* from all the standpoints which full knowledge demands, an inquiry not only into the sociology and economics of their life, but into their *vie intime*,* with its perverted psychology and fragmentary religion. It is a difficult task, requiring high powers of observation, long and patient investigation, a freedom from prejudice and from the vice of 15 glib generalising, and sufficient culture to provide the necessary standpoint. Mr. Kidd in his remarkable book has attempted this task, and in our opinion he has succeeded. His book is by far the most important contribution that we are aware of to the understanding of what must remain one of the cardinal South African problems. He does not theorise, he is a collector of data; and the self-restraint which he shows in this respect must seem most 20 praiseworthy to any one who knows how the field of inquiry is cumbered with half-truths and imperfect generalities. What the business was which took him on his travels he does not explain; but his observation-ground is complete, and embraces not only the natives of the Transkei* and Natal,* but of Mozambique and the North as far as Lake Nyassa.* Any one who is familiar with Kaffirs knows how hard it is to collect accurate information. They 25 will purposely misunderstand the nature of an interrogation, and their conception of politeness leads them to assent to every statement of the questioner. To have achieved so much argues remarkable ingenuity and patience on the writer's part. To his scientific thoroughness Mr. Kidd adds many literary graces. His pages bring before us the wide, quiet spaces of the veld, and the slow cycle of a Kaffir's days. He does not set out to be 30 picturesque, but the sharp impress of keenly felt sensations and unforgettable pictures is on all his work. His book is a kind of epic of the veld, the world which was in being long before the voortrekkers crossed the Orange,* and which still lives apart from the changes of war and governments. As a last word of praise, let us add that he has given us many photographs, of which we can only say that they are the real thing, and therefore 35 unobtainable by the casual traveller. Photographs of Kaffir life you may buy by the score in any South African town; but pictures such as Mr. Kidd's are the fruit of long and intimate study.

The common saying is that the native is a child;* but the bed-rock element in his nature is less childish than animal. "They are highly evolved animals, and to our first view are gifted 40 with minds which are almost blank. They are often jolly, good-natured, ease-loving, selfish; their nature is well rooted in red earth; and if we do not like to look on them as bone of our bone, they certainly are earth of our earth, and claim kinship with us through the lowest strands of our animal nature." Cruel and lustful almost beyond belief was the old Kaffir life. When Mr. Kidd first visited Pondoland, before its annexation,* it was calculated that fully 45 one person on an average daily was put to death in that district for witchcraft; and the doings of Bunu, the Swazi King,* in quite recent years are familiar to all South Africans. When Chaka's mother died* he wanted to kill off every mother in the country to show his grief, and was with difficulty satisfied with the slaughter of seven thousand. The Kaffir's instincts are those of the wild animals around him, and his customs are almost coeval with

50 the rocks. His ceremonies of circumcision and purification, from which some writers have foolishly jumped to a Semitic origin, his taboos, his sin-offerings, his modes of justice, his folk-tales, are all hoar-ancient. Mr. Kidd takes his life from birth, and traces it through boyhood, marriage, war, and hunting to old age, death, and the world of spirits, - a wonderful record, full of understanding and humour. He does not attempt to summarise
55 Kaffir psychology, as so many have tried, within a few pages, but the book gives us much insight into the workings of the native mind. It is a very logical mind, for though the logic is bad – it cannot distinguish between *post hoc* and *propter hoc** – it is consistently applied. Here is an instance where a nonsensical deduction has a kind of crude logic. "When the Matabele* first saw a locomotive engine at Bulawayo,* they declared that it was a large
60 animal which fed on fire; that it hated work – else why did it scream before it moved? – and that it suffered badly from malaria. Did not the white doctor pour medicine into it whenever it groaned?" He has an amazing memory, a strong sense of justice, a readiness to absorb ideas crudely, which misleads many teachers, who think he has grasped a new thought when in reality the lesson taught him has merely provided a convenient expression
65 for a quite different idea which had been simmering in his brain. This last trait, we think, is the great barrier to education, and Mr. Kidd has very accurately described it. "The native mind is supersaturated with beliefs – with 'extra beliefs' – and so your very question causes some of the vague ideas which are floating in his mind to crystallise out into clearly defined thoughts... You bring many of his vague feelings above the 'threshold,' and they become
70 definite and clear-cut; and so he recognises them as his own thought. Out of his mental fog arises a belief which your questions have suggested." He has no sense of beauty; "the only beauty the Kafirs recognise is the fatness of their women and the colour of their oxen." On Kaffir religion Mr. Kidd is indefinite, because there is nothing definite to tell. We think that he is right in saying that the spirit of their belief is to be found in ancestor-worship; but it is very different from the creed we usually associate with that name. The customs at death
75 are so curious and complex that it is impossible to frame from them any coherent doctrine of the Hereafter. Their folk-tales are in the strictest sense fireside stories, and though they have often a mythic origin, it has been forgotten in their present use. On the unexplained in Kaffir life – their power of collecting information, of foretelling events and distributing
80 news with incredible speed – Mr. Kidd has some interesting and rational passages. He quotes a few remarkable cases; but, on the whole, he leans against the theory of an "extra sense," and believes, rightly as we think, that all such instances are capable of being explained, either by some natural code of signals – the human voice or drums – or as skilful anticipations of what was going to happen. We have known a Kaffir incorrect in his
85 information, which was put down to a bad guess; if he had been correct, why should we have attributed it to anything more than a good one?

Mr. Kidd has none of that vulgar intolerance of missionary work which the lesser kind of traveller shows, and which is often based on the most flimsy hearsay. No one who studies this book will be misled by the old argument that the natives are sufficiently moral if only
90 the missionaries would leave them alone. Much missionary work is ineffective enough, and a great deal is conducted on impolitic lines; but whatever the weaknesses of the Christianised Kaffir, he marks a stage immeasurably higher than the raw life of the kraal.* Barbarism is picturesque enough; but to one who knows the unspeakable lusts and cruelties at the base of Kaffir society, any form of civilisation must seem preferable,
95 however imperfect. On the political future of the native Mr. Kidd speaks with the same good sense and moderation. No native will ever feel the equal of the white, or claim equality save in moments of brag. "It is an absurdity, which needs no exposure, to say that the Kafir is in all respects equal to a white man... But he is capable of improvement; he can develop, for he has the basal* elements of manhood, though he is at present low down in
100 the scale of civilisation... This is what, I take it, the missionary means. And surely we have

lost our senses if we deny this." But for the present black is divided from white not by colour only, but by a radical mental dissimilarity, and any theory of government which does not recognise this fact will end in failure. The Kaffir may develop, but at present he has not shown that he is capable of developing mentally beyond a certain stage. Mr. Kidd bases his
105 hope for the future in education, which shall abolish his more paralysing superstitions, and especially industrial education, which may give him new occupations and ambitions in the *débâcle** of his old life. It was the conclusion of Mr. Rhodes,* and it must be the conclusion of every man who looks at the problem with a serious and tolerant mind.

Footnotes

1 *Kaffir*: generic term for the black native people of southern Africa covering many different ethnic groups, which was used during the Dutch and British colonial periods without any derogative connotations. As the twentieth century progressed and racial tensions in South Africa increased, the word became an offensive term of abuse (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Dudley Kidd's book adopts the alternative spelling 'Kafir'.

4-5 *The works of Theal, Bleek, and Callaway*: George McCall Theal (1837-1911), a prolific and influential South African historian. In subsequently reviewing a book edited by Theal (**M17**) Buchan calls him 'the historiographer of the Cape' (225b). The work referred to here is probably his *Kaffir Folk-Lore* (1882). Wilhelm Bleek (1827-75), German linguist who specialised in South African languages and published *A Brief Account of Bushman Folk-Lore, and Other Texts* in 1875. Henry Callaway (1817-90), English missionary in South Africa, published *Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus* in 1868 (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>> and <<http://catalogue.bl.uk>>). Buchan refers to the works of Theal and Callaway, and to those of Jacottet and Junod (see next note), in a footnote to page 14 of *The African Colony* (1903).

5-6 *M. Jacottet on the Basutos and M. Junot on the Baronga*: the books referred to appear to be Édouard Jacottet, *Contes Populaires des Bassoutos (Afrique de Sud)* (Paris, 1895), and Henri-Alexandre Junod (not Junot), *Les Chants et les Contes des Ba-Ronga* (Lausanne, 1897) (7 and 14 February 2013 <<http://catalogue.bl.uk>>).

7-8 *The Natives of South Africa*: this is *The Natives of South Africa: Their Economic and Social Condition* (1901), edited by the South Africa Native Races Committee (7 February 2013 <<http://catalog.bl.uk>>). Buchan reviewed a subsequent report by this committee for the *Times Literary Supplement* (**H139**) and the *Spectator* (**H140**) in 1909.

8-9 *Mr. Scully's chapter on Kaffir life*: William Charles Scully (1855-1943), South African civil servant and author, who published *Kafir Stories* in 1895 (14 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). A volume of his reminiscences about South Africa was reviewed by Buchan for the *Times Literary Supplement* (**C95**) and the *Spectator* (**C96**) in 1913.

10 *Bantu*: the general name given to the different ethnic groups in southern Africa who speak Bantu languages, of which Swahili is the most common (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

12 *vie intime*: inner life, or life of the mind (7 February 2013 <<http://www.interglot.com>>).

23 *the Transkei*: an area of south eastern Africa to the north of the Great Kei river, between the Drakensberg mountains and the Indian Ocean, now part of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

23 Natal: British colony in south eastern Africa, north east of the Transkei (see note above). It is now the Kwazulu-Natal province of South Africa (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

23 Lake Nyassa: now known as Lake Malawi, one of the African Great Lakes, it forms part of the border between Tanzania, Mozambique, and Malawi in south eastern Africa (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

31-32 long before the voortrekkers crossed the Orange: the voortrekkers (Dutch for 'pioneers') were emigrants from British control in Cape Colony (originally Dutch, but ceded to Britain in 1814). In the 1830s and 1840s they crossed the Orange river, which formed the northern border of Cape Colony, in a mass migration north-eastwards that became known as 'the Great Trek' (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

38 the native is a child: this was a common view held by the British colonial administration at the time (Redley, 'South African War' 72). Buchan summarised it in *The African Colony* (1903): 'Mentally he [the native] is as crude and naïve as a child, with a child's curiosity and ingenuity, and a child's practical inconsequence' (290).

44 Pondoland, before its annexation: a small coastal region in south eastern Africa between Port Elizabeth and Durban and the traditional homeland of the Pondo people, Pondoland was annexed by Britain to the Cape Colony in 1894. It now forms part of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

46 Bunu, the Swazi King: Swaziland is a small landlocked area between the north east border of South Africa and Mozambique. Its independence was guaranteed by Britain in 1881, but after the Boer War (1899-1902) it became a protectorate under the control of Transvaal, and subsequently part of the Union of South Africa. It regained its independence as a constitutional monarchy in 1968. Bunu was King of Swaziland 1889-99. Buchan's reference to his 'doings...in quite recent years' probably relates to Bunu's implication in the murder of a Swazi official in 1898. He had to flee the country to avoid arrest, but eventually paid a fine and was reinstated as King (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>> and <<http://www.matsamo.com>>; 14 February 2013 *Dictionary of African National Biography* (1992) <<http://books.google.co.uk>>).

47 When Chaka's mother died: Chaka, or (now usually) Shaka (c1787-1828), a Zulu warrior king, is widely regarded as the most influential Zulu leader, but extremely violent and cruel. The story of the slaughter of seven thousand following his mother's death comes from oral sources and, like many other details of his life, is regarded by modern scholarship as open to some doubt (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). He is mentioned as 'Tchaka' several times in Buchan's 1910 novel *Prester John* (eg 53, 54, 72, 102, 103).

57 post hoc and propter hoc: *post hoc* is an occurrence which follows after another event but is not caused by that event; *propter hoc* is an occurrence which is a consequence or direct effect of an earlier event. Confusion between the two is a common fallacy in logic: an event which follows another is not necessarily caused by the earlier event (7 February 2013 *OED* and <<http://wikipedia.org>>).

59 Matabele: the name given by the British to the Ndebele ethnic group of southern Africa, whose homeland since the 1830s, known to the British as Matabeleland, has been in the west and south-west region of modern-day Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

59 *Bulawayo*: the capital of Matabeleland (see note above) since its earliest days, and subsequently a colonial centre, Bulawayo is now the second largest city in Zimbabwe after the capital, Harare (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

92 *kraal*: the Dutch word for an enclosure for cattle or other livestock located within a southern African settlement or village. It is often used, as in this case, to refer to the entire settlement (7 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

99 *basal*: fundamental (*OED* 7 February 2013).

107 *the débâcle*: in this case, the sudden breaking up (*OED* 7 February 2013).

107 *Mr. Rhodes*: Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902), British imperialist and founder of Rhodesia (*CBD* 7 February 2013).

ARTICLE 8

'The Practical Mystic'

Spectator 93 (16 July 1904): 82-83

Headnote

The notion of the practical mystic, the man who combines lofty spirituality with practical action, had interested Buchan for some time. His Calvinistic upbringing and the influence of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which became his 'constant companion' during childhood (*MHD* 17), had led to a sustained interest in the religious controversies of the seventeenth century, from which Cromwell emerged as an early hero for Buchan (*MHD* 41). By the time of this article he had come to regard both Bunyan and Cromwell as practical mystics, which he makes clear in an article on Bunyan and *The Pilgrim's Progress* for the *Spectator* on 19 November 1904, subsequently reprinted in *Some Eighteenth Century Byways and Other Essays* (1908): 'Both were practical mystics, adding to their spiritual wistfulness the keenest, clearest insight into human nature, and a strong common-sense to lay hold on facts' (281).

There were many other such men in Buchan's view. In a *Spectator* article, 'Disraeli', of 16 April 1904 (**C12**), Buchan comments: 'In the highest sense of the word, he was a constructive statesman' (604a), yet at the same time both he and Gladstone were 'mystics of a kind, advocates of the spiritual life' (604b). In an article on a contemporary statesman, a review of RB Haldane's lectures 'The Pathway to Reality' (7 May 1904, **F3**), Buchan notes that Haldane, the Liberal politician who became Secretary of State for War the following year, is 'a constructive thinker' with 'a profound reverence for the ordinary consciousness' (731b), and he draws attention to 'the acute exposure at the close of the lectures of the essential materialism of so-called spiritualism' (732a). In his memoirs Buchan remembered Haldane as a philosopher with 'a genius for practical work', who nevertheless 'lived his life as one who had a continuing view of the unseen' (*MHD* 132, 133).

The practical mystic as an influential figure in literature, religion, and statesmanship was therefore very much in Buchan's mind when he wrote this article. He uses a quotation from the Marquis of Dalhousie (see footnote to line 76), whose biography he reviewed the previous month (**C14**), and the obituary report in the *Times* on 15 July 1904 (5f) of Sir Reginald Palgrave, who had written a study of Cromwell, may have prompted Buchan to begin the article with Lord Rosebery's assessment of Cromwell as a practical mystic.

THE PRACTICAL MYSTIC

There is a passage in one of Lord Rosebery's speeches* which has always seemed to us one of the happiest efforts of his admirable eloquence. He is speaking of Cromwell – "He was a practical mystic, the most formidable and terrible of all combinations. A man who combines inspiration apparently derived – in my judgment really derived – from close
5 communion with the supernatural and the celestial, a man who has the inspiration and adds to it the energy of a mighty man of action, such a man as that lives in communion on a Sinai of his own,* and when he pleases to come down to this world below seems armed with no less than the terrors and decrees of the Almighty Himself." We are familiar enough with the great dreamers of history who dreamed in blood and iron,* leaving for a moment
10 the task of making their peace with their souls to drill order into mobs and change the

boundaries of nations. And we are apt to regard them as a race by themselves, distinct in nature from ordinary men, and their "formidable combination" as an example no more capable of imitation than the genius of a Leonardo or a Beethoven.* They breathe a different atmosphere from ours, and their mastery over the temporal comes from their
15 passionate devotion to the eternal. The cares and ambitions of the world are things to be played with if the soul has been purged by dwelling constantly in another. This is the common explanation of the practical form of Puritanism,* and probably it is the correct one. "He prostrated himself," as Macaulay wrote,* "in the dust before his Maker; but he set his foot upon the neck of his King ... They brought to civil and military affairs a coolness
20 of judgment and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors and pleasure its charms." Knox* "never feared the face of man" because he so
25 utterly feared the face of God; and doubtless their complete preoccupation with the things of the spirit explains their contemptuous mastery over the things of the world. They succeeded because they were free from the follies and frailties which make man's work ineffectual. But if this were the only explanation, the character would have to be limited to the "daemonic" men of history,* - the few saints, poets, prophets, and crusaders who have
30 been in the world but never of it, and yet have above all others moulded its destiny.

We believe, however, that the nature of the "practical mystic" is commoner than this explanation would assume, and that it descends in gradations from the heroic type till it comes into touch with our everyday life. On the prosaic view, it does not demand a complete preoccupation, but merely the existence of a spiritual element in the human soul,
35 not atrophied from disuse or checked shamefacedly, but consciously and joyfully cultivated. "Mystic" is, perhaps, scarcely the word, for it has a religious significance, and the quality is not necessarily religious; "dreamer," save that it conveys the suggestion of incompetence, would be more fitting. It means simply the existence of a side to a man's nature other than that presented to the world, a side to which he can turn for rest and
40 refreshment, and which has such illuminating and vivifying power as to double his practical efficiency. Any man, in a sense, has something of this, for the labourer who carries the hod may cheer himself with thoughts of a Saturday football match as effectively as the statesman is comforted with a great civic ideal. But the distinction is both of degree and quality. If a man's work is worthy, if his idealism is concerned with the true things of the
45 spirit, if, above all, it is consciously cherished with a clear understanding of its relation to the world he works in, then he has a right to the name of "practical mystic". His mysticism may be religious, or artistic, or moral, or political: a dream of a new art, a new life, or some *civitas Dei** beyond the hard realities of State or township. But it does not lull him into the inertia of an easy life, but quickens his impulse for action. Sometimes one hears the
50 criticism made of a great man, "The pity is that he has no other side to his life," and it is a criticism based upon a true instinct. The worker who, as the saying goes, is wholly wrapped up in his task, and sees it only in its obvious external form, will never do work of the highest order. There is no relief in his life. All is hard, bright, and metallic; and then one day there comes a crash, and the ill-founded edifice tumbles. For man is a spiritual being, and
55 without some spiritual world sooner or later his energy must falter and his eyes, in whose clearness he gloried, grow dim from the glare of sharp outlines. But the man who has this background to his nature carries his own well of vitality in his breast. Like Wordsworth's Happy Warrior,* his faculty for storm and turbulence is keen and true because the other side of life is so dear to his heart. He does not know that terrible mental weariness, when
60 the nerve snaps and there seems nothing worth doing beneath the sun, because his horizon is limitless, and no absorption in the affairs of one world blinds him for a moment

to the realities of another. Like Séguier the Camisard,* who had more reason than most people to complain of life, he can say: "My soul is like a garden full of shelter and of fountains."

65 But the mysticism is also practical. There is nothing more vulgar and discredited than the
notion that that man is most practical who is most pitifully narrow, or that the sanest
nature is the most prosaic. Just as true sanity presupposes a touch of noble madness, so
the strongest practical talent implies a dash of the impracticable. If you shoot at the moon,
your arrow will at least go over the housetops; while if you aim meticulously above the
70 roof-tree,* the odds are that you will get no farther than a gable. For one thing, this
mysticism sets things in their true perspective. A man clamouring in the crowd has no real
conception of the goal to aim at, and a certain preoccupation with higher things will enable
the fighter to neglect the foolish conventions of the mob, and give him a standpoint from
which to direct wisely his corner of the battle. It will also give him courage, for, having
75 striven with his own soul, he will not fear greatly the praise or the abuse of fellow-mortals.
"To fear God," as Dalhousie* said, is not only a truth of religion, but a very vital truth of
politics; and though this is especially true of the profound mysticism of the Christian, it
holds good of lesser idealisms. But, above all, it gives him insight, and that tireless energy
which comes only from devotion to an ideal. Some day a prosaic age which is chary of
80 enthusiasm, and flatters itself that it is sane, without seeing that sanity is only a negative
quality at the best, will give that quality which the Elizabethans called madness, but which
was, of course, not madness in our sense, its due. "Madness" of this kind is simply
devotion to an ideal in defiance of conventional beliefs; and if the ideal is worthy, then such
madness is the completest sanity. Are we to call a man sane who sees nothing in public life
85 but Blue-books* and platitudes in the House, and deny the name to the man to whom
politics is one long strife for the exaltation of his people? Such sanity is not only dull, it is
woefully ineffective. The explorer who is led on by the dream of "something lost behind
the Ranges"* is much more likely to find El Dorado* than the utilitarian traveller journeying
for a syndicate with his expenses paid. Even Mr. Dividends* is not half so much the
90 successful merchant as the Greshams and Smiths* whose fancies were fired by tales of new
continents, and who launched their ventures in the hope of gaining an Empire. For the
foundation of true work is, in the last resort, the spiritual force of the worker, and this
cannot be got from absorption in material interests, but only from some living faith, some
inexhaustible spring of hope and confidence in his own heart.

Footnotes

1 *one of Lord Rosebery's speeches*: the Earl of Rosebery (1847-1929), Liberal statesman and historical biographer, was Prime Minister 1894-95. The speech referred to is an address he delivered on 14 November 1899 at the tercentenary celebrations of the birth of Oliver Cromwell, which was reported verbatim by the *Times* on 15 November (7a-d) and published separately the following year. The passage quoted is Rosebery's explanation of Cromwell's extraordinary power (21 February 2013 The *Times* Digital Archive <<http://infotrac.galegroup.com>>).

6-7 *on a Sinai of his own*: in *The Bible*, Mount Sinai is where Moses was summoned by God to receive the Ten Commandments, descending after a communion of forty days and nights to deliver them to the people (21 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

9 *who dreamed in blood and iron*: a reference to the policy of Otto von Bismarck (1815-98). In a speech to the Budget Committee of the Prussian Parliament on 30 September 1862, Bismarck said that Prussia's position in Germany would be determined by military power, or by 'iron and blood' as he put it. The transposed phrase 'blood and iron' later became a

popular description of the military policy Bismarck subsequently used to bring about the unification of Germany in 1871 under Prussian leadership with himself as Chancellor, and to further the expansion of its power on the Continent of Europe (21 February 2013 <<http://www.en.wikipedia.org>>).

13 *a Leonardo or a Beethoven*: Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Italian artist, and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), German composer (CBD 21 February 2013).

17 *Puritanism*: a significant grouping of English Protestants which evolved from dissatisfaction with the Elizabethan Religious Settlement of 1559. They advocated greater purity of doctrine and worship accompanied by personal piety, and became a major political force in England during the Civil War period of the mid-seventeenth century, when they were led by Oliver Cromwell, who was a vehement Puritan. But after Cromwell's death in 1658 and the Restoration of Charles II two years later, a new religious settlement considerably reduced their influence (21 February 2103 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

18 *'He prostrated himself', as Macaulay wrote*: Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-59), English historian and writer. The long quotation Buchan uses here is taken from Macaulay's essay 'On Milton', which established his reputation when it was first published in the *Edinburgh Review* of August 1825. The quotation is in two parts. The first concerns the dual nature of the Puritan, contrasting his attitude to 'his Maker' and 'his King'. The second, separated from the first by some fifteen lines in the original, begins '*These fanatics* [ie the Puritans] brought to civil and military affairs....', instead of '*They* brought....', which Buchan uses here (21 February 2013 <<http://www.nndb.com>> and <<http://www.archive.org>>).

24 *Knox*: John Knox (c1513-72), Scottish Protestant reformer. At his funeral in St Giles's Church, Edinburgh, on 24 November 1572 the Earl of Morton, Regent of Scotland, said at his graveside: 'Here lyeth a man who in his life never feared the face of man' (21 February 2013 <<http://www.greatsite.com>>).

29 *the 'daemonic' men of history'*: Buchan is probably referring here to the theory of Johann von Goethe (1749-1832), the German poet, philosopher and scientist, that certain obscure but dynamic elements are present in man and nature which he calls 'daemonic' forces. He explains in his autobiography *Poetry and Truth (Dichtung und Wahrheit, 1811-32)* that these prodigious forces are manifest in certain men of history, which enables them to attract the following of the masses (21 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>> and <<http://www.tennesseeplayers.org>>).

48 *civitas Dei*: city of God, an ideal city (OED 21 February 2013).

57-58 *Wordsworth's Happy Warrior*: see Article 3, note to lines 34-35.

62 *Séguier the Camisard*: the Camisards were Protestant militants of the Bas-Languedoc and Cevennes regions of southern France. In the period 1702-10 they organised an armed insurrection against Louis XIV's persecution of Protestantism. Pierre Séguier was one of their early leaders. He was burned at the stake in August 1702 for the murder of the Catholic Abbé du Chayla and others. The story is told in Chapter XII of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* (1879). According to Stevenson, Séguier showed no remorse for his crimes: 'I have committed none. My soul is like a garden full of shelter and of fountains' (21 February 2013 <<http://www.britannica.com>> and <<http://www.etext.lib.virginia.edu>>).

69-70 *the roof-tree*: the main beam or ridge pole of a roof (OED 21 February 2013).

76 Dalhousie: James Andrew Broun-Ramsay, Marquis of Dalhousie (1812-60) was Governor-General of India 1847-56. Here Buchan is paraphrasing a quotation attributed to Dalhousie by Sir William Wilson Hunter in his *Rulers of India: The Marquis of Dalhousie* (1890, p.225): 'To fear God and to have no other fear is a maxim of religion, but the truth of it and the wisdom of it are proved day by day in politics' (21 February 2013 <<http://www.archive.com>>).

85 Blue-books: the official reports of Parliament and the Privy Council which are issued in dark-blue covers (*OED* 21 February 2013).

87-88 'something lost behind the Ranges': see Article 6, note to line 36.

88 El Dorado: the name of a legendary country (or, according to some, a city), abounding in gold, believed by the Spanish and by Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618) to exist in the Amazon region of South America (*OED* 21 February 2013).

89 Mr Dividends: although a typical Bunyan character epithet, this name does not appear in *The Pilgrim's Progress* or any other Bunyan work. It is likely that Buchan invented it as a consciously Bunyanesque reference.

90 the Greshams and Smiths: extremely successful families of English merchants in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The most well-known family members are Sir Thomas Gresham (1519-79), who was financial agent to the crown and founded the Royal Exchange, and Sir Thomas Smith (or Smythe, c1558-1625), who was the first governor of the East India Company (28 February 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

ARTICLE 9

'Sir Richard Burton'

Spectator 96 (26 May 1906): 833-34. Review.

Thomas Wright. *The Life of Sir Richard Burton*. (2 vols).

Headnote

When Buchan wrote this review in 1906, Burton (1821-90) was one of the most famous, but controversial figures of the Victorian era that had just ended. His fame had been established by his pilgrimage in 1853 to the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina disguised as a Muslim native of the Middle East. This was a difficult enterprise involving deep knowledge of native language and culture, as well as being very dangerous, because the pilgrimage was forbidden to non-Muslims and discovery would have meant almost certain death. Burton's account of this exploit, *A Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* (3 vols. 1855-56) made him famous and became a classic of travel literature. But controversy soon followed. In 1857 Burton went on a joint expedition with John Speke to search for the source of the Nile, which was the greatest geographical mystery of the time. They came upon Lake Tanganyika in February 1858, but then Burton fell ill and it was Speke alone who went on to discover Lake Victoria, which he claimed as the source of the Nile. Burton disputed this when they returned to London in 1859, claiming that Lake Tanganyika was the true source, and a rift opened between them which developed into one of the most celebrated controversies of the nineteenth century. In 1864 Speke was killed in an apparent shooting accident, which Burton believed was suicide. Only after his death was it proved beyond doubt that Speke's claim as to the source of the Nile was correct (ODNB 14 March 2013).

The literary aspects of Burton's career also became controversial. He translated a substantial number of Oriental works into English, but challenged the moral standards of the Victorian age by retaining the sexual content of the original versions which had been omitted by previous translators. The *Kama Sutra* appeared in 1883, followed by the *Arabian Nights* in sixteen volumes between 1885 and 1888. Earlier versions of the *Arabian Nights* had a significant influence on Robert Louis Stevenson⁷, who in turn influenced Buchan, but Burton's has since become the pre-eminent English translation and the keystone of his literary reputation (ODNB 14 March 2013).

Buchan's review does not dwell on the controversial aspects of Burton's career. He is more concerned to give his own views of Burton's character and thereby remedy a deficiency in Wright's biography, which he finds too concerned with petty anecdotes and gossip to provide any deep understanding of Burton. His criticism of Wright is unusually stringent, accusing him of having 'no real talent for biography' (line 21), with far too many 'complacent platitudes expressed in banal and slipshod English' (lines 16-17). But his criticism is balanced by recognising 'the mass of material here collected by Mr Wright's industry' (lines 22-23), from which a much better biography might have been written.

⁷ Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* was published in 1882, and his *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* in 1885, before Burton's translation became available.

SIR RICHARD BURTON

The most strangely fated of modern Englishmen has not been happy in his biographers. The Life by Lady Burton* is indiscriminate eulogy, a portrait of her husband as she wished the world to think of him rather than as he was. Miss Stisted's counterblast* is a polemic, and the later memorials of his wife* do not greatly assist the inquirer. There was room and
5 to spare for a judicious writer who, while appreciating the romance of Burton's career, should form a fair and independent estimate of a character strong enough to bear the weight of honest criticism. There is a certain piquancy in the biographer of the poet Cowper* undertaking the task. If we had to find two men at the opposite poles of temperament, Burton and Cowper would be no bad examples. Mr. Wright has brought to
10 his work great industry and considerable enthusiasm, but we cannot say that he has produced the book we have been looking for. He is judicious enough, in a way, and strives to hold the balance even between the hot partisans and the whole-hearted enemies. But his manner is always that of the curiosity hunter, to whom Burton is primarily material for anecdotes. A figure such as his, sinister, tragic, but rarely undignified, deserved a better
15 fate than to be the prey of the literary gossip. The result is that the whole book wears an air of pettiness and vulgarity, - complacent platitudes expressed in banal and slipshod English. Now and then Mr. Wright is fired by the contemplation of the East into attempts at fine writing on his own account, and of these we can only say that we prefer his domestic manner, unpleasing as it is, to his excursions "with the horsemen of Yemen."

20 The truth is that Mr. Wright, while an accurate and painstaking collector of information, has no real talent for biography. To heap epithets on a man does not bring us one step nearer understanding the springs of his being. But for the mass of material here collected by Mr. Wright's industry there is much to be said. It clears up many disputed points on which Burton, an incorrigible obscurantist, loved to mislead the world. Burtonism is
25 Byronism,* save that its area is cosmopolitan instead of European, and, like Byronism, it must pose. Facts, strange as they are, are not strange enough for it, and it must surround them with an atmosphere of theatrical mystery. Burton's doings during the wandering years before he settled at Trieste would be thought incredible in any novel. His boyhood was spent in following his family up and down Europe, where he may be said to have
30 learned everything except what the ordinary boy knows. His parents destined him for the Church, and he went to Trinity College, Oxford, - surely as odd a candidate for Holy Orders as ever entered that University. With his head filled with Southern romance, he was ready to challenge any opponent to a duel, and, when the "ragging" of his rooms was planned, he waited for his assailants with a red-hot poker. Fencing, bull-terriers, and Eastern languages
35 were his main interests, and when the inevitable day of his rustication arrived he "went down" in state in a tandem.* He entered the Indian Army, and in Sind began to lay the foundation of his vast stores of Oriental lore. At the age of thirty-two he undertook the expedition to Mecca and Medina, disguised as a Muslim pilgrim, which first brought him before the eyes of the world. He had always a mania for disguises. In Sind he had visited
40 the back-stairs of native life in the garb of a native merchant, and later he used to don the disguises of Greek doctor, Dervish, Pathan,* and pilgrim as the occasion demanded. Once in London, being afraid lest he might be subpoenaed in a certain case, he "disguised himself by wearing green spectacles and tying a pillow on his stomach to simulate corpulence." It was as Mirza Abdullah of Bushire* that he went to Mecca, and, though Burckhardt* had
45 anticipated him and given the world a full account of the Holy Places, it is Burton's adventure which will always live in the popular imagination. His next expedition - perhaps the most hazardous of all his many enterprises - was to Harar,* in Somaliland. Africa had now laid its spell on him, and the fruit was his famous expedition with Speke* which resulted in the discovery of Tanganyika, and - by Speke - of the Victoria Nyanza.* The

50 quarrels between the two explorers which for long excited the world of geographers need not be recounted to-day; and Burton afterwards did full justice to the merits of his companion, for, heady and violent as he could be at times, he was incapable of conscious meanness. Then followed in rapid succession a journey to Salt Lake City, his marriage, his consulships at Fernando Po and Santos, and finally his appointment to the British Consulate

55 at Damascus.* There he and his wife spent the happiest years of their life. Living in the heart of the East and doing very much what he pleased, he exercised a sway which few British Consuls can ever hope to rival. He was not a very satisfactory official for the sober Foreign Office to contemplate, and in time, with the best of intentions, and no doubt with every justification, he interfered so strenuously in local politics that he had to be recalled.

60 Mr. Wright prints an excellent letter of farewell from an Arab friend, in which Burton is described as "wader of the seas of knowledge, cistern of learning of our globe, exalted above his age, whose exaltation is above the mountain of increase and our rising place, opener by his books of night and day, traveller by ship and foot and horse, one whom none can equal in travel."

65 His final Consulate, Trieste,* was regarded by the British Government as a gift to him for his services as an explorer, and he was not troubled by his official superiors. His wandering years were now over, and till the end of his life he was occupied with his literary work. Few men have suffered more from the itch of composition, and every expedition he ever took is chronicled in some large and verbose work. To these later years belong most of his

70 translations from Eastern authors, including his work for the Khama Shastra Society,* and his famous version of the *Arabian Nights*.* Mr. Wright shows conclusively that the latter work is largely borrowed from Mr. John Payne's admirable version.* Burton was in no way a great man of letters. His style is turgid and wordy, and he has no sense of arrangement. When he comes to translate poetry he has few felicities and many grievous lapses into the

75 banal or the grotesque. But he will always remain one of the greatest of Orientalists. A quick eye and a prodigious memory gave him a stock of learning which can scarcely be exaggerated. His love of adventure took him into strange byways; his marvellous linguistic gifts opened to him their secrets; and the result was an equipment of knowledge which will not be paralleled till such another belated Elizabethan is born into the world.

80 "England," he once wrote, "is now ruled by irresponsible clerks, mostly snobs. My misfortunes in life began with not being a Frenchman." Burton's self-criticisms are generally shrewd, and there was something in his nature antipathetic to the English tradition, - a wildness and rhodomontade* which far exceeded mere swashbuckling. Strange fires burned in his soul. Half mystic, half materialist, it was his delight to scorn the

85 sacred places of the multitude, while building odd shrines to eccentric deities of his own. In his opinion, there were "four great Protestant sommités:* (1) St. Paul, who protested against St. Peter's Hebraism;* (2) Mohammed, who protested against the perversions of Christianity; (3) Luther, who protested against the rule of the Pope; (4) Sir Richard Burton, who protested against the whole business." He was one of the few men who can be said

90 literally not to have known the fear of man. "Of ten men," so ran his scornful proverb, "nine are women." His fierce vitality gave him no rest; he must always be up and doing, his brain on fire with the magic of the "untravell'd world."* To such a man the niceties of conscience and the common rules of conduct will always mean little. Equally he will miss the refinements of art and the subtleties of thought. He is a force, crude, blind,

95 thoughtless, sweeping opposition before it, and then slowly ebbing with the bodily strength which nourished it. Whatever his faults, he is a great figure, and one cannot but regret that that superb energy, instead of being frittered away on a hundred aimless wanderings and fifty books of small value, was not harnessed in the service of his country. Had Burton been a younger man when Gordon's invitation came* to him, he might have left a heroic name in

100 history. Mr. Swinburne's memorial verses* are rather in praise of the man that might have been than the man that was. Few will agree that his fame "outshines Raleigh's fame."*

Footnotes

2 *The Life by Lady Burton*: Lady Isabel Burton's two-volume *Life of Captain Sir Richard F Burton* was published in 1893. It is 'an indispensable source for Burton, but it is also selective and possibly distorted' (ODNB 14 March 2013).

3 *Miss Stisted's counterblast*: Georgiana M Stisted was Burton's niece, the daughter of his sister, Maria. Her side of the Burton family, staunch Anglicans, were incensed when the Catholic Lady Isabel Burton persuaded a priest to perform the last rites at her husband's death, and when she later destroyed most of his enormous collection of private papers and manuscripts. Miss Stisted's biography, *The True Life of Captain Sir Richard F Burton*, was published in 1896. It criticises Lady Isabel and contradicts many of the claims she made in her life of Burton (see note above) (14 March 2013 <<http://www.sirrichardfrancisburton.org>>).

4 *the later memorials of his wife*: Lady Isabel published certain of Burton's manuscripts that she had not destroyed after his death (see note above), and intended a memorial edition of all his published works, of which seven volumes appeared before her own death in 1896. She was writing her autobiography when she died, and portions of it were included in *The Romance of Isabel, Lady Burton* (1897) by WH Wilkins (ODNB 14 March 2013).

7-8 *the biographer of the poet Cowper*: that is, the author of this biography, Thomas Wright, who published *The Life of William Cowper* in 1892 (14 March 2013 <<http://www.archive.org>>).

25 *Byronism*: a nineteenth century cultural phenomenon based on the literature, lifestyle and reputation of George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824). It became associated with a certain type of romantic hero, the artist of genius who disregards established conventions, which was assimilated into the works of other writers and into the minds of the reading public (14 March 2013 <<http://www.litencyc.com>>).

36 *a tandem*: a two-wheeled carriage drawn by two horses harnessed one before the other (OED 22 March 2013).

41 *Dervish, Pathan*: the Dervish is a type of Sufi Muslim, prominent in the Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century, who has chosen an ascetic life involving poverty and austerity. The Pathan (now usually Pashtun) is a member of some sixty Pashto-speaking tribes living in Afghanistan and north-west India (now Pakistan). They are fiercely independent and will fight to retain their tribal customs and traditions (14 March 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

44 *Mirza Abdullah of Bushire*: the name Burton adopted when he travelled to Mecca disguised as a Muslim pilgrim in 1853. He posed as a practitioner of various trades and professions from the commercial port of Bushire, now Bushehr on the (Persian) Gulf in modern Iran (ODNB 14 March 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.com>>).

44 *Burckhardt*: Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (1784-1817), Swiss orientalist, who travelled in North Africa, Syria and the Middle East, and went to Mecca in 1814 disguised as a Muslim scholar. His copious travel journals were published posthumously between 1819 and 1831, including *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* in 1822 (14 March 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

47 Harar: a city in the eastern part of modern-day Ethiopia that was formerly Somaliland. Also known as Harer, it has been a major commercial centre for centuries. In Burton's day it was also an important religious centre that had never been visited by a European, which made his expedition particularly hazardous (ODNB 14 March 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

48 Speke: John Hanning Speke (1827-64), who was sent by the Royal Geographical Society on a joint expedition with Burton in 1857-59 to search for the source of the Nile in the equatorial lakes which were thought to exist in the interior of Africa (ODNB 14 March 2013).

49 the discovery of Tanganyika, and - by Speke - of the Victoria Nyanza: the joint expedition of Burton and Speke (see note above) discovered Lake Tanganyika in February 1858. By then both explorers were ill with the effects of malaria and fever, but Speke recovered sufficiently to lead his own sub-expedition, which discovered Lake Victoria in August 1858. Nyanza is the Bantu word for lake (ODNB 14 March 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

54-55 Fernando Po...Damascus: Fernando Po (now known as Bioko), where Burton was appointed British Consul in 1861, is an island in the Gulf of Guinea off the west African coast of Cameroon. He was transferred to the Consulate at Santos in Brazil in 1864, a position he held until 1869, when he was moved to Damascus (ODNB 14 March 2013).

65 his final Consulate, Trieste: Burton left Damascus (see note above) in 1871, and a year later was appointed as Consul at Trieste on the Adriatic coast in what was then Austria-Hungary (now north east Italy), a position he held until his death in 1890 (ODNB 14 March 2013).

70 his work for the Khama Shastra Society: Burton was a translator of Oriental poetry, which contained sexual and erotic material that he was determined to challenge moral conventions by publishing. In 1882 he formed the secret Khama (now usually Kama) Shastra Society to circumvent the 1857 Obscene Publications Act by printing and circulating books among members of the society that would be illegal to issue to the public. His translations of the *Kama Sutra* (1883) and the *Arabian Nights* (see note below) were issued in this way by the society (ODNB 14 March 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

71 his famous version of the Arabian Nights: Burton's translation of *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* was printed and circulated in ten volumes in 1885. It is usually referred to as the *Arabian Nights*, and a further six supplemental volumes were issued in 1886-88. It has become the pre-eminent English translation and is the keystone of Burton's literary reputation (ODNB 14 March 2013).

72 Mr John Payne's admirable version: Payne had made the first unabridged English translation of the *Arabian Nights*, which was published in nine volumes in 1882 as *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night* (14 March 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Buchan notes that Burton's translation is 'largely borrowed' from Payne's version, but the modern consensus is that this was not the case (14 March 2013 <<http://sirrichardfrancisburton.org>>).

83 rhodomontade: also spelt rodomontade, this is an extravagantly boastful arrogance (OED 14 March 2013).

86 sommités: people of great eminence or influence (OED 14 March 2013).

86-87 *St Paul....St Peter's Hebraism*: according to Paul's Epistle to the Galatians in *The Bible*, he publicly confronted Peter at Antioch in a dispute over Peter's reluctance to share a meal with Gentile Christians because they did not strictly adhere to Jewish customs (14 March 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

92 *the 'untravell'd world'*: a quotation from Tennyson's poem 'Ulysses' (1842) lines 19-20: 'Yet all experience is an arch wherethro' / Gleams that untravell'd world' (14 March 2013 <<http://www.theotherpages.org>>).

99 *when Gordon's invitation came*: when General Charles Gordon was appointed Governor of the Sudan in 1877 he wrote to Burton offering him the governorship of the sultanate of Darfur, but Burton refused. He was then fifty-six years of age, twelve years older than Gordon. In 1885 Gordon was killed at Khartoum, where he had been trapped by a Muslim uprising led by a messianic leader, the Mahdi. Buchan suggests that, if Burton had accepted Gordon's offer, he too might have died heroically serving his country in the Sudan (14 March 2013 <<http://www.miskatonic.org>>). Buchan later wrote a book on Gordon's death, *Gordon at Khartoum* (1934).

100 *Mr Swinburne's memorial verses*: Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) was a friend of Burton and composed 'Verses on the Death of Richard Burton', which first appeared in the *New Review* in February 1891 (14 March 2013 <<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au>>). Buchan reviewed two volumes of Swinburne's poetry for the *Spectator* (**B4** and **B23**).

101 *'outshines Raleigh's fame'*: a reference to Swinburne's memorial verses (see note above), in which the poet proclaims that Burton's name will kindle in England 'A fame outshining her Raleigh's fame' (line 47). Raleigh is Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618), the famous Elizabethan explorer (14 March 2013 <<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au>>).

ARTICLE 10

'The Urban Sentiment'

Spectator 97 (22 September 1906): 394-95.

Headnote

Buchan constructs this article around a new book by EV Lucas, *A Wanderer in London*, which had recently been published. Edward Verrall Lucas (1868-1938) had been brought up in a Quaker family in Brighton, Sussex, and joined the staff of the *Sussex Daily News* in 1889, moving on to the *Globe*, a London evening paper, in 1893. His Quaker background led to a commission from the Society of Friends for a biography of Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet and friend of Charles Lamb, which was published in 1893. Its success led to further commissions from various publishers which culminated in Lucas editing *The Works and Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb* (7 vols. 1903-05) and writing *The Life of Charles Lamb*, which was published in 1905. These works established Lucas as a literary critic, and his biography of Lamb is regarded as seminal (ODNB 28 March 2013).

By the time of Buchan's article in September 1906, Lucas had also gained a reputation as a prolific writer of travel books and of light and humorous essays. His parodies of well-known literary works, such as HG Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, had gained him a position on *Punch* in 1904, which he was to retain for over thirty years (ODNB 28 March 2013). But it is his travel writing which seems to have attracted Buchan. He reviewed Lucas' *Highways and Byways in Sussex* in 1904 (M8) and *A Wanderer in Holland* the following year (M19), finding that in both Lucas displayed a great enthusiasm for the places he visited and a real feeling for their past as well as their present, all described in the urbane style of the well-read, cultivated traveller. These are qualities that Buchan also finds in *A Wanderer in London*, which he praises in this article. The book has twenty chapters on different areas of London, such as 'The Strand and Covent Garden', 'Holborn and Bloomsbury', and 'Westminster and Whitehall'. Lucas demonstrates not only a deep knowledge of the historic and literary associations of the various districts, but also an interest in art, which he developed during his wanderings in Holland and displays in chapters on 'Romance and the Wallace Pictures' and 'The National Gallery and the Italian Masters' (28 March 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

Lucas continued his prolific writing career after 1906, publishing at least two books a year for the rest of his life on travel, art and many other subjects. He also attempted plays and novels, though these were less successful. He had a long association with Methuens, who had published the works on Charles Lamb which established his literary reputation, and became their chairman in 1924 (ODNB 28 March 2013).

THE URBAN SENTIMENT

The urban sentiment is growing rarer as time goes on, and cities spread into counties. Once it was a common note in our literature, as in all literatures; now it is a belated thing, with that slight air of coxcombr^y* which attends any cult of a survival. Every one, of course, likes living in the town at certain seasons, just as every one has a certain love of the
5 country. But just as the latter feeling does not make a man a true countryman, so the former is not the true urban sentiment. It is not a patriotic love of this or that city; it is not a mere preference for the comforts of living in the heart of things; above all, it is not the soullessness which sees no beauty in a June meadow or a September moor. It demands a

very open and alert mind and a high capacity for varied pleasures. Horace was sensible
10 enough of the delights of his Sabine farm;* but he was none the less urban to the core. If
we were to define it otherwise than by negatives, we might call it a special zest for
civilisation, - not civilisation as an abstract quality of the mind, but civilisation with all the
small and intimate comforts which man has devised to fend his life from the rude simplicity
of Nature. It demands the historical sense, since it is especially concerned with man's
15 handiwork. It does not readily attach itself to provincial cities, being metropolitan at heart
and emulous of the best that civilisation can give. There are two ways of looking at the
world. One is to reduce it to its simplest forms, to seek elemental things, - the austerity of
Nature, the pains and pleasures of the greater human emotions, to regard civilisation as a
cloak over the face of truth rather than in itself a phase of it. The other is to hug close the
20 thousand homely intricacies of man's creation, to rejoice in variety rather than simplicity, in
the humane rather than the cosmic. The first way will give us metaphysicians and certain
sublime poets; the second will give us humanists, and comedians, and those who deserve
in a special degree the name of students of life. The urban sentiment is wholly at variance
with metaphysics, loving civilisation to the exclusion of barbarism, and rejoicing in its
25 dualism; but it has its own poetry, and it is first-cousin to the comic spirit. In these days,
when it is all too rare, we welcome a writer like Mr. E.V. Lucas, who has so ample a share of
it. In his "Friendly Town"* he showed that the spirit of great Londoners – Pepys, Johnson,
Lamb, Leigh Hunt, Dickens* – was not without its exponent to-day, and in his new book, "A
Wanderer in London" (Methuen and Co., 6s.), he has expounded the delights of the city
30 with an enthusiasm and an insight which cannot be overpraised. Mr. Lucas, indeed, differs
from the urban eulogists of the past. The old Londoner believed that what he loved was
eternal, and no anticipation of decay marred his enjoyment. But Mr. Lucas, standing in the
midst of violent change, has something of the air of a last survivor, and it is an epitaph as
much as an encomium* that he pronounces.

35 The urban sentiment cannot exist where there is not quaintness and variety. A city of
broad streets and uniform palaces could not call it forth, for it would bear too little impress
of human moods. The glory of London is her disorder. Regent Street and Park Crescent*
are almost the only examples of her efforts on a large scale to achieve unity, and these are
already losing it. Another mark of the feeling is its delight in the company of myriads of
40 human beings, in the warmth, confusion, even in the grubbiness which such company
entails. Hence it finds a genuine pleasure in fog and smoke which is not wholly aesthetic.
"I know of nothing," says Mr. Lucas, "more bewitchingly lovely than the Serpentine* on a
still misty evening – when it is an unruffled lake of dim pearl-grey liquid, such stuff as sleep
is made of.* St. James's Park at dusk on a winter's afternoon, seen from the suspension
45 bridge, with all the lights of the Government offices reflected in its waters, has less mystery
but more romance. It might be the lake before an enchanted castle." Another trait is that
it is without jealousy. It possesses all London, so it has no need to sigh after what it has
already got. In a charming passage Mr. Lucas discusses what houses he would choose to
live in, in the correct urban style of the rich owner who does not act upon his preference
50 only because he is already contented. Again, it demands a mind stored with minute
knowledge. To the true Londoner every street is haunted, every corner recalls a vanished
past. He knows that Mayfair is so called from the fair that used to be held every May
where Curzon Street now stands; he knows the story of the highwayman and the Berkeley
Street passage;* he knows that in the Tottenham Court Road there is still a tobacconist
55 who has a wooden Highlander* on the pavement in front of his shop. He must love also all
places of public entertainment, theatres, music-halls, gardens, shows; and Mr. Lucas
becomes almost lyrical in his chapter on the merits of certain music-hall performers. He
must have an eye for all that is old, quaint, significant, all the properties with which the
human comedy can be played. Here is a passage from Mr. Lucas very typical of the spirit:-

60 "The saddest change in the shops of London is in the chemists: the greatest, in the
tobacconists. There must now be a tobacconist to every ten men of the population, or
something near it, and many of these already save the purchaser such a huge
percentage that a time must be coming when they will pay us to buy tobacco at all. The
65 new tobacconists are in every way unworthy of the old: they know no repose, as a
tobacconist should; they serve you with incredible despatch and turn to the next
customer. To loiter in one of their shops is beyond consideration, and no Prince Florizel
could be a tobacconist to-day,* unless he was prepared for bankruptcy. Of course there
are still a few old-fashioned firms on secure foundations where a certain leisure may be
70 observed; but it is superficial leisure. I feel convinced that below stairs there is a
seething activity."

And here is another:-

"Will there ever come a mixer of hot and kindling beverages who, perhaps taking a
Dickensian name, will wean the world from an indiscriminating devotion to whisky?
Pineapple rum hot, with three lumps – nowhere now can one drink this fragrant
75 concoction. And the other pleasantly-sounding comforters with which Mr. Pickwick*
and his friends and the people they met on the top of coaches were wont to make
themselves happy and aromatic – where are they? All past, with the stage coaches and
the post-chaise.* This is an age of champagne and whisky, motor-cars and religious
novels. Mr. Pickwick and his leisure and his punch are no more."

80 Mr. Lucas confesses that he is not interested in savagery or primitive man. "Not till the
Egyptians baked pottery divinely blue and invented most of civilisation's endearing ways
did the world begin for me." The urban devotee is desperately civilised, and he loves
especially the little things of civilisation. "Perhaps," as Mr. Lucas says of Pepys, "he wins his
85 pre-eminence rather by his littleness, for to be a Londoner in the highest one must be
rather trivial, or at least interested in trivialities."

It is characteristic of the writer that he is most at home in the City,* where things do not
rapidly change. For it is increasingly difficult to be a Londoner. In the old days when the
area was small it was easy to know and love the city as a whole, but now that it has
become a country in itself the sentiment quails before the geographical vastness.

90 Moreover, the romance of London is altering its character. As Mr. Lucas points out,
Stevenson is to blame for dissociating romance from quaint places and planting it boldly in
the citadel of the commonplace. In the "New Arabian Nights" there is no urban sentiment.
London is taken because it is a vast congeries* of people, but New York or Glasgow would
have done nearly as well. And more and more the city is parting with its urban character,
95 and becoming new, rational, utilitarian; and its romance is losing its historic and
picturesque trappings, and becoming daily more elemental. It is ceasing, in other words, to
be in any special sense the romance of civilisation. Urban sentiment, oddly enough, is
more likely in the future to attach itself to country places, and the Londoner of to-day will
be the countryman of to-morrow, since in the country that type of civilisation he seeks may
100 still be found. One may see something of an allegory in the removal of old Temple Bar*
from Fleet Street to adorn a quiet country park. And Mr. Lucas himself seems half
conscious of the change, for when he looks from the dome of St. Paul's it is not the city that
he describes, but the roads running south and west to the green fields.

Footnotes

3 *coxcomby*: foppery, affected vanity (*OED* 28 March 2013).

9-10 *Horace....Sabine Farm*: Horace, Roman poet and satirist of the first century BC, was given a small estate in the Sabine Hills north east of Rome by his patron, Maecenas, the trusted counsellor of Octavian (the future Emperor Augustus). Horace used his Sabine farm as a retreat from the life of Rome, and it is the setting for many of his famous *Odes* (28 March 2013 <<http://www.historyworld.net>>).

27 *'Friendly Town'*: a book of over two hundred selections in verse and prose from some one hundred authors, which was compiled by EV Lucas and published as *The Friendly Town: A Little Book for the Urbane* (1905). The selections were grouped under such headings as 'Music and Painting', 'Youth in the City', 'The Past', and 'London' (28 March 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

27-28 *Pepys, Johnson, Lamb, Leigh Hunt, Dickens*: all authors whose work appeared in *The Friendly Town* (see note above) except, perhaps surprisingly, Charles Dickens. Contemporary authors in the book included George Meredith, AC Swinburne, Andrew Lang, Austin Dobson, and two pieces by Lucas himself, signed 'E.V.L.' (28 March 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

34 *encomium*: formal expression of praise; eulogy (*OED* 28 March 2013).

37 *Regent Street and Park Crescent*: Regent Street was one of the first planned developments in London, designed by John Nash in 1811 to link the central area of the city with Regent's Park. Regent Street extends from the area of Piccadilly Circus, via Langham Place, into Portland Place, at the north end of which is Park Crescent, with Regent's Park nearby (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

42 *the Serpentine*: a forty-acre recreational lake in Hyde Park created in 1730 (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

43-44 *such stuff as sleep is made of*: a paraphrase from Prospero's speech in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* IV.1.156-57: 'We are such stuff/ As dreams are made on'.

53-54 *the story of the highwayman and the Berkeley Street passage*: the east end of Curzon Street once narrowed to a passage between the gardens of Devonshire House and Lansdowne House, which came out on Berkeley Street. In the late eighteenth century a highwayman, escaping from a robbery in nearby Piccadilly, evaded capture by dashing along this passage. It was subsequently closed by installing a set of iron bars at each end (28 March 2013 <<http://edwardianpromenade.com>>).

54-55 *Tottenham Court Road....Highlander*: at this time there was a tobacconist shop at 128 Tottenham Court Road which had a wooden sign of a kilted Jacobite Highlander outside. The sign was purloined by students from University College London during the celebrations of the relief of Ladysmith in February 1900, then returned, but later repeatedly stolen by the students to serve as their mascot, which they called Phineas. It was eventually donated by the tobacconist to the university, and now stands in the UCL Union (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

66-67 *no Prince Florizel could be a tobacconist to-day*: in Robert Louis Stevenson's *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (1885), Prince Florizel of Bohemia, whose adventures were first related in Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* (1878), now calls himself Theophilus Godall and owns a tobacconist, which has the reputation of being the finest cigar shop in London (28 March 2013 <<http://robert-louis-stevenson.org>>).

75 *Mr Pickwick*: the title character in Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*, first published in 1837 (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

78 *post-chaise*: a horse-drawn, usually four-wheeled carriage used for carrying mail and passengers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (*OED* 28 March 2013).

86 *the City*: an area of just over one square mile in the centre of London, which constituted most of the city's area from the time of its Roman settlement until the Middle Ages, after which London expanded vastly to become a large conurbation. The City was a major business and financial centre in Edwardian England, and remains so today (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

93 *congeries*: a mass or heap (*OED* 28 March 2013).

100 *old Temple Bar*: the point in London where Fleet Street, City of London, becomes The Strand, Westminster, and where a barrier was traditionally erected to regulate trade into the City (see note to line 86 above). A two-storey stone gateway designed by Sir Christopher Wren was constructed there in 1669-72. It became known as Temple Bar and remained in place until 1878, when it was dismantled to widen the road, purchased by the brewer Henry Meux, and re-erected as the gateway to his estate, Theobald's Park, in Hertfordshire. There it stood until 2003, when it was again dismantled and re-erected as an entrance to the redeveloped Paternoster Square, next to St Paul's Cathedral (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

ARTICLE 11

'Local Colour'

Spectator 97 (29 December 1906): 1070-71.

Headnote

Buchan wrote this article in response to a letter from the American author Gertrude Atherton, which was published in the *Times* of 13 December 1906 (11a). Mrs Atherton (1857-1948) was a popular author from San Francisco who was best known for her 'California series' of novels and short stories dealing with the social history of her home state. Her latest novel, *Rezánov*, which had recently been published, was based on the true story of Nikolai Rezánov (1764-1807), a Russian nobleman and businessman, who formed the Russian-American company at the beginning of the nineteenth century to monopolise the fur trade on the Pacific north-west coast of America. He also developed a grand plan for the Russian colonisation of Alaska and California, which was then a Spanish colony. With this aim in mind, he travelled to Sitka and San Francisco in 1805-06, but died of fever and exhaustion on the return journey to Russia a year later with his plan unfulfilled (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

Mrs Atherton's letter to the *Times* was part of a debate, mainly conducted via that paper's correspondence columns, about the Publishers' Association in Britain and its equivalent in the United States, which exercised a monopoly on the sale of books. In Britain this was enforced by the Net Book Agreement, under which booksellers agreed not to sell books at below the net price set by the publishers, and in return the publishers agreed not to supply books to any sellers who broke the agreement. Mrs Atherton's *Rezánov* had been cited in the debate as an example. It had been issued in America by a new publisher outside any agreement at a cheap price, whereas John Murray, a member of the Publisher's Association, was selling it in Britain at three times the American price. Mrs Atherton's letter to the *Times* of 13 December followed a previous letter she had written, published on 29 November (8a), in which she set out the special circumstances of the publication of the American edition that justified its lower price. However, her letter of 13 December in general supported the publishers' monopolies in both Britain and America, arguing that higher prices were necessary to maintain an adequate royalty income for authors. She pointed out that authors often incurred considerable expense in researching their books, and offered as an example a special trip she had made from San Francisco to Sitka to view the city and enhance the realism of her location descriptions when writing *Rezánov* (3 April 2013 The *Times* Digital Archive <<http://infotrac.galegroup.com>>).

It is this relatively short section of Mrs Atherton's letter which Buchan addresses in his article. He excludes the wider debate on the publishers' restrictive practices, a subject he was to deal with later in an article for the *Spectator* in June 1908 (**L12**) when such practices were declared illegal in America by the US Supreme Court. In that article he supported the publishers and the continuance of the Net Book Agreement in Britain. By that time Buchan was himself involved in the publishing business, having joined Nelsons as chief literary advisor at the beginning of 1907. He became a Director of Nelsons when it incorporated as a limited company in 1915, and continued in that office until 1929 (Smith, *Biography* 162, 314; Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 153).

LOCAL COLOUR

Mrs. Gertrude Atherton in a recent letter to the *Times* took the world into her confidence as to her methods of work. She pleads with some reason that authorship is a profession which involves more capital expenditure than that on ink and paper. The writer should accept nothing second-hand, and should be prepared to travel from Munich to California*
5 for the sake of an impression. She herself in writing her last novel, "Rezánov," made an expedition of thirteen days from San Francisco to Sitka* for the sake of one chapter. Her plea may be quoted in full:- "I found it quite worth while, for the mental picture I had made of the place from much description was quite different from the reality. It may be argued that a few paragraphs of description do not matter one way or another, and that
10 the average reader will never know the difference – likely as not will skip them; but it matters to the author, who is not worth his salt unless he writes first of all to please himself; and places his work before every other consideration. Moreover, there are subtle suggestions in a new atmosphere related to his work, that he would never get otherwise." Mrs. Atherton has apparently two contentions. The first is that the description of an actual
15 place should be meticulously accurate, for the sake of truth and the author's self-respect. The second is that there is an aura about any place which is in itself suggestive and an aid to creation. We propose to examine shortly the two theses.

The first, we frankly confess, is beyond our understanding. It may be a matter of conscience in the historian to describe his battlefields minutely, but we fail to see what
20 such an ideal has to do with the novelist. The truth he aims at is not a narrow fidelity to fact. He may describe every rood* of a field accurately, giving every measurement; and yet the result, which would be valuable in the historian or the topographer, may in the artist be not only ugly and cumbrous but untrue. That is, it may be as far from suggesting the kind of field which the narrative demands as if it had been a picture of a brick-kiln. The
25 assumption, remember, is that the novelist only *visits* his locality to get the details right: he does not stay in it so as to absorb its spirit. *Ex hypothesi*,* he is only concerned with externals which can be grasped in a day or a week, and not with the things which require long and patient study. Now, speaking generally, such details do not matter in the slightest. There are, of course, certain obvious limits. Matters of common knowledge must
30 not be so travestied as to produce in the reader an impression of something too fantastic for reality. A novelist who describes Paris as if it were a provincial town, or makes eternal snow cover the Cheviots,* gravely handicaps himself. But for the rest, accuracy is important only when a mistake affects the spirit of an incident. If, for example, in a novel Rome were described as a flawless classical relic, instead of a strange jumble of new and
35 old, it might be a blemish in art, for much of the drama might depend on the mingling in the landscape of diverse elements. Inaccuracy in such cases is not wrong because it is false to the fact, but because it is false to the spirit. What we have said applies to fiction where the scenery plays a vital part: but our contention is still stronger in the innumerable cases where the scenery has little relation to the story. A paragraph here and there is inserted
40 perfunctorily as unabashed padding, because it does not happen to be necessary to create the kind of atmosphere which depends on "local colour." To labour after accuracy in such work shows, not a high self-respect, but a defective sense of proportion.

The whole thing is a product of the kind of realist creed which is, we hope, now an exploded superstition. The creed assumed that in fidelity to bare fact there lay some
45 absolute artistic value. We maintain, on the other hand, that such accuracy has no value for art, and, if carried to an extreme, is a positive blemish. We would argue, further, that even when the landscape is of the essence of the drama, accuracy, involving personal knowledge, is not indispensable, provided the proper kind of imagination be in the writer.

50 The extreme view of "local colour" is akin to that old heresy in politics which has been
called "statesmanship by globe-trotting,"* – the belief that no man is entitled to speak with
authority about, or to administer, a far country unless he has visited it. The answer is that
statesmanship is the wise use of data provided for it, and not the hunting for the data
themselves. A statesman who visits many countries in a hurry will often be far less fitted to
55 form an opinion on their problems than the man who remains at home and soberly studies
the reports of experts. So, too, with the novelist. If he has any power of imagination, he
will often be far better able to construct his picture at second hand from books than if he
had visited the place for a day or two and seen only one aspect of it. A man who lays his
scene in an African forest will do better to study volumes of travel written by men who
60 have spent years in its recesses than to pay a hurried visit to the Gold Coast* and return
with a confused impression of heat and moisture. The statesman and the author are exact
parallels. In both cases long residence in and a serious study of any locality are of the
highest value, but in both cases also it is wiser to use the results of others than to attempt
to cram what should be the work of years into a day or two. The history of literature is full
65 of cases in point. The author of "John Inglesant"* never visited Italy, but it would be hard
to better the impressionist power of his Italian descriptions. Trollope has written the best
novels of life in a Cathedral city, though he declared that he had never stayed in and
scarcely ever visited one before he wrote "The Warden."* Sir Walter Scott, if we are not
mistaken, wrote "Anne of Geierstein," with its admirable description of Swiss scenery,
before he had seen the Alps.* A dozen other instances rush to the memory to show that
70 the lack of personal knowledge may be no handicap in describing a country, while a hasty
and perfunctory acquaintance may be a very real one. In the one case there is the best
second-hand evidence to work on; in the other there is only a very indifferent first-hand
knowledge.

With Mrs. Atherton's second point we have no fault to find. A landscape will indeed give
75 subtle suggestions to the artist, but he must seek for them patiently. These things are not
for the literary tourist, who is the object of Mrs. Atherton's defence. In any case, they are
for the novelist during the inception of his work, when he is still open to impressions,
rather than for the hasty man who rushes to a place to verify a detail. The writer who
makes landscape an integral part of his drama must so absorb the atmosphere of a place
80 that its spirit seems to brood over his pages. A sedentary man in England may describe a
West African forest sufficiently well to make it play an ordinary part in a tale, but he will
not describe it as Mr. Joseph Conrad* describes it. The latter kind comes not save by
prayer and fasting.* To depict Nature as Mr. Hardy has described the Southern Counties,*
as Stevenson the Scottish moorlands,* as Mr. Kipling certain parts of India,* requires that a
85 man be steeped body and soul in the air of the place, till his mind is attuned to its subtler
influences. Such an art is for the few, and assuredly it will not be achieved by the
conscientious gentleman who rushes off in the heat of composition with a week-end ticket
to see whether a river be fifty or sixty yards wide.

Footnotes

4 *from Munich to California*: Gertrude Atherton, though based in her home city of San Francisco, was an extensive traveller in America and Europe. Her recent letter to the *Times* was written from Munich in Germany, where she was currently staying (*Times* 13 December 1906, 11a).

6 *Sitka*: a small city on Baranof Island off the coast of Alaska, which was transferred from Russian to American control by the Alaska purchase of 1867. It served as the capital of

Alaska until 1906, when the seat of government was transferred to Juneau (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

21 *rood*: a unit of land area approximating to a quarter of an acre (*OED* 3 April 2013).

26 *Ex hypothesi*: from this hypothesis; on this assumption (*OED* 3 April 2013).

32 *the Cheviots*: a range of hills which straddles the border between England and Scotland (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

50 *'statesmanship by globe-trotting'*: not a direct quotation, but a reference to Buchan's earlier article on this subject for the *Spectator* (**G16**).

59 *the Gold Coast*: a British colony on the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, acquired from the Dutch in 1871. It became the independent nation of Ghana in 1957 (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

64 *The author of 'John Inglesant'*: this was Joseph Henry Shorthouse (1834-1903), whose first novel, *John Inglesant* (1881), a historical romance set mainly in the middle years of the seventeenth century, tells of the eponymous hero who pursues his brother's murderer to Italy. The novel was a great popular and critical success (*ODNB* 3 April 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

65-67 *Trollope....'The Warden'*: Anthony Trollope (1815-86) wrote a series of six novels set in the fictional Cathedral city of Barchester, beginning with *The Warden*, published in 1855 (*ODNB* 3 April 2013).

67-69 *Sir Walter Scott....'Anne of Geierstein'....the Alps*: Buchan is not mistaken. Scott wrote *Anne of Geierstein*, a sequel to *Quentin Durward*, in 1828-29. It is set mainly in Switzerland and France during the period 1474-77 and contains several Alpine scenes, when the two English protagonists get into difficulties in the Swiss mountains. Scott did not visit the Alps until the summer of 1832 on his journey home from a long holiday in the Mediterranean, which he had taken for the sake of his health after a series of strokes. He died later that year (*ODNB* 3 April 2013 and <<http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk>>).

80-82 *a West African forest....Mr Joseph Conrad*: Buchan probably has in mind Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and his earlier tale 'An Outpost of Progress' (1897), both set in the Belgian Congo of West and Central Africa, which Conrad had visited in 1890 (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

82-83 *The latter kind comes not save by prayer and fasting*: in *The Bible*, Jesus performs a miracle by casting out the evil spirit from a lunatic child. His disciples ask him why the spirit did not come out of the child when they attempted to cure him earlier. Buchan here paraphrases Jesus' reply: 'This kind [of spirit] can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting' (Mark 9.29).

83 *Mr Hardy....the Southern Counties*: Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) set all of his major novels in an area of south and south west England, which he called 'Wessex' after the Anglo-Saxon kingdom that once existed in that part of the country. The area is centred on Dorset, but extends from Devon in the west to Oxfordshire and Berkshire in the east (3 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

84 *Stevenson the Scottish moorlands*: Robert Louis Stevenson's Scottish novels have a number of scenes set in the Scottish moorlands, especially *Kidnapped* (1886), which was a particular favourite of Buchan's youth (see Article 1 headnote).

84 *Mr Kipling certain parts of India:* Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was born in Bombay, educated in England, but re-joined his parents in Lahore in northern India (now Pakistan) in 1882. There he worked as a journalist on the *Civil and Military Gazette*, which had the largest circulation in the Punjab, and spent his summers in Simla, the summer capital of British India. Early in 1888 he transferred to the *Pioneer*, published in Allahabad, from where he travelled into the heart of the country. He left India in 1889 and never lived there again, but drew on his experiences for many of his stories, such as *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888) and *Kim* (1901) (*ODNB* 23 April 2013).

ARTICLE 12

'History and Life'

Spectator 98 (2 February 1907): 169-70.

Headnote

This article follows on from a review that Buchan wrote for the *Spectator* which had been published three weeks earlier in the issue of 12 January 1907 (C32). The book reviewed was a biography of Frederick York Powell, who had been Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford from 1894 until his death in 1904. Powell published very few works of history and made no special contribution to the advancement of historical knowledge, so Buchan's review concentrated mainly on his character and personality. In this article, however, he considers Powell's 'arid scientific ideal' as a historian (line 41), which was so contrary to his nature that he did not actually follow it in practice (ODNB 11 April 2013). Buchan includes this point as part of an extended discussion of several major contemporary issues facing historians concerning the nature of history and their various approaches to the writing of it.

Buchan had developed an interest in history since childhood. He recalls in his memoirs: 'As children we lived much in the past, and....we interpreted that past by the present, and also permitted bygone ages to colour our everyday lives. The history of Scotland....was to us not a legend but a living memory' (MHD 45). His interest was widened during his youth by reading 'a good deal of history' in his early teens (MHD 32). At Glasgow University, where his general honours course included history, his main attainments were 'in classical literature, in history, and presently in philosophy' (MHD 34). Then at Oxford he read 'a large part of Hegel', whose doctrine of history is briefly discussed in this article, and 'acquired a serious interest in historical science'. During his reading he was particularly intrigued by the great men of history, discovering heroes in Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, Cromwell, Montrose, Lincoln and Robert E Lee, while disliking Brutus, Henry VIII, and Napoleon – 'him intensely' (MHD 37, 41). These provided several subjects (Caesar, Cromwell, and Montrose) for the historical biographies he was to write later in his career, but while at Oxford he won the Stanhope prize for a biographical essay on another of his heroes, Sir Walter Raleigh. He also wrote a short history of his college, Brasenose, which was published in 1898 as part of a series on Oxford colleges.

Buchan was therefore able to bring to this article both a wide reading of history and some practical experience of research and writing. Though by no means a professional historian at this stage in his career, his comments are those of the intelligent and well-informed amateur. He had already written on contemporary historical issues for the *Spectator* in an article 'Psychology and History' (7 January 1905, D17), and was later to contribute a discussion of 'History and Education' (17 July 1909, D39).

HISTORY AND LIFE

"History," said Lord Acton* in his weighty epigrammatic way, "is the conscience of mankind"; and again, "Ethics are the marrow of history." The words may be taken as the confession of faith of a great, perhaps the greatest, school of historical writing. History, as they understand it, is the elucidation of past ages. For this purpose the facts must be got
5 clear, truth sifted from falsehood, causes placed in relation to effects, lines of development disentangled. The data of judgment must be set out in an organised form. But the

historian is more than the compiler: his business is to elucidate as well as to chronicle. Therefore he must pass judgment on his characters and their doings, settle their place in the hierarchy of merit or infamy, and find out wherein they failed or whereby they succeeded. There need be no moral explicitly pointed, but the whole history must have a moral behind it. Morality is the only common ground of agreement, and the test of condemnation or approval must be ethical. This is the high dogmatic statement of the creed, which may be found admirably put in Lord Acton's famous review of Creighton's "History of the Papacy."* But it is possible to regard the moralist and the historian as being complementary without limiting the test to too narrow a basis. Ethics, after all, are not an unprogressive science, and the standard for the good man in one generation is not the standard in another. Five hundred years ago a kind and upright man might in all honesty condone slavery and persecution, and we should be wrong in thinking his spiritual level necessarily lower than that of the tolerant abolitionist of to-day. The historical imagination is important even in the writing of history, and it is an historian's business to separate *la petite morale* from *la grande*,* to consider what moral standards are ultimate and universal, and what are local and transient. Or, as Bishop Creighton put it,* "we must show as much casuistry* in history as will serve to distinguish between venial and mortal sins."* It is absurd to judge all misdeeds by the standard of to-day. If the guilty mind be the basis of guilt, then many acts which to-day would be heinous would in other ages be venial, and, contrariwise, doings at which we should scarcely raise our brows might in earlier times have been the infallible sign of a black heart. Perspective is wanted in morals as much as in other branches of thought. But the difference is only one of method, - for both schools are agreed on the primary importance of a moral judgment. The historian has not only to provide the data for judgment, he has to pass judgment, otherwise he shirks his main duty. He writes, he must write, with a purpose. He has to reproduce the past, but to do this he must bring it into line with the present. He must show the relation of our existing standards to earlier doings, and the only standard which is of universal application must be the moral criterion. It follows from such a doctrine that history is as much art as science. If the historian would teach, he must attract. A moral is of small use unless the reader be made to feel that the characters to which it applies were living people. Hence the moralistic school of history must perforce be also literary. Style and imagination are as indispensable as accuracy and logic.

We have had few exponents of the opposite creed in England. One was the late Regius Professor of History at Oxford,* a man from whom few would have expected any devotion to an arid scientific ideal. Professor Elton in his recent delightful *Life of York Powell** has shown very clearly by quotations from his lectures how earnestly he held a faith which was foreign to much in his nature. To him the historian was the juror, not the judge: the man who had to settle a question of fact, not pass a verdict in accordance with some abstract law. He should be, as he said, the observer, not the preacher: the biologist, not the physician. To quote from an address:-

"Unfortunately, history is frequently written as a party pamphlet or as a treatise on morality; but the proper view is to treat history as an accumulation or assemblage of facts respecting humanity *en masse*, and not respecting single individuals. Literature, on the other hand, is concerned with the expression of human emotions in an artistic manner. A history may, of course, be a model of exposition, but that is not its true *raison d'être*."*

Both schools, it is clear, go a certain way together. The man who believes in style and ethical judgments will not deny that the first duty is to be perfectly certain about the facts. The other stops short there. Facts, he argues, are a sufficiently complicated business without cumbering oneself with experiments in quite different spheres. History should be

treated as an exact science, like botany, and when the data are secured and arranged the historian's work is over. The botanist does not load his pages with Tennysonian speculations about what the flower in the crannied wall* may or may not mean. So, too, the historian need not trouble to call Caesar Borgia* a blackguard; it is sufficient if he sets out carefully and scientifically what he did. He is not concerned with the moral purpose of the universe, and if he deals with theories and creeds, he must treat them objectively, like specimens in a museum. He has no fault to find with the philosopher or the moralist. They can begin their labours where the historian has finished his, for he gives them the data to work upon. He must assume, as Professor Elton acutely points out, the Hegelian doctrine of history as a working hypothesis, though in a form of which Hegel would have denied the parentage. Things, according to the Hegelian, have worked out as the Divine Will intended them.* What Providence has meant to succeed in the past has succeeded, and the "judgment of history is the judgment of Heaven."* Properly speaking, there is no absolute progress, for reaction may be one of the ways in which the Divine Idea is working towards its realisation. To the impassive historian, as to a type of German metaphysician, "good and evil are not to be sharply distinguished."*

The answer to the doctrine is twofold. In the first place, the two schools are talking about different things. The chronicler who gets his data, tabulates them, and leaves them is a useful person; but he is not the historian, as the word is commonly defined, and to identify the two is to ignore a fundamental and useful distinction. The historian's business is to reproduce the past and to elucidate it, and this can only be done by means of a kind of imagination which involves some portion of the literary graces, and the exercise of a judgment which must be partly ethical. If we limit history to the first work, then we must find a new name for the second, and there seems little reason to get rid of a term which has been used to include so great a roll of names from Herodotus to Mr. Gardiner.* The other objection is that the austere scientific ideal is impossible to apply to a subject-matter which touches so closely the hopes and desires of men. If we were dealing with plant forms or gases the case might be different; but we are dealing with human nature and circumstances which are not without a resemblance to our own. York Powell was no exception. When he wrote history he made moral judgments, which differed from those of Lord Acton only in being more tolerant. There is, after all, no final distinction between pure and applied science, least of all in history, and the man does not live who can maintain a godlike aloofness in the face of characters and deeds which appeal to his emotions as well as to his reason. A glib moralising trick in history is an intolerable blemish. We do not want to be constantly told that this or that event shows how much wiser it is to be good than clever. But equally tiresome is the pose of complete freedom from moral bias; for we may be very certain that we are not therefore rid of moral judgments, but only get caprice and paradox in place of sound reason.

Footnotes

1 *Lord Acton*: John Dalberg Acton (1834-1902) was a historian with a notable flair for aphorisms, whose principles were a strict standard of impartiality and truth, and a rigorous moralism. The two epigrams that Buchan quotes here are from his essay 'German Schools in History', published in 1886 in the first volume of the *English Historical Review*, and later collected in *Historical Essays and Studies* (1907), edited by JN Figgis and RV Laurence (344-92). The full wordings of the epigrams, taken from this edition, are: 'There is no escape from the dogma that history is the conscience of mankind....' (383); and '....the marrow of civilised history is ethical not metaphysical....' (362) (*ODNB* 11 April 2013 and <<http://oll.libertyfund.org>>).

13-14 *Acton's famous review of Creighton's 'History of the Papacy'*: Mandell Creighton (1843-1901) was an ecclesiastical historian and Anglican bishop. Volumes III and IV of his five-volume *History of the Papacy*, covering the period 1464-1518, were published in 1887 and reviewed by Acton in the *English Historical Review*, of which Creighton was editor. This 'famous review', as Buchan puts it, was highly critical of Creighton for insufficiently condemning the medieval popes (*ODNB* 11 April 2013).

20-21 *to separate la petite morale from la grande: la petite morale* are the minor social conventions or morals, the ethics of everyday life. *La grande morale* are major ethical standards or principles of general application (*OED* 11 April 2013).

22 *as Bishop Creighton put it*: I have been unable to trace the source of this quotation among the rather voluminous writings and sermons of Mandell Creighton.

23 *casuistry*: that part of ethics which resolves cases of conscience by applying the general rules of religion and morality to the particular circumstances of the case (*OED* 11 April 2013).

23 *venial and mortal sins*: in theological terms, venial sins are admissible for pardon, forgiveness, or remission; mortal sins are so grave that they cannot be forgiven and entail spiritual death, which deprives the soul of divine grace (*OED* 11 April 2013).

39-40 *the late Regius Professor of History at Oxford*: this is Frederick York Powell (1850-1904), an Icelandic scholar as well as a medieval historian, who became Regius Professor in 1894 (*ODNB* 11 April 2013).

41 *Professor Elton...Life of York Powell*: Oliver Elton (1861-1945), a literary scholar and translator, was Professor of English Literature at Liverpool (1901-25). His biography of York Powell (see note above) was published in 1906 and reviewed by Buchan in the *Spectator* on 12 January 1907 (**C32**) (*ODNB* 11 April 2013).

52 *raison d'être*: reason or purpose for existence (*OED* 11 April 2013).

58-59 *Tennysonian speculations about...the flower in the crannied wall*: 'Flower in the crannied wall' (1869) is a short poem of six lines by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92) in which the speaker plucks the flower from the wall and wonders about its meaning (11 April 2013 <<http://www.bartleby.com>>).

60 *Caesar Borgia*: now usually Cesare Borgia (c1476-1507), the illegitimate son of Pope Alexander VI and brother of Lucrezia Borgia. He was suspected of procuring the assassination of his elder brother so that he could become captain-general of the papacy's military forces. His subsequent military campaigns were noted for their cruelty, and he had several of his captains executed for plotting against him. He fell from power after his father, the Pope, died in 1503 and was exiled to Spain, where he was killed in the siege of Viana (*CBD* 18 April 2013).

65-68 *the Hegelian doctrine of history...as the Divine Will intended them*: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), German philosopher, developed a comprehensive philosophical system in which the underlying reality is mind or spirit (German *geist*), which manifests itself in sets of oppositions and contradictions that, by means of continual synthesis produced by the dialectical process, move towards the Absolute Idea that transcends all previous oppositions. His system includes a philosophy of history in which the underlying movement of reality through the mind or spirit is conceived as the process of God thinking, so that history is determined by the Divine Will working towards the Divine

Idea, which Buchan refers to here (CBD 18 April 2013; Scruton 201, 209; and 11 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

68-69 *the 'judgment of history is the judgment of heaven'*: this follows from the Hegelian concept of history as a process of the Divine Will (see note above). The quotation is from Acton's review of Creighton's *History of the Papacy* (see note to lines 13-14) and can be found in his *Historical Essays and Studies* (1907), eds. JN Figgis and RV Laurence, 437 (11 April 2013 <<http://oll.libertyfund.org>>).

71-72 *'good and evil are not to be sharply distinguished'*: given that Buchan is discussing Hegelian philosophy here, he may have in mind Hegel's defence of Spinoza against the charge that he 'maintains that good is one with evil, and that there is no difference between good and evil' (Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. I. London: Kegan Paul, 1895: 98). However, Spinoza was a Dutch rather than German metaphysician (see line 71), and it is possible that Buchan was thinking of the more recent philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose life and work he was later to review for the *Spectator* (**F19**, **F22**, **F42**). The first English translation of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* had been published the previous year (1906).

81 *from Herodotus to Mr Gardiner*: the Greek Herodotus, from the fifth century BC, was the first historian known to have collected his material systematically, test its accuracy, and arrange it in an orderly narrative. He was called 'the father of history' by the Roman, Cicero. Samuel Rawson Gardiner (1829-1902) had a distinguished contemporary reputation as a historian, mainly due to his major multi-volume work *A History of England from the Accession of James I*, which had reached 1656 by the time of his death (CBD 18 April 2013). Buchan had reviewed one of his volumes for the *Spectator* in 1901 (**D5**).

ARTICLE 13

'George Meredith'

Spectator 102 (22 May 1909): 809-10.

Headnote

George Meredith died aged 81 at his home at Box Hill, near Dorking in Surrey, on 18 May 1909. Since the turn of the century, though his books had never been widely read, his reputation as a novelist, poet and philosopher had given him celebrity status as a public intellectual, 'the Sage of Box Hill'. He wrote frequently to the newspapers on matters of public interest, and was sought out for interviews by the British and American press. His political position was made explicit by his connections with leading Liberals such as Herbert Asquith, John Morley, and Richard Haldane, and his comments had been much in demand during the January 1906 general election campaign, which was won by the Liberals (*ODNB* 23 April 2013). His last interview was given to reporters on his eightieth birthday at the Edwardian equivalent of a press conference at Box Hill, and was published in several London papers on 13 February 1908⁸.

Buchan gives full recognition to Meredith's status from the outset of this obituary article. His death is 'a great bereavement to the English race', which 'alters the whole aspect of our modern world' (lines 1-2, 3-4). Something of that status can be seen from an earlier Buchan article of January 1908 when, in a general review of recent verse, he comments on *The Collected Poems of Dora Sigerson Shorter*, which carried an Introduction written by Meredith: 'It is no small triumph to have a book of collected poems introduced to the world by Mr Meredith, and Mrs Shorter's *Poems* are worthy of the honour' (**B20:120a**). Later, Buchan wrote a short review of Meredith's posthumously published collection, *Last Poems* (**B32**).

Buchan's article goes on to consider Meredith's novels, which he regards as his greatest achievement. Their comic aspects are discussed in more detail by Buchan in his subsequent review of *The Comic Spirit of George Meredith* (**A42**). Buchan had been an admirer of Meredith's novels since his undergraduate days at Oxford, as evidenced in letters to his friend Charles Dick. On 18 August 1896 he wrote: 'I have been reading....Meredith's *Evan Harrington* (2nd time)', and on 26 July 1898: 'I have been re-reading *Richard Feverel*. I hope you have an adequate appreciation of the Diary of Clare Doria Forey. It is surely the finest thing in the English tongue since the end of *The Bride of Lammermoor*' (NLS Acc.7214 Mf.MSS.310). Buchan mentions Clare's diary in this article (see lines 45-46), and his comparison with Sir Walter Scott's *Lammermoor* accords with his claim in this article that Meredith 'has had few equals since Scott' (lines 24-25).

In his summary paragraph at the end of the article Buchan praises the descriptions of landscapes in Meredith's novels, in particular 'his Alpine glens and pastures' (line 129). Given Buchan's interest in climbing and mountaineering and the significance of such settings in his own novels (see Article 6), this is no surprise. In his memoirs he recalls: 'The wittiest thing ever said about mountaineering, I think, was by George Meredith, that "every step is a debate between what you are and what you might become"' (*MHD* 134).

⁸ See Lionel Stevenson. 'Meredith and the Interviewers'. *Modern Philology* 51.1 (August 1953): 63 (23 April 2013 <<http://www.jstor.org>>).

GEORGE MEREDITH

The death of Mr. Meredith on Tuesday morning was a great bereavement to the English race. Perhaps it is a bereavement without regrets, for his work was done, and we could hope for little more from that bountiful treasury. But none the less it alters the whole aspect of our modern world. The woods remain, but there are no longer any tall trees
5 raising crests above their brethren. The mere presence among us of one so great, the sight of an old age so worthy and so youthful, was an inspiration to his contemporaries. Mr. Meredith was issuing poetry while Wordsworth was still writing,* and his career as a novelist began before George Eliot's.* His life takes us back into mid-Victorian times, but he was so essentially a man of his day that we could never regard him as a survival. "I have
10 always hoped," he once said, "I should not grow old as some do, with a palsied intellect, living backwards."* For him the communications with the future were always open. In his own phrase, he kept "the young generations in hail,"* and their knocking at the door had no terrors for him. To the last he was in the thick of things, full of the zest of life, eagerly appreciative of every new man and new movement. To the youngest among us he was
15 always the apostle of hope and courage, the most modern of the moderns, and yet a classic. Such an old age comes to few, but it is the appropriate one for a great man, - a summer of work, and then a mellow autumn which shows the ebbing of physical force, but no decline in spiritual power. Leaving his books out of account, that is surely a great achievement.

20 When he died he was probably the greatest writer of fiction in the world. This is not the place to attempt a critical estimate of Mr. Meredith's ultimate place in literature. On that question the wits of the critics will be exercised for many generations. But it is certain that his must rank among the greatest names in nineteenth-century literature, and as a creator of men and women, a spectator of life with a Shakespearean insight and catholicity, he has
25 had few equals since Scott.* His genius wrought in many forms, and many reputations could have been shaped out of his incidental work; but it is as a novelist that he must have highest rank. People quarrel about the true nature of fiction, but the practice of the masters is always the same. Mr. Meredith took a large fragment of life in all its detail and variety, and set it before his readers so that none dare question its truth. Like
30 Shakespeare, he does not take sides and preach a partial dogma; he has no prejudices in his art, and is as fair to woman as to man, to the wise as to the foolish. His business is not to judge, but to portray. But he never fell into the blunder of those who think that a mass of undigested and unselected detail is fiction. The shaping spirit of imagination is always at work in him, and he models his materials according to the canons of art. He sees the
35 necessity of the dramatic moment, when the characters in a single crisis of destiny stand revealed in their essential truth, and the mind of the reader is held and elevated as by great poetry. It is all one if this moment is romance, or comedy, or tragedy. In the meeting of Lucy Desborough and Richard Feverel by the river* and in the exquisite love-making of Evan Harrington* we have that old idyll of youth and spring told as it has scarcely been told
40 since *Romeo and Juliet*.* When Sir Lukin Dunstane* walks in the pine-wood while his wife is in the surgeon's hands; when Percy Dacier, fleeing from Diana, proposes to Constance Asper;* when Letitia Dale refuses Sir Willoughby,* - in these and a score of other scenes we have the human comedy raised to its most significant and dramatic moment. The ironies of life have never been handled so surely or so sanely. If the key be tragedy, we are
45 moved as if some bright and noble thing had gone out of the world. Few can read the blotted sentences of Clare's diary* or the death of Beauchamp* without tears. However we may define the art of fiction, here we have it beyond cavil, - as surely as when Rawdon Crawley trounces Lord Steyne,* or when Caleb Balderstone picks up the plume from the cap of his dead master.* Mr. Meredith faced the hardest of the novelist's tasks, for the

50 conditions he deals with are often those of a conventional society, where the humanity is
hidden and drama seems far from the cushioned and modish life. But by this true artist in
comedy the difficulty of the medium is used to heighten the effect, and at the crisis the
shivering human souls emerge from their coverings in a nakedness all the more dramatic
from its contrast with their sheltered past. All modes of life pay toll to his genius, and to his
55 catholicity nothing is common or unclean. No writer has ever done better justice to the
average man. He looks not to the outside, but to the soul, and his true knights-errant are
plain people like Tom Redworth and Vernon Whitford.* Hence we may take his novels as
the classic portrait-gallery of Englishmen. He loves English traits, and rejoices even in their
limitations. It is the romance of fact he seeks, and, greatly daring, he will make his heroes
60 out of tailors' sons and schoolmasters and prosperous business men. John Bull* is no butt
for his wit, but a kindly, blundering giant, with tremendous purpose in him and a vast deal
of unspoken poetry. Which brings us to a quality that Mr. Meredith shares with Chaucer
and Shakespeare, - his kindliness. Like Bacon's sage,* he has the face of one who pities
humanity. He deals gently and lovingly with his men and women, gravely conscious of our
65 mortal weaknesses, and tender to any hint of virtue. In a word, he has that moral wisdom
without which art is only a painted shutter.

We do not ask for dogma from our greatest men. Their teaching is not enshrined in a
formula or two for popular consumption. But it is worth noting one or two of the features
of the inspiration which Mr. Meredith has given to his countrymen, since he is not only
70 novelist, but teacher and poet. His philosophy is chiefly to be found in his poetry, and that
poetry is not for the hasty reader. Something of the obscurity of his prose style crept into
his verse, and his pipe did not bear long "the happy country tone" of "Love in the Valley."*
Yet no work of our day so amply repays study. His lines are surcharged with thought, often
subtle and difficult thought, but there are many moments when the close argument ceases
75 and the pure poetic magic takes its place. The first article in Mr. Meredith's philosophy is
that the world is ruled by law. In that wonderful sonnet, "Lucifer in Starlight," he glorifies
"the army of unalterable law"* in the spirit of Milton.* Cowards and weaklings must pay
the price and suffer, for life is not a thing given but a thing to be won. Nature is careless of
us and our ways unless we are of use to her. Others in our generation have held this
80 doctrine, but too often they have fallen, like Mr. Hardy in his *Dynasts*,* into a barren
fatalism. But Mr. Meredith is an optimist, and believes that the universe is on the side of
man's moral strivings. He believes in the regeneration of the world by man, and in the high
destiny of humanity. In one of his most famous sonnets he compares the world to a
drunken peasant staggering home from the inn to his cottage light, making wide circuits,
85 but always getting nearer.* Our line of advance is spiral, he says: we go wildly round-
about, but we are always getting upwards, and though we seem to be still in the same spot,
the level is higher. But the first condition of progress is that we accept the earth and do
not beat our wings in the void. We must clear our eyes and see ourselves as we are, kin
both to the brutes and to the stars. Mr. George Trevelyan in his admirable study of Mr.
90 Meredith's poetry has pointed out that whenever an unknown "she" is apostrophised, we
may take this as meaning Mother Earth.* This conception is the key of his philosophy. It is
the world which God made and which His laws govern; man is a part of it, and, as such,
subject to natural laws, but he is also the key of the whole. He is close to the beasts and
the wild things of Nature, and if he forgets his kinship he will become a vain dreamer. Mr.
95 Meredith would have us always keep in mind the pit whence we were digged, and love the
common earth as our mother, for it is only by the path of our common humanity that we
can rise to higher things. Melampus, the wise physician, goes through the world healing
men, and his power of healing comes just from his kinship to Nature, his:-

"Simple love of the things

100 That glide in grasses and rubble of woody wreck."*

Here is an optimism of the old heroic kind. The world must be faced in all its grimness, for it is part of us, and we cannot escape. But we can make its alienness friendly, and transform its harshness by our love. Its inexorable laws become perfect freedom to those who understand its service. He calls upon mankind to give up tinsel gods and the whole
105 kingdom of make-believe, to come into the fresh air and see things as they are, since the only optimism worth having is that which is more frank and merciless than any pessimism. "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."* The common earth, this rough, intractable, savage place, is the only soil on which we can build Jerusalem.* Such a creed is too natural for naturalism, too spiritual for
110 asceticism. It blinks nothing, and yet hopes and believes all things. To-day, when the fashionable philosophy of life is one of thin sentiment, when men tend to strip morality of rigour, and dally idly with weakness and revolt, it is impossible to overpraise this manly voice. In the close of one of his poems, the "Hymn to Colour,"* he has put into noble verse the central doctrine of his creed:-

115 "This way have men come out of brutishness,
To spell the letters of the sky and read
A reflex upon earth else meaningless.

120 More gardens will they win than any lost;
The vile plucked out of them, the unlovely slain.
Not forfeiting the beast with which they are crossed,
To stature of the gods will they attain.
They shall uplift their Earth to meet her Lord,
Themselves the attuning chord."

125 But the preacher was always secondary to the artist. In looking back on his work it is less the philosopher we think of than the creator. One recalls that wonderful mass of poetry, with every note in it from April bird-song to the thunderous dirge of the sea. One remembers his magical landscapes (for no novelist has ever had greater power of reproducing the atmosphere of a scene), his Alpine glens and pastures, his English
130 meadows in high summer, his spring woodlands, his sea pictures, and a thousand sketches of town and country. One remembers his interest in every phase of the human comedy, whether it were sport, or politics, or boyish escapades, or old wine, or sound scholarship, or the generous dreams of youth. Above all, one remembers that gallery of figures, most of whom are now part of our national heritage. Mr. Meredith has drawn every type of
135 English man and woman and boy and girl, so that his novels are like the "Canterbury Tales,"* the true history of an age. We can only say of him, as Dryden said of Chaucer, "Here is God's plenty."*

Footnotes

7 *Meredith was issuing poetry while Wordsworth was still writing:* Meredith's first published poem, 'Chillianwallah', appeared in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* in 1849, although his first collection, *Poems*, was not issued until 1851. William Wordsworth died in 1850 (ODNB 23 April 2013).

7-8 *his career as a novelist began before George Eliot's:* Meredith's first volume of fiction, *The Shaving of Shagpat: an Arabian Entertainment*, was issued in 1856. George Eliot's first novel, *Adam Bede*, was published in 1859 (ODNB 23 April 2013).

9-11 *'I have always hoped....living backwards'*: this quotation comes from the closing remarks of an interview that Meredith gave to Harold Owen of the *Manchester Guardian*, which was printed in the issue of 2 February 1903. It is quoted in Lionel Stevenson's article 'Meredith and the Interviewers', *Modern Philology* 51.1 (August 1953): 55 (23 April 2013 <<http://www.jstor.org>>).

12 *he kept 'the young generations in hail'*: from Meredith's poem *The Empty Purse* (Macmillan, 1892): 'Keep the young generations in hail, / And bequeath them no tumbled house' (41) (23 April 2013 <<http://catalog.hathitrust.org>>).

25 *Scott*: Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), one of Buchan's favourite novelists and very influential on his work (CBD 23 April 2013).

37-38 *the meeting of Lucy Desborough and Richard Feverel by the river*: this occurs in Volume I, Chapters XVII and XVIII, of Meredith's *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel: A History of Father and Son* (1859).

38-39 *the exquisite love-making of Evan Harrington*: Meredith's novel, *Evan Harrington: or, He Would be a Gentleman*, was published in 1861 (ODNB 23 April 2013).

40 *Romeo and Juliet*: Shakespeare's tragedy of young love, first performed c 1596 (ODNB 16 May 2013).

40 *Sir Lukin Dunstane*: Sir Lukin walks in the pine-wood in Chapter XXVI of Meredith's *Diana of the Crossways* (1885).

41-42 *Percy Dacier....Constance Asper*: this episode occurs in Chapter XXXV of *Diana of the Crossways*.

42 *when Letitia Dale refuses Sir Willoughby*: she does so during their midnight meeting in Chapter XL of Meredith's *The Egoist: A Comedy in Narrative* (1879).

45-46 *the blotted sentences of Clare's diary*: in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, Richard's cousin, Clare Doria Forey, commits suicide after her love for Richard is unrequited. In Volume III, Chapter IX, Richard reads Clare's diary shortly after her death, in which her hopeless love for him is revealed.

46 *the death of Beauchamp*: in Meredith's political novel of 1876, *Beauchamp's Career*, Nevil Beauchamp dies in saving a child from drowning (23 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

47-48 *when Rawdon Crawley trounces Lord Steyne*: in Chapter LIII of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848), Rawdon Crawley, married to Becky Sharp, strikes the Marquis of Steyne to the floor when he finds him in a compromising situation with his wife.

48-49 *when Caleb Balderstone....his dead master*: in the final chapter of Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), Edgar, the Master of Ravenswood, is lost in quicksand on the sea-shore as he rides to meet the challenge of a duel. His faithful old servant, Caleb Balderstone, finds a large sable feather which had become detached from Edgar's hat, the only vestige of his master's fate.

57 *Tom Redworth and Vernon Whitford*: Redworth, in *Diana of the Crossways*, is a successful businessman and MP who shows himself to be unselfishly devoted to Diana's interests and eventually marries her after the death of her husband. Vernon Whitworth, in *The Egoist*, is a scholar, the secretary and right-hand man of Sir Willoughby. He ends the

novel as the lover of Clara Middleton, to whom Sir Willoughby was previously engaged (23 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

60 *John Bull*: the national personification of the typical Englishman, originally created by Dr John Arbuthnot in his 1712 pamphlet, *Law is a Bottomless Pit*, and later taken up by William Hogarth and other British print-makers and writers. John Bull is traditionally depicted as a stout, middle-aged country-dweller, full of jollity and common sense (23 April 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

63 *Bacon's sage*: Francis Bacon (1561-1626), English statesman, philosopher and writer, whose *Essays and Apophthegms* were edited by Buchan in 1894. His 'sage' is one of the unnamed Fathers of Salomon's House, the institution of science and knowledge in Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), who 'had an aspect as if he pitied men' (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999: 175).

72 'the happy country tone' of 'Love in the Valley': 'the happy country tone' is a quotation from Matthew Arnold's poem 'Thyrsis: A Monody, to Commemorate the Author's Friend, Arthur Hugh Clough' (1866), lines 221-22: 'What though the music of thy rustic flute / Kept not for long its happy, country tone'. 'Love in the Valley' is a poem of eleven stanzas included in Meredith's first collection, *Poems*, published in 1851. An altered and expanded version appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* in October 1878 (2 May 2013 <<http://tspace.library.utoronto.ca>>).

76-77 'Lucifer in Starlight'....'the army of unalterable law': Meredith's sonnet, 'Lucifer in Starlight', was first published in 1883 in his collection, *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth*. In the final line of the sonnet, Prince Lucifer (the Devil) sinks before 'the army of unalterable law' (23 April 2013 <<http://www.poetryfoundation.org>>).

77 Milton: John Milton (1608-74), English poet and polemical supporter of the revolution during the English Civil War (1642-48) (*CBD* 23 April 2013).

80 *Mr Hardy in his Dynasts*: Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), English poet and novelist, published his epic poem of the Napoleonic Wars, *The Dynasts*, in three parts between 1904 and 1908. Buchan was very critical in his review of the first part for the *Spectator* (**B3**), though his views were much modified when the final part was published (**B21**).

83-85 *one of his most famous sonnets....always getting nearer*: the reference to the inebriate peasant is from 'The World's Advance', a sonnet collected in Meredith's *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth* (1883) (16 May 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

89-91 *Mr George Trevelyan....Mother Earth*: George Macaulay Trevelyan (1876-1962) published *The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith* in 1906. The point about the apostrophised 'she' can be found at page 76 of this edition (*ODNB* 23 April 2013, and 16 May 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

97-100 *Melampus...woody wreck*: Meredith's poem, 'Melampus', was published in 1883. The quotation here concerning the physician's 'simple love of things' comes from the first two lines of the poem and is repeated in the last two lines (23 April 2013 <<http://allpoetry.com>>).

107-08 'Neither shall they say....within you': this quotation is from *The Bible* Luke 17.21. It is part of Christ's reply to the Pharisees after they had asked him when the kingdom of God will come (*ODQ* 101.24).

109 *Jerusalem*: a Christian metaphor for heaven on earth, derived from the Book of Revelation (3.12 and 21.2) in *The Bible*, which describes a Second Coming when Christ will establish a new Jerusalem. Buchan may also have had in mind William Blake's poem, 'And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time', from the preface to his *Milton* (1803-08), which imagines the possibility of a new Jerusalem being built in England. Blake's poem was later set to music by Sir Hubert Parry in 1916 to create the popular anthem, 'Jerusalem' (2 May 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

113 '*Hymn to Colour*': a poem of fifteen stanzas published by Meredith in his collection *A Reading of Earth* (1888). The passages quoted are the first three lines of stanza XIII and the whole of stanza XIV (23 April 2013 <<http://www.readbookonline.net>>).

135-36 *the 'Canterbury Tales'*: written by Geoffrey Chaucer (c1345-1400) and begun in about 1386 but not completed, this comprises some seventeen thousand lines of verse and prose. It tells of a group of twenty-nine pilgrims travelling to Canterbury, who represent a cross-section of fourteenth century England (CBD 23 April 2013).

136-37 *Dryden....God's plenty*: John Dryden (1631-1700), English poet and the major literary figure of his time. His final work, *Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1700), includes adapted translations of, among others, Geoffrey Chaucer. In his preface to this work Dryden discusses Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (see note above) and refers to their great variety: ' 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty' (CBD 23 April 2013, and 2 May 2013 <<http://www.bartleby.com>>).

ARTICLE 14

'The *Poetics* of Aristotle'

Spectator 103 (4 September 1909): 345-46. Review.

Ingram Bywater. *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry: a Revised Text, with Critical Introduction, Translation, and Commentary.*

Headnote

Aristotle (384-322 BC) was a student of Plato, who was himself a disciple of Socrates. These three were the greatest scholars of ancient Greece and the most important founding figures of Western philosophy. Aristotle himself was a polymath whose writings cover not only metaphysics, but also the natural sciences, politics and government, ethics, logic, rhetoric, linguistics, poetry and the theatre. Taken together his work forms the first comprehensive system of philosophy. Most of it was written in the twelve years after 335 BC when he established his own school, the Lyceum, in Athens. The *Poetics* is usually assigned to this period, and the discontinuities and inconsistencies in its exposition noted by Buchan in his review are now thought to be due to the work having originally evolved as a series of lecture notes for Aristotle's students, rather than as a formal treatise prepared for publication. Nevertheless, the *Poetics* is generally considered the earliest-surviving work of literary theory, even though it is mainly concerned only with two forms of poetic drama – the epic and the tragedy (CBD 23 May 2013).

Buchan's review praises highly this edition and its author, Ingram Bywater, who had retired in 1908 after fifteen years as Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, where he had also been president of the Oxford Aristotelian Society. Bywater was admired by his contemporaries as a great scholar, especially as an editor of Greek texts. He received honorary degrees from Cambridge and Durham Universities, together with other awards from European academic institutions. He was one of the original fellows of the British Academy, and was elected a corresponding member of the Prussian Academy of Sciences. His book on the *Poetics* has come to be regarded as a monumental edition, the crowning work of his Aristotelian studies (ODNB 23 May 2013).

Buchan had studied the philosophy of Aristotle as part of the syllabus for Greats in his classical studies at Oxford. His notebook of lectures at Brasenose includes notes on Aristotle, and a separate manuscript volume of his undergraduate essays contains an analysis of Aristotle's *Politics* (NLS Acc.7214 Mf.MSS 315 and Acc.6975/2). In his memoirs he recalls spending part of the long vacations from Oxford on holiday deep in the Scottish moorlands, where 'the works of Aristotle are for ever bound up for me with the smell of peat reek and certain stretches of granite and heather' (MHD 82). More recently he had reviewed a new edition of *The Greek Anthology* (B14) and had written some twenty articles and reviews on philosophy for the *Spectator* (F1-F20).

THE "POETICS" OF ARISTOTLE

There is no living Greek scholar in England, perhaps in the world, who carries a weightier equipment of learning and sound judgment than the Emeritus Oxford Professor of Greek. We are glad that he has given us an edition of the *Poetics*, for the *Poetics* is precisely the kind of work in which his guidance is most valuable. The text is far from satisfactory, and it has suffered from the emendations of scholars who had very clear ideas of their own as to

what Aristotle ought to have said. The world has been apt to read more into the book than was probably ever intended by its author. Dr. Bywater has a true historical sense, and he has complete critical sanity. His commentary and critical introduction are all that could be desired, and though we may differ from him on certain passages, we differ with hesitation and with profound respect for his argument. He has added a translation, rather unwillingly we gather, and only because a translation is the fashion in such editions. It is an admirable version, very clear and simple, though in literary style it scarcely equals Mr. Butcher's mellifluous prose.*

It is a great mistake, as Dr. Bywater points out, to look for logical perfection in the *Poetics*, and to amend the text boldly in order to attain it. The treatise is full of blemishes, all of which cannot reasonably be attributed to the faults of copyists. There is no continuity of exposition, and often it resolves itself into a series of jottings. Technical terms are used in anticipation and defined afterwards; the terminology varies, and is sometimes inconsistent; there are frequent lapses of memory; and the writer's views seem now and then to change unconsciously. The *Poetics* is best regarded, not as an elaborate treatise, but as the reflections of a mind of the highest order on a matter which played a great part in contemporary life. But if those who seek logical perfection of form are astray, they err still more gravely who would treat the book as a modern treatise on aesthetics. The whole conception of a theory of art is modern. Aristotle deals with the matter simply by analysing the current experience and practice. "He tells one, in fact, how to construct a good play and a good epic, just as in the *Rhetoric** he tells one how to make a good speech." His mind is occupied with the work of Greek dramatists and poets and the conditions of the Attic theatre.* Dr. Bywater goes further, and thinks that he was so influenced by contemporary thought that his model was not wholly the work of Aeschylus* or Sophocles.* "His ideal play would seem to be in many respects a comparison between the play of the great era and that of his own day; he was writing for men of a generation living some seventy years after the death of Euripides,* and there is the mark of the age on a good deal of what his theory lays down or assumes." If the lost Second Book* should ever be found, we should find his theory of comedy, he thinks, more applicable to the New Comedy* than to that of Aristophanes.* We must not look in the *Poetics*, then, for impeccable taste, any more than we must look for the kind of metaphysics of art which we find in modern works on aesthetics. But, when all this has been granted, the fact remains that Aristotle has penetrated to the heart of artistic beauty, and has formulated principles of art which are as vital to-day as when he wrote. He deals with the two admittedly highest forms of poetry, the tragedy and the epic, and he defines for all time their specific merits and the nature and value of their appeal to the human soul. The effect of great poetry has never been more truly and philosophically stated than in his famous doctrine of *catharsis*, - the cleansing of the feelings by means of pity and fear. It is the effect of *Lear* and *Hamlet** and *Les Misérables*,* as well as of the *Antigone** and the *Bacchae*.*

Aristotle illustrates his doctrine by reference to plays and poems the bulk of which are no longer extant. An interesting commentary could be written on the *Poetics*, in which the place of *Cresphontes* and *Thyestes* and the *Tydeus** would be taken by modern plays and novels. In this way the most casual reader would be enabled to see the universal application of the doctrine. Take, for example, his definition of tragedy:-

"Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life, of happiness and misery. All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality. Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions - what we do - that we are happy or the reverse... One may string together a series of characteristic speeches of the utmost finish as regards Diction and Thought, and yet fail to produce the true magic effect; but one will have much better success

with a tragedy which, however inferior in these respects, has a Plot, a combination of incidents, in it."

Character revealed in action, the significant dramatic moment, - after all, the best modern criticism has not travelled beyond Aristotle. Subtle character-drawing and an exquisite style do not make the great novel or great play. The elaborate psychology of one type of French and American novel is very admirable in its way, but it is not the highest form of art. The great moments are still those in which things happen, - when Rawdon Crawley thrashes Lord Steyne; when Miss Dale refuses Sir Willoughby;* when Bussy d'Amboise fights against odds;* when Jean Valjean sees the lanterns of the patrol* through the dark of the sewer. Take, too, the doctrine that there is a quantitative as well as a qualitative condition in art:-

"To be beautiful, a living creature, and every whole made up of parts, must not only present a certain order in its arrangement of parts, but also be of a certain definite magnitude... The longer the story, consistently with its being comprehensible as a whole, the finer it is by reason of its magnitude."

A good short story is not as fine a form of art as a good novel, any more than a painting on a fan is equivalent to a large canvas, though both be by the same hand. Or take the famous statement of the relation of art to actuality:-

"The poet's function is to describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, *i.e.*, what is possible as being probable or necessary... Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars... A likely impossibility is always preferable to an unconvincing possibility."

With one stroke this demolishes the crude theories of realism, which would make art a photograph. An event is of no artistic value because it has happened. It must be a universal, not a singular. As Aristotle says elsewhere, great art must follow the main march of the human affections. It must universalise its material, and an unrelated and non-significant corner of life is of no value for art merely because it happens to exist. Take, again, the definition of the chief constituents of tragedy, the *Peripateia* or Reversal of Fortune, and the Discovery or Recognition. Are these still not the materials of great fiction? When Bertram sings the song about the "Links of Forth"* in *Guy Mannering*, when Jean Valjean sees in the face of a passing beggar the features of Javert,* we have the Aristotelian discovery. As for *Peripateia*, it is of the essence of all creative art. To take only one instance, we have *Les Misérables* built up on the tragic irony of undeserved reversals. It is curious that while certain select modern practitioners have forgotten all about Aristotle's doctrine, it is faithfully obeyed by the crude purveyors of popular fiction, who in their missing heirs and strawberry-marks* grope after fundamental drama. The *Family Herald** is unconsciously Aristotelian. Take his views, again, on the tragic character. He must be a man of like passions with ourselves, but transcending us in a certain greatness. In this way he will be elevated and yet sympathetic. His misfortune must not be due to depravity, but to some fatal error of judgment, some flaw which is scarcely a vice. Othello* fulfils the requirements; or, to take an instance from history, Sir Walter Raleigh,* whose career is surely the material for great tragedy. Causeless suffering – a good man passing from happiness to misery – is ruled out. Such a situation, Aristotle says, is "not fear-inspiring or piteous, but simply odious." Last of all, let us quote his very short and simple definition of style. "The perfection of diction is for it to be at once clear and not mean." There have been many scores of definitions in the history of criticism, but we question whether any has got nearer the truth. The "master of them that know"* even in his hasty generalisations from the drama of a half-decadent age could divine the eternal rules of art.

Footnotes

12-13 *Mr Butcher's mellifluous prose*: Samuel Butcher (1850-1910), eminent classical scholar and Professor of Greek at Edinburgh University (1882-1903), published his translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* in 1902 (*ODNB* 23 May 2013). Mellifluous means sweet, pleasant-sounding and flowing (*OED* 23 May 2013).

26 *the Rhetoric*: Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, developed during two periods 367-347 and 335-322 BC, deals with the art of persuasion and influenced the development of rhetorical theory through to modern times (23 May 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

27-28 *the Attic theatre*: Attica was the historical region of Greece that included Athens. It was centred on the Attic peninsula, which projects into the Aegean sea (23 May 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

29 *Aeschylus*: often referred to as 'the father of Greek tragedy', Aeschylus (c525-c456 BC) is estimated to have written at least sixty plays, of which only seven have survived into modern times. The best known are the trilogy which comprise the *Oresteia* (*CBD* 23 May 2013).

30 *Sophocles*: one of three ancient Greek tragedians whose plays have survived, Sophocles (c496-c405 BC) wrote his first plays after those of Aeschylus (see note above) and before or contemporaneously with those of Euripides (see note below). Only seven of over a hundred plays have survived in complete form, the most famous of which are *Oedipus the King* and the *Antigone* (*CBD* 23 May 2013).

32 *Euripides*: the last of the three great Greek tragedians, Euripides (c480-406 BC) wrote some ninety plays, of which eighteen have survived in complete form, including *Medea*, *Electra*, and the *Bacchae* (*CBD* 23 May 2013).

33 *the lost Second book*: Aristotle's *Poetics* is known to have been divided into two parts, each 'book' being written on a separate roll of papyrus. Only the first book, which focuses on tragedy, has survived; the second, dealing with comedy, has been lost (23 May 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

34-35 *the New Comedy*: ancient Greek comedy is conventionally divided into three periods: Old Comedy, mainly represented by the eleven surviving plays of Aristophanes (c448-c388 BC) (see note below); Middle Comedy, of which only short fragments have been preserved; and New Comedy, principally associated with the substantial surviving fragments of plays by Menander (c343-291 BC). The New Comedy therefore appears some one hundred years after the Old, with Aristotle's *Poetics* (c335-c323 BC) much closer in time to the New Comedy (23 May 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

35 *Aristophanes*: often called 'the father of comedy', Aristophanes (c448-c388 BC) was the greatest of the Greek comic dramatists. Eleven of over forty plays survive, of which the *Acharnians*, *Knights*, *Clouds*, and *Wasps*, all named after their respective choruses, are generally recognised as the best (*CBD* 23 May 2013).

43 *Lear and Hamlet*: Shakespeare's tragedies *King Lear* (c1605-06) and *Hamlet* (c1600-01) (*ODNB* 23 May 2013).

44 *Les Misérables*: the French historical novel by Victor Hugo (1802-85), first published in 1862 (*CBD* 23 May 2013).

44 *the Antigone*: a tragedy by Sophocles (see note to line 30) written around 441 BC (23 May 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

44 *the Bacchae*: a tragedy by Euripides (see note to line 32) written during the final years of his life and first performed posthumously in 405 BC (23 May 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

47 *Cresphontes and Thyestes and the Tydeus*: all lost plays by Greek dramatists. The first two are by Euripides; the third, the *Tydeus*, is by Theodectes (c380-340 BC), Greek rhetorician and tragic poet (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

62-63 *when Rawdon Crawley thrashes Lord Steyne; when Miss Dale refuses Sir Willoughby*: Buchan has used these examples before – see Article 13, notes to lines 47-48 and 42 respectively.

63-64 *when Bussy d'Amboise fights against odds*: d'Amboise (1549-79) was a gentleman at the court of the French King Henri III, a noted lover and swordsman, who frequently fought duels and was eventually trapped and killed by the husband of a lover. He is the hero of a Jacobean play *The Tragedy of Bussy d'Ambois* (1607) by the English dramatist George Chapman. He is also a leading character in the play *Henri III and his Court* (1829) by Alexandre Dumas père, and in the same author's novel *The Lady of Monsoreau* (1845). Given that the other incidents Buchan cites in this section are all taken from novels, it is probable that he is referring here to *The Lady of Monsoreau*, in which the death of d'Amboise is described (23 May 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>> and <<http://www.cadytech.com>>).

64 *when Jean Valjean sees the lanterns of the patrol*: this occurs in *Les Misérables* (see note to line 44) at the end of Chapter I, Volume V, Book III, and is described further in Chapter II.

86 *When Bertram sings the song about the 'Links of Forth'*: this episode occurs in Chapter XLI of Sir Walter Scott's 1815 novel *Guy Mannering*. However, it is not Harry Bertram who sings the song, but an unnamed damsel bleaching linen nearby who overhears the tune as Bertram plays it on his flageolet (a small flute).

86-87 *when Jean Viljean sees....the features of Javert*: from *Les Misérables*, Volume II, Book IV, Chapter V.

92 *strawberry-marks*: small, reddish birthmarks (23 May 2013 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com>>).

92-93 *The Family Herald*: a cheap, weekly story paper aimed at the popular market. Its full title was *The Family Herald: A Domestic Magazine of Useful Information and Amusement*. Originally established in 1843, it continued in publication until 1940 (23 May 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

96 *Othello*: the title character in Shakespeare's tragedy of the Moor of Venice (c1603-04) (*ODNB* 23 May 2013).

97 *Sir Walter Raleigh*: the English courtier, navigator and author, whose fall from favour led to his imprisonment in the Tower of London and eventual beheading (*CBD* 23 May 2013).

103 *The 'master of them that know'*: in the later Middle Ages, Aristotle's work was rediscovered and treated with authority by medieval scholars. His name became so well-known and respected that when Dante (1265-1321) referred to him in the 'Inferno', the first part of his *Divine Comedy*, as 'the Master there of those who know' (Circle I, Canto 4,

line 131), the phrase was sufficient to identify him (23 May 2013
<<http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu>>).

ARTICLE 15

'Greek Religion and Modern Folk-Lore'

Spectator 104 (11 June 1910): 980-81. Review.

John Cuthbert Lawson. *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: a Study in Survivals*.

Headnote

In the spring of 1910 Buchan and his wife travelled on the Orient Express to Constantinople where they joined the yacht owned by Gerard Craig-Sellar, a close friend of Buchan from his time in South Africa, for a month's cruise which involved visits to the Greek mainland and the islands of the Aegean Sea. It was Buchan's first tour of the region and was of great interest to him as a classical scholar. He wrote about it enthusiastically in a letter from Athens to his former Greek tutor at Glasgow University, Professor Gilbert Murray, who was now also a close friend (Smith, *Biography* 177).

John Cuthbert Lawson's book on Greek folklore and religion was among the first that Buchan reviewed on his return from holiday. Its exploration of possible links between the mythology and beliefs of ancient Greece and present day folklore and superstitions must have appealed to Buchan's fascination with the notion of the survival of paganism far into Christian times (Smith, *Biography* 70). The book reflected not only the popular interest in paganism associated with the Celtic revival of the *fin de siècle*, but also the growth of scholarly research at the time into the relationship between Greek mythology and religion, especially the work of Jane Harrison, a lecturer with a research fellowship at Newnham College, Cambridge, who published *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* in 1903 and *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* in 1912. Harrison was a member of the Cambridge ritualists, a small group of classical scholars active in the period 1900-14 which included Buchan's former tutor, Gilbert Murray (ODNB 20 and 27 June 2013).

Lawson was also a scholar, a fellow and lecturer at Pembroke College, Cambridge, though not a member of the ritualists group, but Buchan had some significant reservations about his academic approach, which he sets out in his review. Lawson's thesis that contemporary Greek folklore casts some light upon the popular beliefs of ancient Greece was very difficult to prove, and he had limited the extent of his evidence in order to allow a wider area of observation. Buchan was much more impressed by Lawson's imagination and style, which led him to conclude that the book was 'one of the most original contributions to Greek scholarship which have appeared for many days' (lines 114-15). But the lack of a rigorous academic approach has proved to be more significant in the long term. Lawson's work is now largely forgotten, while that of Jane Harrison continues to be an influence on modern studies of Greek religion and mythology (ODNB 20 June 2013).

GREEK RELIGION AND MODERN FOLK-LORE

Mr. Lawson has written a book which, whether we accept his conclusion or not, is a remarkable and stimulating contribution to the study of Hellenic* life. He is deeply read in classical literature, and is also well acquainted with the works of the Church fathers and others which shed light upon mediaeval Greece. He has an extraordinarily fertile and
5 ingenious mind, and a style which is only too rare in books of scholarship. Some ten years ago he spent a couple of years in various parts of Greece, and, talking and understanding

Romaic,* studied the customs and beliefs of the peasantry with a thoroughness to which few Englishmen can attain. He conceived the idea that the folk-lore of the Greek peasant of to-day might cast some light upon the popular beliefs and customs of ancient Hellas, which the great Greek writers, writing for a cultured audience, have necessarily touched upon but lightly. In his introductory chapter he meets and answers some of the more obvious objections. Popular customs are, as a rule, hoar-ancient, and date back to an antiquity at least as great as the fifth century B.C. Though the modern Greeks are not Hellenes, they have large Hellenic elements in their ancestry, and they have been singularly tenacious of their Hellenic nationality. In racial character and in many of their customs they reproduce exactly the Hellenes of the classical age. They have become Christian without, in one sense, ceasing to be polytheistic. The stories of S. Dionysius are an expurgated form of the doings of Dionysus; Artemis has become S. Artemidos; and S. Elias is the Christian successor of Helios.* The Church has never suppressed the worship of τὰ παλαιά,* and when these deities were not fused with Christian saints they lingered in folk-tales and country legends. Is it not possible to get from these country tales of to-day some light on the old popular Hellenic mind, the beliefs of peasants contemporary with Plato and the tragedians,* which Greek literature, as the work of the elect for the elect, would be slow to reveal to us?

In theory there is a great deal to be said for this thesis. It is a task, however, of immense complexity which Mr. Lawson has set himself. The problem is how to get cross-bearings. We may trace in a modern custom the germ of a classical belief, but if it differs from or amplifies the classical belief, how are we to be certain that the difference is classical too? It would be necessary to show that the difference does not come from any of the other race traditions which constitute the modern Greek; and to make assurance double sure there should be some cross-bearing either from classical literature or archaeology upon the point. To pursue this scientific method would have meant not one volume but a library, and there is no objection to Mr. Lawson limiting the nature of his proof in order to keep wide the area of his observation. But the result is that few of his conclusions can be regarded as more than probable, and in many of them we think he claims a higher degree of probability than the method warrants. He admits that he is no folk-lorist, and so the negative proof from comparative folk-lore is wanting. He does not claim to be an archaeologist, and so one possible source of cross-bearings is cut off. Further, he appears to be unfamiliar with some modern works which closely affect his subject. He uses the word "Pelagic" very loosely for all non-Achaean stock,* and he does not seem to accept the view of recent scholars as to the ethnological history of the Aegean.* On some points, such as the prevalence of human sacrifice in Greek religion, he seems to us to fall into overstatements from which he would have been saved by the knowledge of certain modern developments in other lines of classical scholarship than his own. We make these remarks not so much in criticism of the book as to show that its scope is limited and its results rather suggestions for future inquiry than ascertained truths. For the rest, it is a brilliant compendium of modern Greek beliefs, drawn not merely from the author's own travels, but from a host of other workers in the same field. This in itself is an admirable piece of work, and we have nothing but praise for the boldness of Mr. Lawson's speculations, and the vigour and ingenuity with which he reconstructs his picture. The book is not only a real contribution to scholarship, but a piece of good literature. The description in the last chapter of the Easter ceremonies in a Greek village reveals high gifts of imagination and style.

We have only space to select a few of the beliefs which Mr. Lawson claims to be relics of Hellenism. Demeter has been superseded by a male S. Demetrius,* but in her old home of Eleusis* she is still female. In country places they still talk of her as "The Mistress" or "The

Mistress of the World," a saint with no Church, who has been occasionally won in marriage by a mortal lover. Charon* has become a saint too, the messenger of God, - Death, who, often regretfully, conquers mortals and takes them from the world. The Nymphs,* on the other hand, are pure creatures of folk-lore, the "Nereids"* or fairy-folk, whose name is on the lips of every Greek peasant. They are not immortal, though they are cleverer and more beautiful than mortals, and they may become wives to mortals who do not mind a somewhat unsettled domestic life. They can turn themselves into awful shapes; they are very mischievous, and cast strange spells over men and women and children, and even animals; and certain lonely places are sacred to them, and are to be visited with great circumspection. Altogether, the Nereids have all the traits of those nymphs of the mountain of whom Aphrodite told Anchises in one of the Homeric hymns.* There is too a certain Queen of the Nymphs, called by the country-folk "The Great Lady" or "The Lady Beautiful," in whom Mr. Lawson sees traces of Artemis. But his most ingenious interpretation is reserved for those bugbears of all Greek peasants, the Callicantzari.* Into the natural history of these portents he enters with the precision of a zoologist. They are specially rampant during the twelve days following Christmas, and in the mumming still carried on during this period he sees a survival of a festival of Dionysus. He derives the name of the monsters from the word *κένταυρος*,* and argues that now, as in ancient Hellas, the "centaur"* was a genus which included other species than the "horse" kind. A "centaur" is not so much a special creature as a creature capable of transforming itself, like the Callicantzari, into different shapes. Birds, as of old, are still recognised as intermediaries between earth and heaven; and to-day omens are taken from the pig's spleen, just as in the old *σπλαγχνοσκοπία*.* Then comes a remarkable story of a human sacrifice in the island of Santorini* during the Greek War of Independence* which was told to Mr. Lawson by an eyewitness. If the story is to be believed, the victim was sent as a messenger to the gods. On the basis of this tale he argues for a new conception of the victim in the tales of human sacrifice which we find in classical literature. In succeeding chapters he investigates the modern idea of *revenants*,* of vampires, and of the rites of burial. Much of the argument is merely on the interpretation of the modern beliefs, but when he comes to the conception of dissolution and the fate of the spirit after death he propounds theories which have a direct reference to ancient Hellenic religion. "The dissolution of the body, which the dead so eagerly desired, far from being regarded as a complete severance of soul and body, was in the Pelasgian religion* the means of their re-union in another world." The body could only pass to the other side to join the soul when its dissolution, in the real or in the ritual sense, was complete. The final chapter on "The Union of Gods and Men" is in many ways the most remarkable in the volume. Death, Mr. Lawson argues, was in the old Greek religion conceived of as a wedding, the means whereby men attained to union with the gods. It is an idea still familiar in the ballads of the Greek peasant to-day. It was the teaching of the Mysteries,* which he endeavours to reconstruct from the hostile account of Clement of Alexandria.* The legend of Kore,* acted before the initiate, taught "that not only was there physical life beyond death, but a life of wedded happiness with the gods." "Blessed I call Iasion," sang the shepherd in Theocritus, "whom such things befell as ye that are uninitiate shall never come to know."* We think that in his reliance on evidence from modern ballads of this belief Mr. Lawson is straining a metaphor too far; but there is power and truth, it seems to us, in his speculations on this aspect of the older religion. At the same time, we are on slippery ground. This conception of death as a bride-chamber was used sometimes in classical Greek without any sense of divine nuptials. Take the epitaph of Apollonides in the Anthology, when Heliodorus and Diogeneia are said to "rejoice in their common tomb as in a bride-chamber."*

The new light on Hellenic beliefs which Mr. Lawson draws from his inquiry is limited to a few matters. Such are especially the conception of Demeter; the view of Charon, not as the ferryman of Hades, but as Death himself; the view of the Centaurs as originally a tribe of
110 reputed sorcerers who were able by magic to transform themselves into wild beasts; and the teaching of the Mysteries that death was a mystic marriage with the immortals. Much of the evidence may seem to us slight and fantastic, but much is striking and curious; and the whole book from its imaginative power is in the highest degree fascinating and suggestive. We congratulate Mr. Lawson on having made one of the most original
115 contributions to Greek scholarship which have appeared for many days.

Footnotes

2 Hellenic: the period of ancient Greece (then known as Hellas, and its inhabitants Hellenes), which extends from the beginning of the Iron Age (eleventh century BC) to the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC (*OED* 3 June 2013). Buchan later makes it clear that in this context he is referring to a time before the classical period of Greek civilisation and culture (the two hundred year period ending with the death of Alexander): ‘...the popular beliefs and customs of ancient Hellas, which the great Greek writers, writing for a cultured audience, have necessarily touched upon but lightly’ (lines 9-11).

7 Romaic: the vernacular language of modern Greece (*OED* 3 June 2013).

17-19 The stories of S. Dionysius....Helios: the examples given here of modern day saints (S. Dionysius, S. Artemidos, and S. Elias) and their ancient equivalents are all taken from Lawson’s book (43-45) (3 June 2013 <<http://www.archive.org>>). Dionysus was the ancient Greek god of wine, Artemis was a protector of young children, especially girls, and Helios was the sun god (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

19-20 τὰ παγανά: Lawson’s book translates this phrase as ‘the pagan ones’ (67) (12 June 2013 <<http://www.archive.org>>).

22-23 Plato and the tragedians: Plato, the ancient Greek philosopher and founder of the Academy in Athens, lived c427-c347 BC (*CBD* 3 June 2013). The three great Greek tragedians - Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides – lived between c525 and c405 BC (*CBD* 23 May 2013). So Buchan is referring in this instance to the classical period of Greek literature and culture (see note to line 2 above).

40 ‘Pelagic’....non-Achaean stock: Pelagic refers to the people who inhabited the coasts and islands of the eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean (see note below) before the Hellenic period. The Achaeans inhabited a region in the west of Greece (*OED* 3 June 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

41 the Aegean: the sea which lies between the mainlands of Greece to the west and Turkey to the east (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

55 Demeter....S. Demetrius: another example (see note to lines 17-19) from Lawson’s book (43-44). Demeter was the Greek goddess of the harvest (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

56 Eleusis: a town in Greece situated about eleven miles north west of Athens (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

58 *Charon*: the ferryman in Greek mythology who carried the souls of the newly deceased from the land of the living, across the rivers Styx and Acheron, to the world of the dead (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

59 *The Nymphs*: minor female deities of Greek mythology, divine spirits who dwelt in the mountains, woods, rivers or other natural locations. They were usually depicted as beautiful maidens with an amorous freedom, who loved to dance and sing (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

60 *the 'Nereids'*: in Greek mythology the Nereids were specifically sea nymphs, but in modern Greek folklore, as Buchan indicates, the name is used for all nymphs and fairies (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

66-67 *those nymphs of the mountain....in one of the Homeric hymns*: in Greek mythology Aphrodite, the goddess of love, beauty and pleasure, had many lovers, both gods and men. Anchises was one of her mortal lovers, and Aphrodite bore him a son, Aeneas. This tale is related in the 'Hymn to Aphrodite', one of thirty-three Homeric Hymns which have survived. Most of these poems were written in the seventh and sixth centuries BC. They were not composed by Homer but by anonymous Greek writers in the same dialect and using the same epic metre as the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. The 'Hymn to Aphrodite' includes the episode in which Aphrodite tells Anchises of the mountain nymphs (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

70 *the Callicantzari*: according to Greek Christian folk belief, these are vampires which become active and attack people during the twelve days of Christmas between 25 December and Epiphany (6 January). They often appear in half-animal, half-human shapes (3 June 2013 <<http://www.monstropedia.org>>).

74 *κένταυρος*: the ancient Greek word for a centaur (see note below) (*OED* 12 June 2013).

75 *the 'centaur'*: a mythological creature with the head, arms and torso of a human male, and the body and legs of a horse (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Greek mythology does not contain any significant variation from this form, but Buchan indicates here that both ancient Hellenic and modern Greek myths have centaurs capable of transforming into different shapes.

79 *σπλαγχνοσκοπία*: Lawson translates this as 'inspection of entrails' (325), which he believes to have been the most common method of divination from the sacrificed animal in ancient Greece (12 June 2013 <<http://www.archive.org>>).

80 *Santorini*: a small island of approximately 28 square miles in the Aegean sea, about 120 miles south east of the Greek mainland. Its original Greek name of Thira was officially revived in the nineteenth century, but the colloquial name of Santorini continues in popular use (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

80 *the Greek War of Independence*: a successful war (1821-32) for the independence of Greece from the Ottoman Empire, during which Santorini (see note above) was united with Greece by the Treaty of London in 1830 (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

84 *revenants*: people who return from the dead; reanimated corpses; ghosts (*OED* 3 June 2013).

89 *the Pelasgian religion*: the religion of the Pelasgic people referred to in the note to line 40.

95 *the Mysteries*: these are the Eleusinian Mysteries, ancient Greek initiation ceremonies that were held every year at Eleusis (see note to line 56) (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

96 *Clement of Alexandria*: an early Christian theologian (c150-c215) who was also familiar with ancient Greek culture and taught in Alexandria. In the *Protrepticus (Exhortation)*, one of three theological works to survive, Clement displays an extensive knowledge of Greek mythologies and mysteries. He criticises Greek paganism on the basis that its deities are false and provide poor moral examples, and attacks its mysteries for their trivial rituals, exhorting the Greeks to adopt Christianity (CBD 3 June 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

96 *The legend of Kore*: in Greek mythology Kore ('the maiden') is an alternative name for Persephone, the daughter of Zeus and the harvest goddess Demeter. According to her legend, which is the basis of the Eleusinian Mysteries (see note to line 95), she was seized by Hades, the god of death, and taken to his underworld kingdom. She was only returned after her mother, Demeter, had caused a terrible drought, which forced Zeus to secure her release, thereby bringing the drought to an end. Kore/Persephone is therefore known as the Queen of the Underworld, but her name is also associated with the cult of spring and the rejuvenation of the earth (3 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

98-99 '*Blessed I call Iasion....shall never come to know*': Theocritus was a Greek poet of the third century BC noted for his pastoral poems. His best known work is represented by his *Idylls*, and the quotation here is from the final lines of 'Idyll III'. The speaker is a goatherd rather than a shepherd, and the phrase 'ye that are uninitiate' is usually translated as 'ye that be profane' (3 June 2013 <<ftp://ftp.ibiblio.org>> and <<http://www.poetry.literaturelearning.org>>). Buchan may have changed the translation here to fit his discussion of the legend of Kore acted before the initiate in the Eleusinian Mysteries.

104-06 *the epitaph of Apollonides....a bride-chamber*: the reference here is to JW Mackail's *Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology*, which had been the subject of an article by Buchan when a new edition was published in 1906 (**B14**). In Chapter XI of this edition there is a short epitaph (XLV 'Undivided') by Apollonides from the tomb of Heliodorus and his wife, Diogeneia, who were buried together, 'rejoicing in their common tomb even as in a bride-chamber' (12 June 2013 <<http://www.fullbooks.com>>). Buchan had quoted the whole of this epitaph at the conclusion of his 1906 article on Mackail's new edition.

ARTICLE 16

'The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century'

Spectator 106 (25 February 1911): 286-87. Review.

Houston Stewart Chamberlain. *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. (2 vols.).

Headnote

Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927) was an English academic who spent most of his life in Europe. He studied natural sciences at the University of Geneva, and then lived in Dresden and Vienna, where he wrote an analysis of Richard Wagner's drama and a biography of the composer. Towards the end of the 1890s he was commissioned to write a historical work which would survey the condition of civilisation as the century drew to a close. The result was *Die Grundlagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1899), which made him famous. Its emphasis on the superiority of the Teutonic races, led by the Germans, in their continuing struggle against the Jews for the survival of Christian civilisation struck a chord with the educated elite and middle classes of a Germany which had only been united as a nation less than thirty years before. Kaiser Wilhelm II wrote to Chamberlain in praise of the book and organised subsidies for a popularly-priced edition to be published, with the result that by 1914 sales in Germany had exceeded 100,000. The Kaiser also arranged for the book to be distributed within the German Army, carried in German libraries, and included in the school curriculum. The work was widely read elsewhere in Europe, and the first English translation in 1911, the book reviewed here by Buchan, carried an enthusiastic introduction by Lord Redesdale (*ODNB* 12 June 2013). Three years later Buchan reviewed the first English edition of Chamberlain's study of Immanuel Kant, which was originally published in Germany in 1905 (**C104**).

The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century proved to be a seminal work in German nationalism. After its initial success in Germany, Chamberlain divorced his wife and in 1908 married Eva von Bülow, the stepdaughter of Richard Wagner. The following year they moved to Bayreuth, a centre for Wagner's music, where Chamberlain lived for the rest of his life. With the outbreak of the First World War he began producing polemical essays against Britain, which were published in a 'Trench Edition' for the German troops. He was awarded the non-combatants' Iron Cross in 1915, and finally took German citizenship the following year. After the war he began to forge close links with the emerging Nazi movement, meeting Adolf Hitler for the first time in 1923. He joined the Nazi party and contributed to its publications. But by now his health was gradually worsening, and he died in 1927. Hitler was among the mourners at his funeral in Bayreuth (*ODNB* 12 June 2013).

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

This remarkable book is the best instance we have lately met with of history written to prove a thesis. One merit all such attempts possess: they have a unity which is lacking in ordinary historical writing. Whether they have other merits depends upon the value of the thesis which they are written to prove. If the thesis be a sound and fruitful one, a genuine principle of things, they may give us history in its most illuminating and suggestive form. If the thesis be wrong-headed or trivial – such as a history of Europe from the point of view of the migrations of red-haired men – then we have only a barren exercise of ill-directed industry. One fault, too, the best of such historians must share. Their work demands

universal knowledge, which no man possesses. "Quel plus sûr moyen de courir d'erreurs en erreurs," as Mr. Chamberlain quotes from Rousseau, "que la fureur de savoir tout."* The best must contain blunders and perversions which will shake the confidence of the ordinary reader. If a man is convinced of the truth of a thesis, his view of historical fact will be insensibly coloured by the desire to obtain corroborative evidence. The work before us has had a great popular vogue in Germany, and Lord Redesdale,* who writes the introduction to its English translation, thinks it a new gospel. We have read the volumes with interest and profit, some scepticism, and occasional annoyance. It is a rich book, in which one may delve to good purpose – a "mass of fine confused feeding,"* as the Scotsman said of his national dish. We can well understand its popularity in Germany, for this kind of dogmatic survey of history, if picturesquely written, is the fashion at present in that country. Also Mr. Chamberlain's carefully guarded conclusions, if translated roughly into popular language, might seem to give support both to the fashionable *Judenhetze** and to national pride. At the same time the book merits serious consideration, for it is the work of a vigorous thinker and a man of immense erudition. The true temper of a judicious scholar is not often apparent, but there can be no question about the width and variety of Mr. Chamberlain's reading.

The aim of the book is to expound the various influences which "conditioned" our nineteenth-century civilisation. "I do not profess," the author says, "to give a history of the past, but merely of that past which is still living." His aim is to suggest rather than teach; to provide a principle of illustration. He is quite alive to the difficulties of this kind of task.

"Philosophical history is a desert; fanciful history an idiot asylum. We must therefore demand that the artistic designer should have a positive tendency of mind and a strictly scientific conscience. Before he reasons he must know." After these common-sense prolegomena* he sketches his thesis. Roughly it is that the Teutons – by which he means all Northmen, Celts, Saxons, Germans, and Slavs alike – deserve the first place among the peoples who have moulded the world's history. "Our whole civilisation and culture of to-day is the work of one definite race of men – the Teutonic." They used, of course, certain great legacies from the past, notably that of Greece in art and thought, of Rome in law and organisation, and of Christ in religion. But they have moulded and united these in one new and coherent doctrine of life. He then proceeds to discuss these earlier influences in turn.

The chapter on Greece seems to us by far the least convincing in the book. It is full of dubious race generalisations, such as that from the earliest times the Greeks were disloyal, unpatriotic, and selfish, which is like a schoolboy's comment when he first reads of Themistocles.* There is a disquisition on Homeric unity which shows that the author has not in the least appreciated the most modern form of the controversy.* Of Aristotle* he writes that "till a short time ago he had paralysed the natural sciences at all points; philosophy, and especially metaphysics, have not yet shaken off his yoke." This is the way people wrote in Germany a hundred years ago when they were still combating Scholasticism;* it is safe to say that at the present moment all schools of philosophy are inclined to return to Aristotle and to find in him a wisdom the world had forgotten. Mr. Chamberlain declares roundly that the Greek was no metaphysician, but his own metaphysical equipment seems to us strangely confused. He thinks the Greek cruel. Professor Murray* has dealt with that subject so well that, in the light of his argument, the opinion is untenable. Mr. Chamberlain takes his view of the Persian War from Gobineau!* Every man is entitled to his own opinion, but these violently stated and generally exploded dogmas shake the confidence of the reader. The chapter on Rome is much better; except that he is wholly unfair to Julius Cæsar,* he has a real insight into the Roman genius and the principles underlying the Roman conquests. "Rome is not the creation of individual men, but of the whole people; in contrast to Hellas* everything really great is here

'anonymous'; none of its great men approach the greatness of the Roman people as a whole." The great legacy of Rome was the removal of the centre of gravity of culture once and for all to the West, and that law which in its spirit rather than in its form is the cement of civilisation. "Whilst our artistic and scientific culture is in many essential points derived from Greece, our social culture leads us back to Rome"; and by social culture he means not material civilisation, but the "secure moral foundations of a dignified social life." Mr. Chamberlain is at his best in his acute appreciation of Roman law, and especially in his account of the transition to the formalism of the Byzantine editors.*

The third and greatest legacy from the past was the revelation of Christ. We commend this chapter to all readers, for few things more reverent and more wise have been written in our time. Whenever the author approaches the Christian revelation, his language acquires a dignity and beauty which few historians reach. We are far from agreeing with all he says, and we think the pages spent in proving that Christ had "not a drop of genuinely Jewish blood in His veins" a waste of fallacious ingenuity; but these faults do not detract from the majesty and truth of Mr. Chamberlain's conception of Our Lord:-

"I believe that we are still far, very far, from the moment when the transfiguring might of the vision of Christ will make itself felt to its utmost extent by civilised mankind. Even if our churches in their present form should come to an end, the idea of Christianity would only stand out with the more force... Even now Christianity is not firm upon its childish feet; its maturity is hardly dawning upon our dim vision. Who knows but a day may come when the bloody church history of the first eighteen centuries of our era may be looked upon as the history of the infantile diseases of Christianity?"

These are the three great legacies of the past. After them came the Chaos, the raceless welter of the later Roman Empire.* "Hatred and disdain of every great achievement of the pure races were taught: a Lucian scoffs at the great thinkers;* an Augustine* reviles the heroes of Rome's heroic age; a Tertullian* calls Homer a 'liar'." Asceticism* grows up out of sheer disgust at the state of the world. Salvation came from the barbarian invasions which meant the annihilation of "that monstrosity, a State without a nation, of that empty form, of that soulless congeries* of humanity, that union of mongrels bound together only by a community of taxes and superstitions." The strife of the future was to lie between these Northern invaders and the Jews, who now enter Western history, and the battle was fought over the interpretation and use of the three great legacies from the past. Mr. Chamberlain is no vulgar Anti-Semite. He has an immense respect for the great qualities of the Jew and expounds the mystery of his origin in many pages; but in religion he holds that he is essentially a materialist, in politics essentially unnational, in art unimaginative. But he is racially pure, and against him only a pure race can stand. This latter he finds in the Teuton, or Northman, *homo Europaeus*,* whose chief virtues were freedom and loyalty. The second volume is the story of the struggle of the two types – the struggle for nationality, for art, for liberty, for a spiritual religion. This latter part is necessarily sketchy and a little out of proportion to the scheme of the work. Mr. Chamberlain finds the Roman Church eminently Judaistic* in spirit, both in its materialism and its superstition. "Rome has never, from the first, adopted a specifically religious or a specifically evangelical* standpoint... Rome, by banishing the Gospel from the home and the heart of the Christian, and by taking as the official basis of religion the original materialism upon which the dying chaos of races had supported itself, as well as the Jewish theory of sacrifice, by which the priest becomes an indispensable mediator, has simply been consistent." The struggle in the domain of politics was between universalism and nationalism. At first the struggle was against the Emperor and the Pope; but the battle is not yet over, and Mr. Chamberlain believes that the form it will take in the future will be the fight between patriotism and international socialism. It was the Northman who was the true legatee of Greece and

Rome, the true exponent of a revelation of Christ; and it is to him that we owe the foundations of the nineteenth century. In the later chapters Mr. Chamberlain works out the thesis in detail, dealing with the different domains of science, art, religion, economy and politics. There is nothing specially remarkable in this section except the enthusiastic appreciation of Kant,* who, however, might surely have been praised without a constant belittling Hegel.*

115 It is a bold and sensational thesis. How true is it all? At least as true as any other thesis on the subject. In this kind of history there is no finality. Mr. Chamberlain is quite aware of the danger of generalisation. We are willing to believe that he has taken pains not to sum up prematurely, but no human knowledge is sufficient to buttress so vast an argument. We differ from him on many of the so-called facts, and we think that he has carried his race theories to desperate lengths. When he is compelled to maintain that the great Italians of the Middle Ages were all Northmen, he reveals the impossible basis of his doctrine. The thesis cannot be held proved in the extreme form in which he has stated it. It is open to a learned man to write another book to prove that the foundations of the nineteenth century are wholly Latin or wholly Jewish, and make a good argument of it. We think that

120 Mr. Chamberlain would have the better case, but among extreme doctrines there is, as we have said, no finality. In spite, however, of many crudities and extravagances, it is a remarkable book. It is a monument of erudition, and the skilful handling of erudition; and even those who differ from it most widely will find it in a high degree stimulating and suggestive. It was well worth an English translation, and we would add that the translation

125 could scarcely have been better done.

130

Footnotes

9-10 *Quel plus sûr moyen....de savoir tout*: this quotation is from a letter dated 10 September 1755 by Rousseau (1712-78), the Genevan political philosopher, to the French author Voltaire (1694-1778). It may be translated as: 'What more certain way of making error after error, than the mania to know everything' (14 June 2013 <<http://www.site-magister.com>>).

14 *Lord Redesdale*: Algernon Freeman-Mitford (1837-1916), Baron Redesdale, was an English diplomat and author who was an old friend of the explorer Richard Burton (see article 9). After retiring from a career in the Foreign Office, he concentrated on writing his autobiography together with translations, pamphlets and other material, including introductions to this book and Chamberlain's later study of Immanuel Kant (1914), which he also translated from the German. His grand-daughters were the Mitford sisters, who achieved notoriety in the 1930s (*ODNB* 12 June 2013).

17 a '*mass of fine confused feeding*': the quotation that 'there is much fine, confused feeding' in the Scottish haggis has been attributed to Dr Samuel Johnson by Eric Temple Bell (1883-1960), Scottish mathematician and science fiction author, in a book review for the *American Mathematical Monthly* 38.3 (March 1931): 161 (27 June 2013 <<http://www.jstor.org>>). However, Johnson was English, and Buchan attributes the phrase to a Scotsman, but I have been unable to discover the original source of the quotation.

21 *Judenhetze*: the literal translation of this word from the German is 'Jew-baiting'. In English it has the meaning of active anti-Semitism, the systematic persecution of Jews (*OED* 12 June 2013).

33 *prolegomena*: introductory observations preceding the main text of a book (*OED* 12 June 2013).

43 *Themistocles*: Athenian general and statesman (c523-c458 BC), who dreamed of a great Athenian empire, but was later brought down by the Spartan faction in Athens and expelled from Greece. He unsuccessfully plotted his return and the subjugation of Greece, which gained him a reputation for unpatriotic selfishness and disloyalty (CBD 12 June 2013).

43-44 *Homeric unity....controversy*: in the nineteenth century a controversy had developed in Homeric scholarship between analysts and unitarians concerning the authorship of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The analysts believed that these Greek epics were composed by many authors while they were being transmitted orally, before being edited and written down. Their arguments were based on a detailed linguistic analysis of the texts. They were opposed by the unitarians, who adopted a literary-critical approach in arguing that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* showed an artistic unity and intention that must have been the work of a single author. In referring to 'the most modern form of the controversy' Buchan probably had in mind Gilbert Murray's *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (1907), which he had re-read during his cruise of the Aegean in the spring of 1910 (see Article 15 headnote). Murray's book attempted to mediate between the analysts and unitarians by arguing that the Homeric epics were the end result of a protracted process of linguistic evolution within a coherent tradition which gave them a literary unity (ODNB 14 June 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

44 *Aristotle*: see Article 14.

48 *Scholasticism*: a method of critical thought and learning which dominated teaching by the academics of European universities from about 1100 to 1500, and continued to be employed thereafter in defending Christian dogma against advances in philosophical thought and scientific knowledge (14 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

52 *Professor Murray*: Gilbert Murray (1866-1957), Australian-born classical scholar, who was Buchan's tutor in Greek at Glasgow University. He later succeeded Ingram Bywater (see Article 14 headnote) as Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford in 1908, a position he held until his retirement in 1936 (ODNB 14 June 2013). In *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (see note to lines 43-44 above) Murray argues that the few elements in Greek myth which might be regarded as cruel are remnants from an ancient barbarity and are 'in no sense characteristically Greek' (22) (27 June 2013 <<http://www.questia.com>>).

53 *Mr Chamberlain....Gobineau!*: Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (1816-82) was a French diplomat, novelist and philosopher whose most influential work, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853-55), was given an English version as *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races* in 1856, although a full English translation was not published until 1915 (CBD 14 June 2013). The book developed the theory of the Aryan master race and was an influence on Chamberlain, as Buchan suggests here. Gobineau was well educated in languages and Oriental culture. His two-volume *History of the Persians* was published in 1869. The Persian Wars were a series of conflicts between the Persian Empire and the Greeks from 499 until 449 BC (14 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>> and 27 June 2013 <<http://www.britannica.com>>).

56 *he is wholly unfair to Julius Caesar*: this great Roman general and politician (c101-44 BC) was an early hero of Buchan's (MHD 41), who takes exception here to Chamberlain's perceived unfairness towards him. Buchan later wrote a short biography of Caesar (1932).

58 *Hellas*: see Article 15, note to line 2.

66 *the transition to the formalism of the Byzantine editors*: the Byzantine Empire inherited the Roman legal system when it was formed in 330 AD from the eastern half of the Roman Empire. Many additional Byzantine laws were subsequently enacted until in 529 the Emperor Justinian set up a commission to collect, edit and codify all the existing Roman and Byzantine laws. This is almost certainly the transition process that Buchan is referring to here. It was completed in 529 with the issue of a revised *Codex* of existing law (CBD 14 June 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

81-82 *the Chaos, the raceless welter of the later Roman Empire*: 'the Chaos' is the term usually applied to the period 235-284 AD when the Roman Empire experienced a time of military anarchy, civil war and economic crises. Although there was a partial recovery in the fourth century, continual invasions by barbarian forces eventually led to the collapse of the Empire in the West by 476 (14 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>> and 27 June 2013 <<http://ancienthistory.about.com>>). Buchan is probably referring here to the whole of the period 235-476 when the Empire was in gradual decline.

83 *Lucian scoffs at the great thinkers*: see Article 2, note to lines 1-2, which explains how this Greek satirist mocked the rival schools of philosophy.

83 *Augustine*: St Augustine (350-430) was one of the most influential of the Latin Christian theologians. Between 413 and 426 he produced *De Civitate Dei* (*The City of God*), a profound vindication of the Christian church, which he saw as a new order that would arise out of the collapse of the Roman Empire (CBD 12 June 2013).

84 *Tertullian*: Carthaginian theologian (160-220), who had the greatest influence on the Latin Church between Paul in the first century and Augustine (see note above). He did not believe that any of the Greek mythic poets, including Homer, had much regard for the truth (CBD 12 June 2013, and 27 June 2013 <<http://st-takla.org>>).

84 *Asceticism*: the practice of some in the early Christian church who retired into a life of solitude, meditation and prayer which involved rigorous self-discipline, celibacy and fasting (OED 12 June 2013).

87 *congeries*: mass or heap (OED 28 March 2013).

95 *homo Europaeus*: a term first used by Georges Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936), French anthropologist and theoretician of racialism and eugenics, in his 1899 book *The Aryan and his Social Role*, to describe the Nordic race of Central and Northern Europe, which he regarded as superior to all other races (14 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

99 *Judaistic*: relating to the profession or practice of the Jewish religion (OED 12 June 2013).

100 *evangelical*: relating to the faith or morality expressed in the four Christian Gospels of the New Testament (OED 12 June 2013).

113 *Kant*: Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), German idealist philosopher (CBD 12 June 2013).

114 *Hegel*: Georg Hegel (1770-1831), German idealist philosopher, who modified the system of philosophy developed by Kant (CBD 12 June 2013).

ARTICLE 17

'African Secret History'

Spectator 107 (2 December 1911): 965-67. Review.

Douglas Blackburn and Captain W Waithman Caddell. *Secret Service in South Africa*.
John Boyes. *John Boyes: King of the Wa-kikuyu*.

Headnote

Buchan allocates the bulk of this review to the book on the Secret Service in South Africa. He notes that it covers only 'part of the story, the part concerned with old days in the Transvaal' (line 7). The book deals mainly with the secret service work of the Boers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century leading up to the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899. It has relatively little to say about British intelligence work during this period or about the work of either side during the war itself. The authors seem to have been insiders, especially Douglas Blackburn who, according to the book's title page, was 'Document and Cipher Expert to the late Transvaal Republic' (3 July 2013 <<http://archive.org>>). It is the *late* Republic because in the previous year (1910) the former Boer Republics and British colonies had been subsumed into the new Republic of South Africa, and there is a sense of 'now the story can be told' about Blackburn and Caddell's book.

Blackburn was an English journalist who was in South Africa between 1892 and 1908, writing for the *Star* newspaper in Johannesburg and editing the *Transvaal Sentinel* in Krugersdorp in the 1890s. He also wrote several novels based on his South African experiences, one of which is mentioned in Buchan's review (see note to lines 75-76). Little is known about his co-author, Captain Caddell. According to the book's title page he was 'Chief Repatriation Magistrate for the West Rand on the British Occupation', which would have been during the aftermath of the Boer War (3 July 2013 <<http://archive.org>> and <<http://esaach.org.za>>).

Buchan was also something of an insider himself because of his two years in South Africa (1901-03) at the end of the Boer War. While he was there he had access to the official intelligence files in his capacity as Private Secretary to the High Commissioner, Lord Milner (Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 82, 121). He also had some experience of secret work. In 1902 Milner placed him in charge of a clandestine operation to purchase land in the Transvaal and other areas which could be made available to British settlers after the war ended. As the defeated Boers would not sell to the British Government on principle, a number of agents posing as private land dealers had to be employed to acquire the land (Redley, 'South African War' 68-69).

In South Africa Buchan also got to know David Henderson, who was Director of Military Intelligence during the Boer War. Henderson was thirteen years older than Buchan, but they were fellow Scots who had both been to Glasgow University (*ODNB* 3 July 2013). Buchan later confirmed in his obituary article on Henderson for the *Quarterly Review* in January 1922 (**C110**) that it was in South Africa that he came to know Henderson well. It was also there that he first met Edmund Ironside, another fellow Scot almost five years younger than Buchan, who had fought through the Boer War and afterwards undertook secret intelligence work in German South West Africa. Ironside is regarded by Buchan's biographers and others as the principal inspiration for Richard Hannay (*ODNB* 3 July 2013; Smith, *Biography* 253-54; Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 121-22).

John Boyes, the author of the second book reviewed, spent most of his life in Africa. After the adventures he describes with the Wa-kikuyu tribe, he served with the Intelligence Corps in the First World War, eventually taking up farming in Kenya (3 July 2013 <<http://www.frontiersmen.org.au>>). Buchan's request in this review (lines 128-29) that Boyes should publish more of his experiences was belatedly answered in *The Company of Adventurers* (1928).

AFRICAN SECRET HISTORY

There is a saga of Africa – North, East, South, and West – which does not get into the history books. It is the story of the backstairs, the things behind the scenes of business and politics, the great underworld which many drift into and few return from. You may hear bits of it in bars and mining camps and from chance companions; occasionally it appears in
5 fiction; but the truth is that those who know most about it are the least likely to write down their knowledge. In the first of the books before us Mr. Blackburn and Captain Caddell tell part of the story, the part concerned with old days in the Transvaal.* They write from first-hand experience, and these chapters are as entertaining a tale as we have read for many a day. The writers are very discreet, and mention few names – naturally, for
10 there are rich and respected citizens abroad to-day whose fortunes were built on queer foundations. But anyone who knew the Transvaal before the war* will be able to fill up the gaps. It is not a pretty story. New mining camps are not Sunday schools, and the haste to get rich drives men into ugly devices. But what gives the Transvaal its interest above other mining camps is, first, the native background and, second, the Kruger *régime*.* You had a
15 vast industry carried on under mediæval laws by means of the labour of those who had no part or interest in the economic structure. The situation involved "Secret Service" of some sort.

The authors give us many glimpses into politics. Mr. Blackburn was cipher expert to the Transvaal Republic, and knew the devious ways of republican administration as well as any
20 man. We are given excellent accounts of the reform agitation in Johannesburg* and of the Jameson Raid* from the Transvaal standpoint. This has been done before, but never with more illuminating detail. One of the authors was in Krugersdorp* when the Raiders arrived, and has much to tell which is new to us. There is a chapter on Dr. Leyds's Secret Service* and a character sketch of that much-abused and most curious personality. Justice
25 will perhaps never be done to Leyds's extraordinary abilities, for his employers were not capable of appreciating them, and his opponents had too many grudges to judge fairly. He estimated the British character very shrewdly, and his management of the Press was in its way a masterpiece. His work was well summed up by a colleague: "He gives a day to European politics for every minute he devotes to the Transvaal. Yet he knows this country
30 as well as Paul Kruger, which is saying much."* Under this head perhaps the most amusing chapter is that which deals with the "Third Raad,"* the small coterie of Kruger's friends, who formed the inner Executive and charged a percentage on all business. San Francisco in its palmiest days never evolved a more barefaced system of "graft."* Their chief work was, of course, Government concessions, but nothing was too small for their care. One of the
35 authors, when editing a Transvaal paper, found it necessary to collect his account for official advertisements through this body, paying a regular sum of £10 by way of commission. The usual defence of concessions was that they encouraged local industry and development, but the conceded articles were scarcely ever manufactured in the Transvaal. "Matches, paint, ornamental building stoneware, certain spirits, explosives,
40 were all imported ready-manufactured, though a pretence of producing them on the spot

was gone through in the case of explosives, matches, and stonework." The "Third Raad" is gone, and the members have not kept their ill-gotten wealth; but we agree with the authors that it is a pity that the bribers as well as the bribed have not suffered the same fate.

45 From the Government we pass to the mining industry. Illicit liquor selling to natives was the chief affliction of Johannesburg. It was mostly worked by Polish Jews, and the profits were enormous. "A licence was granted to a canteen on a derelict mine in charge of a caretaker, and three miles out on the veld. The licensee would require to sell £1,000 worth of liquor per annum at ordinary profits to make a bare living out of the place. Yet he
50 contrived to retire in four years with a competency,* and find a purchaser of the goodwill and the tin shanty for £1,000." The Prohibition laws were severe, but it was almost impossible to enforce them because of the difficulty of proof. Unless an actual sale to a native was detected the illicit seller went scot-free. Hence native trap-boys* were used by the police, and these boys carried their lives in their hands. The original mischief lay in the
55 licensing system, which was both lax and corrupt. Illicit gold selling was much less of a grief to the mining industry. Practically the only way of stealing gold was by scraping the plates of the battery,* and it was difficult to get away with enough of the precious metal to make it worth the risk. At Kimberley* I.D.B., or illicit diamond buying, was, until Cecil Rhodes* established the compound system,* so great an evil that it became a serious question
60 whether legitimate diamond digging was worth while. The European market was flooded with stolen stones, and in self-defence respectable dealers had to limit the output to keep up prices. From the beginning the laws against the practice were of Draconian* severity, but evasion was far too easy for the risks to be deterrent. The authors give a host of amusing stories of the devices adopted to convey stones to a confederate and to get them
65 over the Free State border.* Here is an example. The I.D.B. had a barmaid as his confederate, and dropped in regularly for drinks.

"When a bottle of stout was called for the barmaid understood the signal. The I.D.B. would drink about half of it, engage in conversation with some one at the bar, and either go off hurriedly, after glancing at his watch, or accept the offer of some one to
70 take a drink. In either case he did not finish the stout. This the barmaid would put apparently among the dirty glasses awaiting washing, but actually in a place of safety, for she knew that diamonds had been dropped into it from the mouth of the I.D.B."

We like best the chapters in which the authors leave the Rand* and Pretoria* and tell some of those tales of the veld and the bush which are now becoming only a faint memory.
75 There was the business of gun-running, for example, about which Mr. Blackburn has written an excellent novel.* Magato, the chief in the Zoutpansberg,* was a ready purchaser of rifles and his soul yearned for a machine gun. He had a calabash* full of diamonds to pay for it, and many an impecunious adventurer had a try for those diamonds. No one succeeded, though one or two came near it, and where these diamonds have gone
80 to no man can tell. Then there was the perennial romance of hidden treasure. Sometimes it took the form of a kloof* in Swaziland,* where diamonds could be had for the picking up. Or it might be the buried loot of some old Portuguese adventurer, hidden somewhere near the Lebombo hills,* or a cave of pure gold in some remote range, or a reef of platinum in the Kalahari.* Later came the wild story of the Kruger millions, secreted somewhere in the
85 bush – a story palpably impossible to any one who knew anything of the republican finances, but sufficient to set many innocent and thirsty souls off on a wild-goose chase. Such tales are always false, always credited, and absolutely immortal. A new generation succeeds to the whimsies of its predecessor. The authors have something, too, to tell us of those recluses whom travellers found in remote places in the days when the Transvaal was
90 not subject to the law of extradition. Men of good family, who had got into trouble, would

be found living alone in Kaffir* huts, still trying to maintain the rudiments of their old civilization. And there were those who sank lower and became "mean whites" living on the bounty of native kraals.* South Africa is full of such tales, and many South Africans carry strange secrets in their hearts. We hear, too, of famous figures, little more than myths to the present generation. The great Abel Erasmus, who ruled Lydenburg* with a rod of iron; the "Captain," who carried "gun-running" to its boldest pitch; "Scotty" Smith* – *clarum*, if not exactly *venerabile, nomen** in the Western Transvaal – the most audacious and humorous of adventurers. There were others whose deeds we hope may be chronicled in some future book, such as the mighty Scotsman who once terrorised Swaziland and the Portuguese border.* Meantime we have to thank the authors for a most delightful work, written with excellent taste and judgment and as full of instruction as of amusement.

The story of John Boyes, the Yorkshireman who became virtual king of an East African tribe, is one of the most wonderful of modern times. It is written by himself and admirably edited by his friend, Mr. C.W.L. Bulpett. It sets forth clearly and modestly such a record of adventure as it would be hard to parallel. Mr. Boyes began life as a sailor, and after an experience of many climes found himself in Natal* when the second Matabele War* was going on. He made his way to the front, fought till the end of hostilities, and then became a trader in Buluwayo.* But the restlessness of the pioneer was upon him, so with much trouble he wandered up the coast to Mombasa,* and rode transport on the Uganda road.* Food was scarce, and it occurred to him that a bold man might enter the Kikuyu territories* and then organize some kind of food supply. With extraordinary courage and judgment he made friends first with one tribe and then with another, until he virtually stamped out native war and leagued the different tribes together by the ceremony of blood-brotherhood. For long his life was in constant danger, and he succeeded by sheer nerve and good sense. He was as just and merciful as he was brave, and when he became "king" he greatly bettered the economic conditions of the people and reformed their customs and manner of life. All this was done by a young man in the twenties, entirely alone, with no support but his own personality. It is one of the finest examples known to us of the true work of the pioneer, and he had the pioneer's reward. The East African Government determined to take over the administration of the Kikuyu country, and as a preliminary they arrested Mr. Boyes (or rather ordered Mr. Boyes to arrest himself). He was tried on various charges and acquitted, but his work among the Wa-kikuyu* was over, though he gave loyal help in keeping the district quiet. In those days the East African official was not of a high type, and no doubt it was difficult to allow an independent white power to grow up next door, but the method of "taking over" left something to be desired. Mr. Boyes makes no complaint, and evidently harbours no grudge, for he speaks highly of the present administration. He is not yet thirty-eight years old, and has spent the time since his abdication as a professional big-game hunter. We sincerely hope that he may publish some of his recent experiences, for his book will leave every reader with a strong appetite for more.

Footnotes

7 *the Transvaal*: during the second half of the nineteenth century, the Transvaal was an independent Boer republic in southern Africa to the north of the British Cape Colony. It was subsequently acquired by Britain as a result of the Boer War (1899-1902) and became one of the provinces of the Union of South Africa in 1910 (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

11 *before the war*: here Buchan is referring to the South African War of 1899-1902, now commonly known as the Boer War.

14 *the Kruger régime*: Paul Kruger (1825-1904) was President of the Transvaal from 1883 until its defeat in the Boer War (*CBD* 27 June 2013).

20 *Johannesburg*: founded in 1886 after the discovery of gold on a farm, Johannesburg grew rapidly to become a rough and disorganised city of over 100,000 inhabitants within ten years. It is now the largest city in South Africa (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

20-21 *the Jameson Raid*: a raid on the Transvaal from the British colony of Rhodesia over the New Year weekend of 1895-96. It was led by Dr Jameson, a colonial administrator and close associate of Cecil Rhodes. The raid was intended to set off an uprising by mainly British expatriate workers, who had flocked to the Transvaal when gold was discovered, but whose rights were severely restricted by the Kruger régime. The raid was unsuccessful and no uprising took place (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

22 *Krugersdorp*: a town in the Transvaal on the road to Johannesburg where the Jameson raiders were halted on 1 January 1896 after an exchange of fire lasting several hours (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

23-24 *Dr Leyds's Secret Service*: Willem Johannes Leyds (1859-1940), a Dutch lawyer, was State Attorney (1884-89) and then Secretary of State of the Transvaal (1889-98). It was while he was State Secretary that he transformed the Transvaal secret service into one of the most extensive in the world. From 1898 to 1902, during a crucial period which covered the Boer War, he was Minister Plenipotentiary in Brussels, accredited to several European states (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>> and 3 July 2013 <<http://archive.org>>). Buchan had reviewed Leyds' book on British policy in South Africa for the *Spectator* in 1906 (**H117**).

28-30 *'He gives a day....which is saying much'*: a quotation from Blackburn and Caddells' book (266) which they attribute to a remark made to one of them by an unnamed close colleague of Dr Leyds (3 July 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

31 *the 'Third Raad'*: according to Blackburn and Caddell (219-20), the formal government of the Transvaal was carried on by two elected Houses, the First and Second Raads, together with an Executive headed by President Kruger. The 'Third Raad' was the informal name given to the small coterie of Kruger's friends who had no official status but wielded great influence by acting as self-appointed intermediaries between the Executive and anyone wishing to do business with it (3 July 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

33 *'graft'*: obtaining profit by dishonest or shady means, such as the abuse of a position of power or influence (*OED* 27 June 2013).

50 *a competency*: a sufficiency of the means of life in terms of assets and/or income (*OED* 27 June 2013).

53 *native trap-boys*: Blackburn and Caddell explain (41, 337) that these were native boys employed by the police to entrap illicit sellers by purchasing liquor from those suspected of supplying it (3 July 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

56-57 *scraping the plates of the battery*: in the extraction process described in Blackburn and Caddells' book (129), the stone containing the gold was crushed to a fine powder and washed onto large iron plates coated with quicksilver, which attracted the particles of gold in the powder. The process took up to a month, after which the amalgam of quicksilver and gold was peeled off the plates and the gold subsequently extracted by distillation. The

amalgam stolen by scraping the plates was worth about thirty shillings (£1.50) per ounce (3 July 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

58 Kimberley: founded in the late 1860s after the discovery of diamonds, Kimberley grew rapidly and was annexed to the British Cape Colony in 1877. It was the emerging city where Cecil Rhodes (see note below) made his fortune and founded the De Beers mining company in 1888 (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

58 Cecil Rhodes: British imperialist and founder of Rhodesia, who died in 1902 (*CBD* 7 February 2013).

59 the compound system: according to Blackburn and Caddell (328-31), the only practical way of stopping wholesale theft was to prevent the natives smuggling out the diamonds when they left the mines after each day's work. The compound system achieved this by confining the natives to the mines for their period of service. Any necessities they required could be obtained from stores operated by the mining company within the compound (3 July 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

62 Draconian: rigorous or harsh (derived from the severe code of laws established by Draco, a chief magistrate of Athens, in 621 BC) (*OED* 27 June 2013).

65 the Free State border: the Orange Free State was an independent Boer republic in southern Africa located between Transvaal to the north and the British Cape Colony to the south. Like the Transvaal, it was acquired by Britain after the Boer War and became a founding province of the Union of South Africa (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

73 the Rand: short for Witwatersrand, this is a region of southern Africa about sixty miles long and twenty-five miles wide, based around a ridge of gold-bearing rock, with Johannesburg near its centre (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

73 Pretoria: founded in 1855, this city became capital of the Transvaal in 1860. It is located close to Johannesburg and the Rand (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

75-76 the business of gun-running....an excellent novel: Douglas Blackburn's novel *Richard Hartley, Prospector* (1905) has a plot involving gun-running in the Transvaal (3 July 2013 <<http://www.unz.org>>).

76 Magato....the Zoutpansberg: Magato (also known as Magata or Makhado) was chief of the native tribes in the Zoutpansberg, the north eastern region of the Transvaal, during the period 1864-95 (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>> and 3 July 2013 <<http://dspace.nwu.ac.za>>).

77 calabash: a type of pumpkin, the hollow shell of which is used as a vessel for holding liquids or storing small objects (*OED* 27 June 2013).

81 kloof: a deep, narrow valley, or a ravine or gorge between mountains (*OED* 27 June 2013).

81 Zwaziland: see Article 7, note to line 46.

83 the Lebombo hills: a narrow range of mountains which stretch from north to south straddling the border between modern-day South Africa, Mozambique, and Swaziland (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

- 84** *the Kalahari*: a large area of semi-desert covering much of present-day Botswana and parts of Namibia and the north west area of South Africa (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).
- 91** *Kaffir*: see Article 7, note to line 1.
- 93** *kraals*: see Article 7, note to line 92.
- 95** *Lydenburg*: a town in eastern Transvaal founded in 1849 (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).
- 95-96** *Abel Erasmus....the 'Captain'....'Scotty' Smith*: all characters whose tales are related in Blackburn and Caddells' book at pages 85, 99, and 357 respectively (3 July 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).
- 96-97** *clarum, if not exactly venerabile, nomen*: an illustrious, if not exactly venerable, name (27 June 2013 <<http://www.answers.com>>).
- 99-100** *the mighty Scotsman....the Portuguese border*: this character is unidentified, but Buchan may be referring here to the 'Admiral', who is described by Blackburn and Caddell as 'another picturesque adventurer' (163) and was rumoured to be 'next heir to a Scottish baronetcy' (168) (3 July 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).
- 106** *Natal*: see Article 7, note to line 23.
- 106** *the second Matabele War*: this was fought during 1896-97 to put down a rebellion by the Matabele people against the authority of the British South Africa Company in their homeland in the west and south west region of modern-day Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia). The first Matabele War had been fought to quell unrest during 1893-94 (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).
- 108** *Buluwayo*: normally spelt Bulawayo, this was the capital of Matabeleland (see Article 7, note to line 59).
- 109** *Mombasa*: on the east coast of Africa in present-day Kenya, Mombasa in the late nineteenth century was an important port and trading centre, and the capital of the British East Africa Protectorate (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).
- 109** *the Uganda road*: Uganda became a British protectorate in 1893. It lies inland to the west of Kenya, and the road to it from Mombasa was an important route until construction of a railway was begun in 1896 (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).
- 110** *the Kikuyu territories*: the Kikuyu are the largest native ethnic group in Kenya, and their territories are centred in the region of Mount Kenya to the north of modern-day Nairobi (27 June 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).
- 122** *the Wa-kikuyu*: another name for the Kikuyu tribe (3 July 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

ARTICLE 18

'Montrose'

Spectator 108 (8 June 1912): 909-10. Review.

Mrs Hugh Pryce. *The Great Marquis of Montrose*.

Headnote

James Graham (1612-50), Marquis of Montrose, was one of the Scottish noblemen who signed the National Covenant in February 1638, which sought to maintain the Presbyterian religion in Scotland in the face of new reforms being imposed from England by Charles I and his Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud. The Covenant contained no direct attack upon the king's authority, but when it was formally adopted by the Scottish Parliament which met on 31 August 1639, conflict with the king became inevitable. By this time the Covenanters had become dominated by extreme religious views which Montrose could not support. He had been one of their leaders, but now he chose to maintain his loyalty to Charles, leaving the Covenanters to the leadership of his rival, the Duke of Argyll. Montrose later became the king's lieutenant-general in Scotland and led a campaign against the Covenanting armies in 1644-45, which was initially very successful. But he remained a controversial and mistrusted figure because he had left the Covenanting side, and therefore he could not achieve sufficient support within Scotland to maintain his military advantage. Eventual defeat led ultimately to his execution at Edinburgh in 1650 (*ODNB* 25 July 2013).

Montrose had been one of Buchan's childhood heroes, a fascination which grew while he was at Oxford and began to read into the Civil War period. This was supplemented by an interest in military history and the art of war which he acquired in South Africa, where he made acquaintance with many junior officers who had experience of the Boer War (*MHD* 41, 111, 197). All of these interests came together in *The Marquis of Montrose*, which was Buchan's first full-length historical biography. Most of the book was written after the early death of his younger brother, William, in November 1912, during a period when Buchan was resting in bed suffering from the first effects of the duodenal ulcer which was to plague him for the rest of his life (Smith, *Biography* 191).

It is possible that Buchan had begun writing his biography at the time of this review in June 1912, but he must at least have had the outline of his book clearly in mind when he came to the review. While he welcomes Mrs Pryce's book as 'the best popular life of Montrose', he paves the way for his own work by commenting that 'the great biography remains to be written' (lines 8-9). However, *The Marquis of Montrose* met with mixed reviews when it was published, and was particularly criticised for a lack of research and its romanticised bias towards Montrose and against his chief opponent, Argyll. Buchan responded by carrying out more research into original sources and eventually produced a new biography, *Montrose* (1928), which gave more detailed background to the period and provided a more balanced assessment of Montrose and his controversial relationship with the Covenanters and their religious politics.

Buchan also used his detailed research of the period to produce his historical novel *Witch Wood* (1927), in which Montrose makes a brief fictional appearance to influence the ideas and actions of the book's hero, David Sempill. Later, Buchan gave a lecture on 'Montrose and Leadership' at the University of St Andrews in 1930, which was published separately as a pamphlet and subsequently reprinted in *Men and Deeds* (1935).

MONTROSE

Of late years Montrose has come to his own. Mark Napier's volumes* began the process of illumination, and the works of Gardiner, Murdoch and Simpson, Mowbray Morris, and, not least, Mr. Andrew Lang* have completed it. No writer, whatever his bias, now questions the great Marquis's nobility of purpose any more than he questions his remarkable genius.

5 Carlyle's "Hero-Cavalier"* ranks among the very few stainless figures in our history. But the story cannot be told too often, and we welcome Mrs. Hugh Pryce's vigorous and skilful version. She has read widely and carefully among her authorities, and her love for her subject gives the narrative a pleasing enthusiasm. Her book deserves to rank as the best popular life of Montrose. But the great biography remains to be written. Mark Napier's
10 ponderous volumes are diffuse and uncritical, and, admirably as Gardiner and Mr. Lang have treated the question, it is only as an episode in a general history of the times. Now that we possess such ample evidence, is it too much to hope that some younger scholar will do for Montrose what has been done for Cromwell* and – the other day – for Ormonde,* and give us a complete study of a unique personality and a marvellous career? Such a
15 study should give us the different aspects in true proportion, the statesmanship as well as the military exploits; for the difficulty with a hero is that the glamour and the romance of his deeds are apt to blind us to things which, if less dramatic, are equally vital.

To Gardiner Montrose was a great soldier, but inferior to Argyll* in statesmanship. He was certainly inferior to Argyll in the tortuous intrigues which did duty for such in seventeenth-
20 century Scotland. But it seems to us that insufficient justice has been done to the far-seeing sagacity of Montrose's views. In the beginning of his career he wrote a paper on "Sovereignty," which is printed in Mark Napier's *Memoir*. It is well worth reading, for the views contained in it find no parallel till the days of Edward Burke.* He says that the supreme executive power may reside in a king, or a parliament, or a nobility, but it must
25 have some jealously preserved legal habitat. It cannot be shared, or anarchy will arrive. He is no sentimental monarchist. He admits that other forms of government have succeeded, but he thinks that for Britain a monarchy is best, provided it be limited by the laws of God, the laws of the land, and the rights of the people. He is as far from the divine-right view* as Cromwell himself. He looks at the whole question from the most practical standpoint. If
30 sovereignty is shared, he says, you will have too great power in the hands of subjects – Scotland was an awful warning* – and then will come lawlessness and then tyranny – the domination of the One. As he wrote, the One – in the shape of Cromwell – was commanding a troop in England. Montrose is the first great democrat that Scotland produced. He signed the National Covenant when it was a just and lawful protest against
35 royal interference with private rights. He was with the Covenanters when they stood for the people of Scotland; he left them when their cause became that of a selfish oligarchy of nobles and an intolerant Kirk. He maintained with perfect justice that he did not desert the Covenant – the Covenant deserted him. In that turbid seventeenth century, when men died for half-truths and glorious follies, Montrose stands out as a curiously modern figure.
40 He had no prejudices except in favour of honest government. The Scottish nobility, after their ancient fashion, were bent on fishing for their own interests in troubled waters. They were stalwart reactionaries who opposed the King as they had opposed every other king of Scotland, but who cared as little for the Scottish people as for the Ten Commandments. It was the same godly crew who after the Restoration were responsible for the barbarities of
45 the Killing Time.* The Kirk aimed at establishing a medieval theocracy and compelling England to subscribe to a creed to which nine-tenths of the English people were utterly hostile. Montrose stood for toleration, common sense, and pure government. "God forgive them!" he said of his opponents on the scaffold; "they have oppressed the poor and violently perverted judgment and justice."* His true avenger was Cromwell. When the

50 greatest of Englishmen marched North and scattered the Scots at Dunbar* he put into
practice what Montrose had preached. He declared that there might be "a covenant made
with death and hell,"* and his iron hand enforced tolerance and restored a little order and
prosperity to the distracted land. The Restoration, when the great Marquis's remains were
given stately burial in St. Giles's,* while his old enemy Argyll lay under sentence of death,
55 was far less of a vindication, for Montrose had as little in common with the Lauderdale
and the Middletons* and the rest of the Court rabble as he had with the Guthries and the
Warristons* of the Covenant. He had to wait for a century and a half before a school of
political thought arose to endorse his faith.

Montrose was by far the most modern man of his age, not only in views, but in
60 temperament. Sir George Mackenzie, the "Bloody Advocate," was also curiously modern,
as Mr. Lang* has pointed out; but he was a lawyer who sacrificed the spirit to the letter and
sank his convictions in a false loyalty. Montrose had no such taint. In the famous words of
his youth, his resolution always was "to carry along with me fidelity and honour to the
grave."* His peculiar distinction is that he combined serene reasonableness with a white-
65 hot enthusiasm. There were other moderate men, but they either fell out of the battle-
line, or, like Falkland,* fought sadly and despairingly. There were plenty of enthusiasts,
but, as a rule, they stood for a crude and unpractical creed. Montrose was armed and
mailed Reason, Philosophy with its sword drawn. He was not any kind of mystic or fanatic.
He saw life with terrible clearness, but his heart was stout enough to make him set about
70 the heartless business of reform with a boyish gallantry. And he never wavered.
Misfortunes which would have beaten another man to the earth only fired his courage. To
such a spirit the gods may send many trials, but they usually give what he most desires – a
worthy culmination. And certainly the last act in the great drama is the finest. At thirty-
eight he died with the lights down and the stage darkened, an end which not even
75 Raleigh's* surpassed. The Edinburgh mob,* violently hostile, were awed into silence by the
nobility of his presence. Argyll did not dare to meet his eye. His last words breathed the
truest Christian spirit of gentleness and peace. "He stept along the street with so great
state," wrote an eye-witness, "and there appeared in his countenance so much beauty,
majesty, and gravity as amazed the beholders. And many of his enemies did acknowledge
80 him to be the bravest subject in the world."*

His positive achievement is, of course, to be found in his campaigns. Foreign observers
considered him the greatest soldier of his day, and it is difficult to think them wrong. He
was certainly superior to Cromwell in all the higher developments of strategy and tactics.
When, at the age of thirty-two, he raised the Royal Standard* on the Braes of Atholl he had
85 a following of Irish levies and Highland volunteers far inferior, both in numbers and
equipment, to any one of the armies which surrounded him. He took them singly, and by
lightning strokes destroyed them all. He beat Elcho at Tippermuir, and then, marching
swiftly to the north, took Aberdeen and drove off Argyll at Fyvie. His Highland following
compelled him to invade the Campbell country, and it seemed that he was caught in a trap,
90 for Argyll with a superior force lay behind him at the head of Loch Linnhe. Baillie held
Perth, and Seaforth waited to cut him off at Inverness. By a flank march, which is one of
the great exploits in our history, he turned east into the wild mountains around the Spean,
and by forced marches through icy glens fell upon Argyll at Inverlochy and all but
annihilated his army. The right course was to have marched south, but he could not get his
95 Highlanders to follow him, so he was compelled to continue a desultory campaign north of
the Forth. His retreat from Dundee when he evaded Hurrie in the darkness is, from a
military point of view, one of the most marvellous of his feats. Then came more fighting
north of the Grampians, when he defeated Hurrie at Auldearn and Baillie at Alford, and,
marching south, scattered the forces of the Covenant at Kilsyth. After that his levies

100 melted away, in the fashion of Highland volunteers. He tried to join hands with the King in
England, but the Border lords played him false, and his few hundred troops were surprised
and broken by Leslie at Philiphaugh. Philiphaugh was not a battle, for Montrose had at the
most six hundred weary men, and Leslie had six thousand veterans. In every other fight
where he had any semblance of a force he proved himself invincible. He never
105 commanded anything approaching a regular army; he was always hampered by lack of
supplies and clan jealousies, and he fought always against immense odds. There are few
campaigns in the world's history to match it. Montrose is probably the greatest soldier that
Scotland has produced. We cannot judge fairly the work of Wallace and Bruce,* and
among soldiers who fought under modern conditions it is difficult to see who can be put
110 above him. Not Marshal Macdonald* or Frederick the Great's general, Keith*; not any of
the excellent Scottish soldiers who have fought in British wars, though Sir John Moore* – if
he had lived and if we can call him a Scotsman – might have run him close. Montrose
seems to us to be the only Scotsman who comes near that select inner circle of supreme
military talent which among men of our race shows no other names than Marlborough*
115 and Wellington.*

Footnotes

1 *Mark Napier's volumes*: the lawyer and historian Mark Napier (1798-1879) published *Montrose and the Covenanters* (1838), *Life and Times of Montrose* (1840), and *Memorials of Montrose and his Times*, a two-volume edited collection of original documents (1848, 1850). These were followed by a summation, *Memoirs of the Marquis of Montrose* (2 vols. 1856) (ODNB 9 July 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

2-3 *the works of Gardiner....Andrew Lang*: these appear to be Samuel Rawson Gardiner's *The Great Civil War* (3 vols., first published 1886-91); Alexander Murdoch and HF Morland Simpson's edition of George Wishart's *The Memoirs of James, Marquis of Montrose* (1893); Mowbray Morris' *Montrose* (1892); and Andrew Lang's *A History of Scotland from the Roman Occupation, vol.iii* (1904) (ODNB 9 July 2013 and Buchan, *Montrose* (1928): xiii-xiv). Buchan had reviewed Lang's book, which covers seventeenth century Scotland, for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1904 (**D15**).

5 *Carlyle's 'Hero-Cavalier'*: the historian Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) gave a series of six lectures in May 1840 which were subsequently published as *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*. Lecture VI, 'The Hero as King', contained his assessment of Montrose as 'the noblest of all the Cavaliers....what one may call the Hero-Cavalier' (New York: Frederick A Stokes, 1888: 254) (9 July 2013 <<http://www.questia.com>>).

13 *what has been done for Cromwell*: Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658). Buchan probably has in mind here the third volume of Samuel Rawson Gardiner's *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649-1660*, which he had reviewed for the *Spectator* in 1901 (**D5**) and had considered to be a significant contribution towards the historical rehabilitation of Cromwell.

13 *Ormonde*: the Duke of Ormonde (1610-88) was a leading soldier and administrator under both Charles I and II (*CBD* 9 July 2013). Buchan is referring here to the recently published biography of Ormonde by Lady Burghclere, which he reviewed for the *Spectator* the following week (**C80**).

18 *Argyll*: the Duke of Argyll (1598-1661), chief of the Campbells, a powerful West Highland clan. He was a leading opponent of Montrose, but was heavily defeated by him at the battle of Inverlochy in 1645 (*CBD* 9 July 2013).

23 *Edward Burke*: a misprint for *Edmund Burke* (1729-97), the statesman and philosopher (*CBD* 9 July 2013). The misprint is rather surprising given Buchan's high regard for Burke's political philosophy (he confesses to being 'a devotee' in his memoirs – *MHD* 92).

28 *the divine-right view*: this is a theory of kingship, held by Charles I at the time of the Civil War, that the monarch is subject to no earthly authority, but derives his right to rule solely from the will of God. Any attempt to depose the king or restrict his powers therefore infringes his divine right (9 July 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

31 *Scotland was an awful warning*: a reference to the religious strife in seventeenth century Scotland which turned to violence after the adoption of the National Covenant by the Scottish Parliament in 1639 (see headnote). During the Civil War of the 1640s the Covenanters, through their General Assembly, were the *de facto* government of Scotland and became more extreme in their aims for a Protestant state and Presbyterian rule (9 July 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

45 *the Killing Time*: with the restoration of Charles II in 1660 the tide turned against the Covenanters (see note above) and they came to be persecuted, especially after the accession of the Catholic James II in 1685, when Covenanters throughout Scotland were hunted down by government troops. This period of violent persecution in the 1680s came to be known as 'the Killing Time' (9 July 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

47-49 *'God forgive them...judgment and justice'*: this quotation is from Montrose's speech on the scaffold when he was publicly hanged in 1650. The full speech is given in Buchan's *Montrose* (1928): 376-77, where Buchan also notes his sources.

50 *Dunbar*: at the battle of Dunbar on 3 September 1650 the English Parliamentary forces under Oliver Cromwell decisively defeated a Scottish army commanded by Sir David Leslie (9 July 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

51-52 *'a covenant made with death and hell'*: a month before the battle of Dunbar, Cromwell sent a letter from Musselburgh dated 3 August 1650 to the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland (the *de facto* Scottish government – see note to line 31) which sought to persuade them that their extreme support for the Covenant was leading the Scottish people astray. It contained the famous line: 'I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken', and argued that, in the Kirk's extreme views: 'There may be a Covenant made with Death and Hell', which Buchan quotes here (9 July 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>> and <<http://www.olivercromwell.org>>).

54 *St Giles's*: a Cathedral on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh. Montrose had been executed in Edinburgh in May 1650, but after the restoration of Charles II his remains were given a state burial at St Giles's in May 1661 (*CBD* 9 July 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

55-56 *the Lauderdales and the Middletons*: John Maitland (1616-82), Duke of Lauderdale, was a Scottish statesman and ardent monarchist who became Scottish Secretary at the Restoration. John Middleton (c1608-74), first Earl of Middleton, was a Scottish army major-general who opposed Montrose but later became an active supporter of the royal cause (*CBD* and *ODNB* 9 July 2013).

56-57 *the Guthries and the Warristons*: James Guthrie (c1612-61), Presbyterian minister, and Sir Archibald Johnston (c1611-63) of Wariston (not Warriston as printed here), lawyer and politician, were among the extreme religious leaders of the Covenanters (*ODNB* 25 July 2013). In his *Montrose* (1928) Buchan refers to Guthrie as 'lean and fanatical', and Wariston as 'obstinate and crack-brained' (89).

60-61 *Sir George Mackenzie....Mr Lang*: Mackenzie (1636-91) was a Scottish lawyer who became the King's Advocate in 1677 and led the persecution of the Covenanters in Scotland, for which he earned the unpopular names of the 'Bloody Advocate' or, in Scotland, 'Bluidy Mackenzie' (CBD 9 July 2013). Here Buchan refers to Andrew Lang's biography of Mackenzie which he had reviewed for *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Spectator* in March 1909 (C47 and C48). Buchan also gave the name of 'The Bluidy Mackenzie' to Archie Roylance's dog in *John Macnab* (1925).

63-64 *'to carry along....to the grave'*: this quotation is from Montrose's statements before the Scottish Parliament in July 1641 when he was being questioned about his involvement in a secret plot against Argyll (see note to line 18) and unauthorised negotiations with the king, Charles I. Montrose was later released without charge after spending five months imprisoned in Edinburgh castle (CBD 9 July 2013). Buchan includes the quotation and notes its source in his *Montrose* (1928): 130.

66 *Falkland*: Lucius Carey (c1609-43), second Viscount Falkland, English statesman and writer. He reluctantly took the king's side in the Civil War and was killed at the battle of Newbury in September 1643 (ODNB 9 July 2013).

75 *Raleigh's*: Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618), the famous Elizabethan explorer, whose end was to be beheaded (CBD 9 July 2013).

75 *The Edinburgh mob*: the large crowd which gathered at Montrose's public execution (see note to lines 47-49).

77-80 *'he stept along the street....the bravest subject in the world'*: the eye-witness was James Fraser (1634-1709), minister of the parish of Wardlaw in Inverness, and his description is quoted in Buchan's *Montrose* (1928): 375. The source is the 1905 edition of the *Chronicles of the Frasers: the Wardlaw Manuscript* by James Fraser: 359 (1 August 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

84 *he raised the Royal Standard*: here Buchan begins a long summary of Montrose's military campaign in Scotland on behalf of Charles I, which began at the town of Blair Atholl in the Highlands in August 1644 and ended with his eventual defeat at the battle of Philliphaugh, near Selkirk, in September 1645 (CBD 9 July 2013, and 25 July 2013 <<http://www.british-civil-wars.co.uk>>).

108 *Wallace and Bruce*: William Wallace (c1274-1305) and Robert Bruce (1274-1329), heroes of the long Scottish War of Independence, which eventually ended in 1328 when Edward III of England recognised Scottish independence and Bruce's right to the throne of Scotland (CBD 9 July 2013).

110 *Marshal Macdonald*: Jacques Macdonald (1765-1840), the French son of a Scottish schoolmaster, had a very successful career in the French army and became one of Napoleon's marshals (CBD 9 July 2013).

110 *Frederick the Great's general, Keith*: James Keith (1696-1758) came from a family who had held the hereditary office of Great Marischal of Scotland since the twelfth century. After taking part in the Jacobite rising of 1715 he escaped to the Continent where he became a Spanish colonel, a Russian major-general, and finally, in 1747, a Prussian field-marshal in the service of Frederick the Great. He was killed in battle during the Seven Years' War (ODNB 25 July 2013).

111 *Sir John Moore*: born in Glasgow in 1761, he distinguished himself as a soldier during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, rising to the rank of general. Facing superior French forces in Spain in December 1808 he retreated to Corunna, where he managed to defeat the French in January 1809, but was killed in the moment of victory (CBD 9 July 2013).

114 *Marlborough*: John Churchill (1650-1722), first Duke of Marlborough, the English general best known for his victories at Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13) (CBD 9 July 2013).

115 *Wellington*: Arthur Wellesley (1769-1852), first Duke of Wellington, commanded the British forces in the Peninsular War against the French (1808-14), and is most famous for his victory over Napoleon at Waterloo in June 1815. He had a subsequent career in politics and was Prime Minister in 1828-30 and 1834 (CBD 9 July 2013).

ARTICLE 19

'Ypres To-day'

Times 22 May 1915: 9d-e. Signed.

Headnote

At the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Buchan was approaching his thirty-ninth birthday and continuing to suffer from problems associated with his duodenal ulcer. He tried to join the army but was rejected on grounds of age and health. Then his work for Nelson's the publishers provided him with an opportunity to make his own contribution to the war effort. Much of Nelson's business in continental Europe was lost when war broke out and needed to be replaced, because the firm could not allow its printing plant in Edinburgh to fall idle. It therefore decided to produce two magazines to record the events of the war as it progressed. The first was a cheap weekly called *The War*, with an editorial by Buchan, who also contributed occasional articles, but this ceased publication in March 1915 due to intense competition from rival magazines. The second was *Nelson's History of the War*, a more considered and authoritative journal written almost entirely by Buchan, which was more successful and continued publication throughout the conflict (Smith, *Biography* 192-93; Macdonald, 'Translating Propaganda' 183).

Meanwhile, Buchan's early war writing led to him giving a number of lectures for charities in Edinburgh and London on the course of the war. Some of those in London were attended by professional soldiers, including General Sir Francis Lloyd⁹, who were impressed by his clear grasp of strategy and ability to explain complex tactics. As a result, Buchan started to gain a reputation in this field, which led to him being appointed by the *Times* as its special correspondent at the Second Battle of Ypres in May 1915 (Smith, *Biography* 194). 'Ypres To-day' is one of six eye-witness reports Buchan despatched for the *Times* in May (**I 71-76**), which were followed by a long summary article in July (**I 79**). He returned to the Western Front for the *Times* in late September to file four further reports on the Battle of Loos (**I 81-84**).

The Second Battle of Ypres was fought in the spring of 1915 for control of this strategic town in western Belgium, which had been successfully defended by the Allies in the First Battle the previous autumn. By early 1915 the Allied lines bulged out eastwards around Ypres in an area known as the Ypres salient. The Second Battle consisted of a series of German attacks on the Allied trenches at various points along this salient, together with a prolonged bombardment of Ypres itself in an attempt to destroy the town and render it useless to the Allies. The battle began on 22 April with a German attack using chlorine gas, the first time that chemical warfare was used on a large scale on the Western Front. Buchan arrived in mid-May during a lull in the German attacks, and in this report he is able to visit the town and describe the effects of the German bombardment. His later dispatches describe some of the British counter-attacks towards the end of the month. By then the battle was beginning to peter out. The Germans had managed to reduce the size of the Ypres salient, so that Ypres itself was closer to the front line, but they failed to take

⁹ Lloyd was General Officer Commanding London District, which made him responsible for the defence of London during the war (9 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Buchan came to know him well in their work for war charities, and dedicated his novel *The Power-House* to him when it was reissued as a piece of light reading for the troops in May 1916, after the success of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 137).

the town, though their continued shelling eventually reduced it to almost complete ruin (9 August 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

YPRES TO-DAY

Yesterday the villages of Poperinghe and Vlamertinghe* were heavily shelled and the Ypres road made unwholesome travelling. But to-day there was a lull in the cannonade, and it was possible to make a push for Ypres and the salient beyond it. After two days of rain the dust was laid, and the land, scoured by a north wind, looked very fresh and green.

5 Civil life goes on up to the very edge of the fire zone. In the hamlets girls sit outside their doors busy at lacemaking; the country people are at work in the fields, and children are playing round the cottages. The roads beyond the fire zone are alive with troops – battered battalions that have returned from the trenches; cavalry with their horses; French infantry of the line and *chasseurs-à-pied*,* for the French front on the canal is only a few
10 miles off. Belgian working parties are engaged repairing the roads, which need it badly; numbers of motor-lorries and converted London omnibuses move along below the poplars, and motor dispatch-riders twist in and out among the traffic. A little farther back is the car of the Commander-in-Chief, for Sir John French* is to address some of the battalions engaged in the recent fighting. The road is as busy as Piccadilly-circus. And then suddenly
15 you pass out of this wholesome bustle through the fire zone and into a place of the dead.

It is not healthy to linger at the cross-roads or the level crossing at the entrance to Ypres, for these are places of which the Germans have the exact range. Before you is a square tower which looks quite normal, and the grouping of masonry around it seems natural and ordinary. But as soon as you enter the *faubourg** of little houses you realize that you are in
20 a shattered world. The red cottages are riddled and roofless; the asylum opposite has had its front blown off; a water tower has a shell hole in the middle of it. Presently you are in the main street, with the Cathedral at the head of it. The street lies white and empty in the sun, and over all reigns a deathly stillness. There is not a human being to be seen in all its length, and the houses which contain it are skeletons.

25 Here the whole front has gone and bedrooms with wrecked furniture are open to the light. Here a 42cm. shell has made a breach in the line with raw edges of masonry on both sides and a yawning cavern below. Go into one of the houses which have suffered least. In one room the carpet is spattered with plaster from the ceiling, but the furniture is unbroken. There is a Boule cabinet* with china, red plush chairs, a piano, and a gramophone – the
30 plenishing* of the best parlour of a middle-class home. In another room is a sewing machine, from which the owner has fled in the middle of a piece of work. Here is a novel with the reader's place marked. It is like a city which has been visited by an earthquake which caught the inhabitants unaware and drove them shivering to seek a place of refuge.

Through the gaps in the houses there are glimpses of greenery. Push open this broken
35 door and you enter a garden – a carefully-tended garden, for the grass has been once trimly kept and the owner must have had a pretty taste in spring flowers. A little fountain still splashes in a stone basin. But at one corner an incendiary shell has fallen on the house, and in the heap of charred *débris* there are human remains. Most of the dead have been removed, but there are still bodies in out-of-the-way corners. Over all hangs a sickening
40 smell of decay, against which the lilacs and hawthorns are powerless. That garden is no place to tarry in.

From the street you enter the Place, where stand the great Church of St. Martin and the Cloth Hall. Those who knew Ypres before the war will remember the pleasant façades of shops on the south side, and the cluster of old Flemish buildings at the north-eastern
45 corner. There are no words to describe the devastation of these houses. Of the southern side nothing remains but a file of gaunt gables. At the north-east corner if you crawl across the rubble you will find the remnants of some beautiful old mantelpiece. Stand in the middle of the Place and you will be oppressed by the utter silence. Some jackdaws are cawing from the ruins and a painstaking starling is rebuilding its nest in a broken pinnacle.
50 An old cow, a miserable object, is poking her head in the *débris* and sniffing curiously at the dead body of a horse. But these sounds only intensify the stillness, and it is well, for sound is a profanation in this tomb which was once a city.

The Cloth Hall has lost all its arcades, most of its front, and there are great rents everywhere. Its spire looks like a badly whittled stick, and the big gilt clock with its hands
55 irrevocably fixed hangs loose on a jet of stone.* Through the gaps one sees the bad modern frescoes on the further walls. St. Martin's Church is a ruin, and its stately square spire is nicked and dented* till it seems as if a strong wind would topple it over. Inside the church is a weird sight. Most of the windows have gone, and the famous rose window in the southern transept* lacks a segment. The side chapels are in ruins, the floor is deep in
60 fallen stones, but the pillars still stand, and one can realize the noble lines of the building. No damage has been done to the fine Renaissance reredos.* A mass for the dead must have been in progress, for the altar is still draped in black, but the altar stone is cracked across. The sacristy* is full of vestments and candlesticks tumbled together in haste, and all are covered with yellow picric dust* from the high explosives. In the graveyard behind
65 there is a huge shell crater, 60ft. across and 20ft. deep, with human bones exposed in the sides. Before the main door there is a curious piece of irony. An empty pedestal proclaims from its four sides the many virtues of a certain Belgian statesman, who was also Mayor of Ypres.* The worthy Mayor is lying in the dust beside it, a fat man in a frockcoat with side whiskers and a face like Bismarck.*

70 Out in the sunlight there is the first sign of human life. A detachment of French colonial *tirailleurs** enters from the north – brown men in fantastic weather-stained uniforms. A vehicle is at the Cathedral door, and a lean and sad-faced priest is loading it with some of the church treasures, chalices, plate, embroideries. A Carmelite friar* comes up with news of some dead in a side street. Slowly under constant shell fire we are getting on with the
75 work of clearing of the ruins. The dead beasts have been mostly burned and the dead citizens buried, and in this cold wind there is a good chance of staving off disease.

The ruins of old buildings are so familiar that they do not at first arrest the imagination. Far more arresting are the ruins of the pitiful little homes, where there is no dignity but a pathos which cries aloud. Ypres is like a city destroyed by an earthquake; that is the
80 simplest and truest description. But the skeletons of her great buildings, famous in Europe for 500 years, leave another impression. You feel, as at Pompeii,* that things have always been so; you feel that they are verily indestructible they are so great in their fall. The cloak of St. Martin is not needed to cover the nakedness of his church. There is a terrible splendour about these gaunt and broken figures, these noble shattered façades, which
85 defies their destroyers. Ypres may be empty and a ruin, but to the end of time she will be no mean city.

All the same I was glad to get out of that charnel house.* About the Menin gate* it is unwise to tarry, for the German guns have the range to a foot, and this is a favoured place for their punctual shells. On the right is the spire of St. Jacques lacking one of its pinnacles,

90 and then you cross the moat and reach the open country. That moat is the Ypres Canal, where the French are fighting farther north. It comes from the Yser, and south of Ypres runs to the Lys past the corner at Klein Zillebeke, which was the German objective last November.*

We are now on the greatest of our battle-fields, where every yard has been fought over. In
95 appearance the country is very like rural England – red-roofed farms and cottages, little straggling villages, and masses of lilac, may, and laburnum everywhere. Only everything is broken. A wayside cottage has been so tattered by shot that it looks like a skeleton autumn leaf, and from its rickety shade emerges a gnome-like private in the Army Service Corps, who makes precisely the right human counterpart. Once we held all the ground to
100 Zonnebeke* and beyond, but now the salient is shrunk and our front is only some two or three miles from Ypres. There lies the wood where our headquarters were shelled on October 31, when General Lomax* received his fatal wound and five Staff officers were killed. Away beyond is a low ridge, and on this side half a mile off are our trenches. Beyond the ridge are the Württembergers.*

105 If Ypres was silent, this place is a pandemonium of sound. Shell fire has been described so often that all epithets have become banal, and it is simplest to say that it never appears to stop. Now and again comes a report so sharp that it seems to be at one's ear. The British soldier has his own terminology for the different kinds of shell – "pip-squeak," "whizz-bang," "little Willy," "white hope," "white swan," "mother," "grandmother," "Archie," and
110 many others. Most of them seem to be going on now, but I do not think "grandmother" (the biggest howitzer) is talking, and I fail to detect "Archie" (the anti-aircraft gun).

There are various kinds of headquarters. There is the pleasant house in a street of an ancient town many miles to the westward. There is the château in a neglected park – a
115 very common type – and for the brigadier in the Hell of a fight there is the dug-out. There you will see the smartest of leaders, men whose names are on everybody's lips and whom you last met at a London dinner-party, dragging himself from an underground lair like a badger's earth. The Germans are always on the look-out for headquarters on which to drop their shells, and they have their snipers – forest-rangers from South Germany – on every knuckle of ground, so it is not wise to move about much in the open or in groups in
120 these parts. A party of stretcher-bearers are bringing in the dead of the morning. Under the blossoming domes of the chestnuts are many graves with their simple wooden crosses; one was laid open this morning by a shell. In a corner lie two officers who fell in the great fight of the cavalry last Thursday.* A man becomes almost inured to reading in the casualty lists of the death of friends, and except in the case of the most intimate there is no
125 acute realization. But to see, half a mile from where they fell, the new graves of men one had known in the pride of youth and strength is to awake with a shock to the desolation of war.

Any man who journeys from the Base to the actual front must be impressed with the immense and complex mechanism of modern armies. At first it seems like a gigantic
130 business concern, a sort of magnified combine. Fifty miles off we are manufacturing on a colossal scale, and men are suffering from industrial ailments as they suffer in dangerous trades at home. There are more mechanics than in Sheffield, more transport-workers than in Newcastle. But all this mechanism seems to me to resemble a series of pyramids which taper to a point as they near the front. Behind, are the great general hospitals and
135 convalescent homes; then come the clearing hospitals; then the main dressing stations; and last of all the advanced and regimental dressing stations, where mechanism fails you. Behind are the huge transport depots and repairing shops; the daily trains to railheads; the

supply columns and last the handcarts to carry ammunition to the firing line. Behind are the railways and the mechanical transport, but at the end a man has only his two legs.
140 Behind are the workshops of the Flying Corps and the squadron and flight stations, but at the end of the chain is the solitary aeroplane coasting over the German lines and depending upon the skill and nerve of one man.

This is the most highly organized and mechanical war ever fought. All modern science has gone to the making of it. But in the last resort you get to the human factor, the fighting
145 man, who, in spite of every artificial aid, depends upon the same qualities which gained victory in the days of bows and arrows. Here is a tale which may be untrue, but which is well vouched for, and will serve as a parable. When Ypres was first bombarded early in November we withdrew our troops from the town, but we did not remove the civil population.

150 There was one British private who did not leave with the rest, for he was asleep in a cellar. Next morning he awoke to find Ypres without any authority, and, misliking that, he set about governing it himself. He kept the citizens under an iron discipline, had looters shot at sight, and, though himself inclined to the bottle, prevented drunkenness in others. They called him *le Roi d'Ypres*,* but his kingship lasted only for a week. A callous Court-martial
155 tried him, found that his efforts in the cause of order had been good, and forgave him his other delinquencies. I take the doings of the not wholly reputable and probably mythical British private as emblematic of a certain governing and winning quality in our race. Mechanize war to the uttermost and the human factor will still remain and will still – granted a reasonable equality in equipment – determine the issue. In all humility one may
160 believe – and the past months give warrant for the faith – that in the human factor we have the better of the enemy.

Footnotes

1 *Poperinghe and Vlamertinghe*: Poperinghe is a large village about six miles west of Ypres. Vlamertinghe is a smaller village which lies about half-way on the road between Poperinghe and Ypres (9 August 2013 <<http://www.wwlbattlefields.co.uk>> and <<http://1914-18.invisionzone.com>>).

9 *chasseurs-à-pied*: originally the elite light infantrymen of the French Imperial Army, specially trained to excel in marksmanship and rapid manoeuvres. By the early twentieth century they had been absorbed as a corps into the main infantry, but continued to be distinguished by their special uniforms and insignia (9 August 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

13 *Sir John French*: British soldier (1852-1925), who rose to the rank of Field-Marshal and held supreme command of the British Expeditionary Force in France, 1914-15. He took the title Earl of Ypres after the war (CBD 9 August 2013).

19 *faubourg*; a suburb of a town or city (OED 9 August 2013).

29 *Boule cabinet*: an ornamental type of wooden cabinet, correctly spelt Boulle, named after the French cabinet-maker André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732) (OED 9 August 2013).

30 *plenishing*: household furnishings (OED 9 August 2013).

55 *jet of stone*: a protruding piece of stone (OED 9 August 2013) from the damaged spire.

57 *nicked and dented*: cut into and dented (*OED* 9 August 2013) by the impact of shells and shrapnel.

59 *transept*: the transverse part of a cruciform church, divided into north and south transepts either side of the nave (*OED* 9 August 2013).

61 *reredos*: an ornamental screen of stone or wood covering the wall at the back of the altar (*OED* 9 August 2013).

63 *sacristy*: the room of a church, now usually called the vestry, in which the priestly robes (vestments), sacred vessels, and other valuable property are kept (*OED* 9 August 2013).

64 *picric dust*: the residue from the yellow crystalline picric acid used in the manufacture of explosives (*OED* 9 August 2013).

67-68 *a certain Belgian statesman, who was also Mayor of Ypres*: this is almost certainly Alphonse Vandenpeereboom (1812-84), a Belgian liberal politician, Minister of the Interior and Minister of State, who was Mayor of Ypres in 1859. His statue was erected in 1892. It has now been replaced by a bust on a tall pedestal outside St Martin's Church in Ypres (9 August 2013 <<http://nl.wikipedia.org>> and <<http://www.flicker.com>>).

69 *Bismarck*: the Prussian statesman (1815-98) who was Chancellor of Germany 1871-90 (*CBD* 9 August 2013).

71 *tirailleurs*: infantry soldiers trained for independent action as sharpshooters and skirmishers (*OED* 9 August 2013).

73 *Carmelite friar*: a member of an order of white-cloaked Roman Catholic friars which originated in the twelfth century from a colony founded on Mount Carmel in modern-day Israel (*OED* 9 August 2013).

81 *Pompeii*: the ancient Roman city near modern Naples which was mostly destroyed by the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD (9 August 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

87 *charnel house*: a place where corpses or the bones of the dead are deposited (*OED* 9 August 2013).

87 *the Menin gate*: the eastern entrance to Ypres and the starting point for one of the main roads that led Allied soldiers out to the front line. Today the Menin Gate Memorial stands at this point, dedicated to the British and Commonwealth soldiers who were killed in the Ypres salient and whose graves are unknown (9 August 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

92-93 *Klein Zillebeke....last November*: Klein Zillebeke was a small village on the south eastern outskirts of Ypres, which has since been absorbed into Ypres itself. Between 1 and 11 November 1914, during the First Battle of Ypres, British troops successfully defended the village against a German assault, thereby playing a major part in preventing a German breakthrough to the Channel Ports which threatened British supply lines from the coast (9 August 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

100 *Zonnebeke*: a village some four miles to the north west of Ypres, situated in the centre of the Ypres salient (9 August 2014 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

102 *General Lomax*: Lieutenant-General Samuel Lomax (1855-1915), who commanded the 1st Division during the early battles of the war. He never recovered from the serious

wounds he received from the shelling on 31 October 1914, and died in England on 10 April 1915, one of the most senior British officers to be killed on active service during the war (9 August 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

104 *the Württembergers*: correctly spelt Württembergers, this is a German army corps which originated as the army of the kingdom of Württemberg, but was integrated into the Imperial German Army in 1871 (9 August 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

122-23 *the great fight of the cavalry last Thursday*: Buchan's despatch is dated Thursday 20 May, so he is referring here to the battle of Frezenberg Ridge, a German offensive on the British lines around Frezenberg village on the road between Ypres and Zonnebeke (see note to line 100). The assault had culminated a week earlier on Thursday 13 May with a break-in on the front held by the 7th Cavalry Brigade. The attack was eventually repelled and the situation restored, but at such heavy cost in casualties to the Germans' offensive that their operations were halted (9 August 2013 <<http://www.cwgc.org>>).

154 *le Roi d'Ypres*: the King of Ypres, the title of a subsequent Buchan short story based on this episode, first published in the Christmas 1915 edition of the *Illustrated London News*.

ARTICLE 20

'A New Defence of Poetry'

Spectator 129 (8 July 1922): 47-48. Review. Signed.

A Williams-Ellis. *An Anatomy of Poetry*.

Headnote

The author of the book under review is Annabel Strachey, daughter of the owner and editor of the *Spectator*, St Loe Strachey. She had been an early member of the Bloomsbury group to which her cousin, Lytton Strachey, also belonged. In July 1915 she married the architect, Clough Williams-Ellis, best known for his creation of the romantic Italianate village of Portmeirion in North Wales, which was begun in 1925. Taking her husband's surname, Annabel Williams-Ellis had earlier collaborated with him in writing a history of the tank corps, in which he had been an intelligence officer during the First World War. This had been published in 1919 and was reviewed by Buchan in the *Spectator* (I 101). They subsequently collaborated on a number of other books, mainly concerning the preservation of the built environment and the need for effective town and country planning in Britain (ODNB 27 August 2013).

This review is extremely unusual for any article by Buchan in the *Spectator* in that it is headed 'Communicated'. Throughout the period that Buchan was writing for the journal, every issue carried a notice printed in italics at the end of the Letters section, which stated that when articles were marked 'Communicated':

the Editor must not necessarily be held to be in agreement with the views therein expressed or with the mode of expression. In such instances, as in the case of 'Letters to the Editor', insertion only means that the matter or point of view is considered of sufficient interest and importance to warrant publication.

In the case of this article the editor, St Loe Strachey, may be using the 'Communicated' heading to indicate the independence of the review to those of his readers who knew that the book was written by his daughter. The point that this is a personal review rather than one influenced by the *Spectator's* editorial policy is emphasised by the fact that the article is signed by Buchan, who gives his opinions throughout using the personal pronoun 'I' rather than following the normal *Spectator* house style of 'we' whenever direct opinions are expressed. The same treatment had been accorded to *The Tank Corps* by Clough and Annabel Williams-Ellis when Buchan reviewed it in 1919: the article was marked 'Communicated' and was personally signed by Buchan.

However, in the case of this review of *An Anatomy of Poetry* the 'Communicated' heading may also be an indication that, by praising the modernism of the new poets and casting doubt upon the more extreme conservative critiques of contemporary poetry, Buchan was writing against the grain of the editorial policy adopted by St Loe Strachey in the *Spectator*. In this respect it is significant that the only other Buchan article to carry the 'Communicated' heading, out of some eight hundred that he wrote for the *Spectator*, was 'The Forgotten Chapters of *The Wealth of Nations*' (J25). This article criticised the tactics of the Free Trade advocates in the pre-War controversy over tariff reform and Protection, and went against the wishes of Strachey, who had been a staunch supporter of Free Trade, a view he wanted reflected in the editorial policy of the *Spectator*. He had specifically emphasised this point when offering Buchan a permanent position on the journal in 1904

after his return from South Africa: he would be expected to adopt 'an aggressive Free Trade attitude....to carry the war into the enemy's country' (letter to Buchan dated 21 May 1904, quoted in Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 88). So, in the case of this article, the 'Communicated' heading may not just be a case of Strachey distancing himself from a review of his daughter's book to avoid accusations of bias; it may also be an indication of his disapproval of Buchan's views.

A NEW DEFENCE OF POETRY

I hesitate whether to call Mrs. Williams-Ellis's book a new defence of poetry or a defence of the new poetry, for it is both. There are two very deep pitfalls for those who practise the business of criticism – to believe that the last word must be the truest word, the pit into which the *déraciné** tumbles, and to hold that the new must be the second-rate, which is
5 the bourne* of the conservative. I do not know in which hole the mire is more deplorable, and strait is the path* between them. On the whole, I think the conservative is the more in the wrong; the perverse modern has at least a creed which he must defend by argument and is aggressively alive and snuffing the wind, whereas the other is, in a manner of speaking, dead. But I willingly grant that the foolish iconoclast is the more irritating of the
10 two with his preposterous assumption that wisdom began with him. Both, as Alice said of the Walrus and the Carpenter, are unpleasant people,* but it is uncommonly easy to imitate them. The danger is, perhaps, most acute in the sphere of poetry. It is unwise to be harsh to a poet who may some day build Babylon with a song,* and it is right to applaud even merit in embryo; on the other hand, experience reminds us that most ugly ducklings
15 are just ugly ducklings and not swans.

A defence of poetry, with glances at its modern practitioners, demands, therefore, a delicate course between "right-hand waverings and left-hand backslidings."* In the first and most important of the tasks she has set herself, Mrs. Williams-Ellis is completely successful. Having a wide knowledge of poetry and a great power of enjoying it, she asks
20 herself what is the specific pleasure it gives her; and, finding the conventional answers unsatisfying, she makes for herself a fresh analysis. The book is not a technical treatise with a recapitulation of doctrines from Aristotle* to Croce.* Its author begins at the other end; she interprets what philosophers call the "ordinary consciousness" – which is right, for joy in good poetry is spread in the widest commonalty. I have rarely read anything on the
25 subject more sane and illuminating than the first hundred pages. Mrs. Williams-Ellis derives her canon of judgment from a wide reading and a catholic* sense of beauty, and she justifies it by a reasoning which shows at once a rare acumen and the strongest good sense. I would especially commend her excellent illustrations, which are generally homely and sometimes surprising, but always exactly to the point. There is a total absence of
30 formalism and pedantry in these chapters, and she has mercifully spared us the dreary clichés of Aesthetic,* and, though she is much concerned with psychology, the drearier jargon of the new psychological schools. It is all good persuasive talk, *causerie** in the true sense, and I do not know a better introduction to the subject.

The author's healthy modernism makes her take most of her instances from her younger
35 contemporaries. I am the last to object to the practice, for I believe that almost the best work in literature to-day is being done in poetry. That work has the extra merit of being largely experimental and so furnishes apt illustrations for an anatomy of poetry. It is on the look-out for new modes of expression and is tolerant of any honest novelty. To its merits Mrs. Williams-Ellis is very kind, and generously blind to its faults. She deprecates a too
40 austere critical judgment. "After all," she writes, "what if we were to get pleasure from the

second-rate? True, the public has a duty to the poets who write for it, and we ought to try to distinguish between the good and the bad; but admiration is to some extent a Fortunatus' Purse,* and in admiring something which is not perhaps strictly worthy of admiration we are not necessarily robbing some other poet of his rightful heritage. In this
45 matter of praise and appreciation it is as true as it is in the world of law that it is better to let off two or three guilty persons than to condemn one innocent one. It is better to overpraise a few earnest but mediocre souls than to underpraise one Keats." That seems to me a reasonable attitude. An age of experiment is not often an age of attained perfection, and the plants grown from the new seed are apt at first to be a little weakly.

50 The danger, of course, is that the new thing produced by revolt from a stale convention may very speedily become itself stale and conventional. Take, for example, the modern tendency in nature poetry to abandon the old rhetorical generalizations and aim at loving and intimate observation. There are two snares before the new fashion. It is just as easy to be false in it as in the old "purling brooks and bosky glades"* business. I read a poem of
55 the kind the other day, a poem by a writer of repute, where all the "loving and intimate" details happened to be wrong from the point of view of the field-naturalist – except one, which was unblushingly conveyed from Tennyson. The other danger is simply that a multitude of trees do not make a wood. Dr. Johnson, long ago, put his finger on it. "Those writers who lay on the watch for novelty can have little hope of greatness; for great things
60 cannot have escaped former observation. Their attempts were always analytick; they broke every image into fragments, and could no more represent, by their slender conceits and laboured particularities, the prospects of nature or the scenes of life than he who dissects a sunbeam with a prism can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer noon."*

If I have any criticism of Mrs. Williams-Ellis's point of view it is not that it is too generous,
65 but that at moments her generosity takes a random and fantastic form. I am a little sceptical about the existence of an entity called the "modern mind" to which she sometimes refers – at least, of its relevance in the connexion in which she uses it. I do not quite see why Shakespeare's "When that I was and a little tiny boy"* should be called "extremely advanced and Georgian."* It is eternal and dateless and can be paralleled from
70 the oldest folk poetry. The reader, too, is pulled up with a start when he finds a bracketing of the new and the old, the doubtful and the established, as if they were on the same plane – for example, Mr. Flecker* and Keats*, Mr. Aldous Huxley's "Leda"* and "Venus and Adonis,"* Mr. Frankau's "One of Us" and Byron's "Don Juan."* I do not suppose that Mrs. Williams-Ellis would seriously allege any real equality, but the juxtaposition argues, I think,
75 a slight blurring of perspective. Also, she occasionally quotes writers as if they were classics, of whose names one reader – to his shame be it written – has never heard. This practice – to the same reader – has just a suspicion of comedy, like Mr. Belloc's references to "Martha Brown, the Great Stylist."*

The second half of the book, the sections entitled "For Missionaries," "For Critics," and "For
80 Readers," seems to be conceived on different lines from the first part. It is more carelessly written, less judicious, more in the nature of reprinted journalism. With admirable courage the writer puts all her cards on the table. She explains her views on the introduction of children and unpoetical adults to poetry, in particular to contemporary poetry, and her views are worthy of all attention, for they are honest and practical, though I confess to a
85 doubt as to whether an audience of "commercial travellers or analytical chemists" could be wooed into the Muses' garden by the reading of the works of the Sitwell family.* The section on critics contains many good things, and it is pleasant to be reminded of the virtues of Sir Philip Sidney* and Peacock.* The last chapter is a series of short notes on the younger poets, with occasional specimens of their work. Here I feel that the writing falls

- 90 below the high standard of the earlier chapters; misprints abound, the judgments are hasty and scarcely supported by the brief quotations. Does so good a critic really find anything Miltonic in lines like
- "the lonely marshes
That lie beside the desolate Caspian,"*
- 95 or the ballad quality in such a verse as
- "Oh, where are you, my own true love,
And why are you not here?
The nightingale amid the boughs
Is flattering his dear"?"*
- 100 There is one piece of work which I commend to Mrs. Williams-Ellis's attention. I wish she would make an anthology of the younger poets, for she has not left herself room in this last chapter of hers. Nobody could do it better, and the first hundred pages of the present book would make an illuminating introduction. She has enthusiasm and generosity, and is guided in her researches amid the new by a sound love of the old. Her book has inspired
- 105 one reviewer with a desire, not only to read more modern verse, but to write it – a feat of which his prosaic spirit is manifestly incapable.

Footnotes

4 *déraciné*: someone uprooted from their cultural environment (*OED* 27 August 2013).

5 *bourne*: ultimate conclusion (*OED* 27 August 2013).

6 *strait is the path*: a course which is narrow and difficult to negotiate (*OED* 27 August 2013).

10-11 *Both....are unpleasant people*: in Chapter 4 of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871), Tweedledum and Tweedledee recite to Alice a narrative poem, 'The Walrus and the Carpenter'. After hearing the poem Alice concludes that the Walrus and the Carpenter were 'both very unpleasant characters' (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. Ed. Roger Lancelyn Green. Oxford University Press, 1971: 167).

13 *build Babylon with a song*: Babylon was a city-state of ancient Mesopotamia renowned for its size and grandeur. In modern usage it means any large and luxurious city, especially one seen as decadent or corrupt (*OED* 27 August 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Here Buchan seems to mean a poet who may build a grand reputation from their work.

17 *'right-hand waverings and left-hand backslidings'*: I have not been able to trace the source of this quotation.

22 *Aristotle*: see Article 14.

22 *Croce*: Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), Italian philosopher, historian, critic and senator. Buchan had reviewed his aesthetic theory for the *Spectator* in 1909-10 (**F23,F24**) and other aspects of his philosophy in 1914 (**F46**).

26 *catholic*: of universal human interest or use (*OED* 27 August 2013).

31 *Aesthetic*: the philosophy of the beautiful or of art (*OED* 27 August 2013).

32 *causerie*: informal talk or discussion, especially on literary topics (*OED* 27 August 2013).

42-43 *a Fortunatus' Purse*: something which is inexhaustible. The phrase is derived from *The Pleasant Comedie of Old Fortunatus* (1600), a play in a mixture of prose and verse by Thomas Dekker (c1570-c1641), based on the German legend of Fortunatus and his magic inexhaustible purse (CBD 27 August 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

54 *'purling brooks and bosky glades'*: I have been unable to trace a source for this specific phrase. It seems that 'purling brooks' and 'bosky glades' were old poetic clichés familiar in this period, which Buchan would certainly have known from his regular reviews of 'Recent Verse' for the *Spectator* (see Catalogue section B). 'Purling' means rippling, while 'bosky' refers to glades covered with bushes or thickets (OED 10 September 2013).

58-63 *Those writers....a summer noon'*: this long quotation is from a passage in Dr Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*, vol. I (1779) in which he discusses the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century (*Lives of the Poets*. Ed. Arthur Waugh. Oxford University Press, 1973: 14-15).

68 *Shakespeare's 'When....a little tiny boy'*: this is the Clown's song which ends Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (V.1.388-407).

69 *Georgian*: a school of poetry which emerged in the early years (1910-c1922) of the reign of George V and was centred on those poets whose work appeared in five anthologies entitled *Georgian Poetry* (1912-22), edited by Edward Marsh and published by Harold Monro. The school included Edmund Blunden, Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, DH Lawrence, Walter de la Mare and Siegfried Sassoon. The period of publication located the Georgians between Victorian poetry and literary modernism (27 August 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

72 *Mr Flecker*: James Elroy Flecker (1884-1915), English poet and playwright, who died from tuberculosis at an early age. Perhaps his best known book of poetry is *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* (1913) (ODNB 27 August 2013).

72 *Keats*: John Keats (1795-1821), English romantic poet (CBD 27 August 2013).

72 *Mr Aldous Huxley's 'Leda'*: Huxley (1894-1963) is now well known as a novelist and essayist, but his first published works were collections of poetry, including *Leda* (1920) (CBD 27 August 2013).

72-73 *'Venus and Adonis'*: a narrative poem by William Shakespeare (1564-1616), first published in 1593 (ODNB 23 May 2013).

73 *Mr Frankau's 'One of Us' and Byron's Don Juan*: Gilbert Frankau (1884-1953), English novelist, published his novel in verse, *One of Us*, in 1912. It is a direct imitation of *Don Juan* (published 1819-24) by George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824) (CBD 27 August 2013).

77-78 *Mr Belloc's....the Great Stylist*: Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953) was an English writer born in France (CBD 27 August 2013). He was a prolific author who wrote numerous travel books, among them *A Path to Rome* (1902), which made comic references to the 'Martha Brown school' of writing, named after the fictitious 'Martha Brown the stylist' (*The Path to Rome*. GP Putnam's, 1915: x and 162, 27 August 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

85-86 *an audience....the Sitwell family*: in the book under review, the author suggests that such an audience might be introduced to poetry by hearing the works of various contemporary poets, including 'the Sitwells' (132-33) (27 August 2013 <<http://archive.org>>). This is a reference to Edith Sitwell (1887-1964) and her brothers,

Osbert (1892-1969) and Sacheverell (1897-1988), who were all *avant garde* poets of the period (CBD 27 August 2012).

88 *Sir Philip Sidney*: English poet (1554-86), whose critical essay *The Apologie for Poetrie* (also known as *The Defence of Poesie*) was probably written in about 1580, but was not published until 1591. It is a reply to a Puritan pamphlet which was severely critical of poets (CBD 27 August 2013).

88 *Peacock*: Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866), English novelist, who satirised the intellectual and cultural figures of his time, including the Romantic poets, in such novels as *Headlong Hall* (1816) and *Nightmare Abbey* (1818) (CBD 27 August 2013).

93-94 '*the lonely marshes....the desolate Caspian*': a quotation in the book under review (260) from the verse of Edward Shanks (1892-1953), a poet who was also a literary reviewer, journalist and biographer (27 August 2013 <<http://archive.org>> and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

96-99 '*Oh, where are you....flattering his dear*': another quotation in the book under review (265) from the verse of Edward Shanks (see note above) (27 August 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

ARTICLE 21

'This Freedom'

Spectator 129 (12 August 1922): 215-16. Review.

ASM Hutchinson. *This Freedom*.

Headnote

The author of the novel under review, Arthur Stuart-Menteth Hutchinson (1879-1971), was born in India. His father was a distinguished soldier, and his mother was a member of the Stuart-Menteths, a noble Scottish family. Hutchinson wrote romance and domestic novels, as well as short stories for a variety of magazines. His first novel, *One Aboard the Lugger*, was published in 1908, followed by *The Happy Warrior* in 1912, and *The Clean Heart* (1914), which Buchan mentions in this review (lines 61-62).

After the First World War Hutchinson's novel *If Winter Comes* (1921) was a great popular success, especially in the United States, where it became the best-selling book of the year in 1922 and was subsequently made into a film. Its theme, dealing with an unhappy marriage, divorce, and eventual suicide, was somewhat ahead of its time for a popular novel. His follow-up, *This Freedom*, which Buchan reviews here, was controversial when it was published in 1922, being criticised by supporters of women's rights as anti-feminist. Its defence of conservative values was not particularly unusual for the time, but the immense success of *If Winter Comes* had made Hutchinson a prominent author who was now a target for those critics who disagreed with him. Nevertheless, *This Freedom* was highly successful and a US top ten best-seller in both 1923 and 1924.

Hutchinson continued to publish fiction until the Second World War, after which his only work was a short biography, *Of Swinburne*, published in 1960. He died at Uckfield, Sussex, in 1971 (27 August 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

THIS FREEDOM

A girl grows up in the straitened household of a country parson, where everything is sacrificed to the interests and caprices of not very agreeable male beings – the father and the two brothers. She passes to a boarding-school in London, and her life there, varied by visits to the house of a prosperous aunt, confirms her in her conviction that the world is too
5 much ordered for the sake of one sex. She discovers an aptitude for business, obtains work in which she is highly successful, and then, when she has laid the foundation of an independent career, falls in love. Her feeling about men had never been sex antagonism, but a revolt against their social oligarchy, and she is most deeply in love with Harry Occleve. But love does not change her philosophy of life; she will not sink to the ordinary housewife;
10 marriage and maternity are not incompatible with a business career for a wife; the other view is only a relic of the old masculine monopoly. "They say a woman marries for a home. Wrong, wrong. It's man who marries for a home... Look at little boys playing – it's caves and tents and wigwams they delight to play at... Girls don't play at that; they play at shops and being grown up, at nursing dolls and not themselves being nursed." So while she
15 deeply loves husband and children and organizes her home life as skilfully as her business, she stands a little aloof from family duties. The most modern type of governess is engaged for the children, and in spite of her affection for them she does not regard them as a more intimate and urgent responsibility than, say, a branch of her bank. The result is that they

grow up in a world of their own, and one tragedy after another falls upon them, till the
20 book closes with a stricken mother shaken out of all her creeds and lavishing upon the child
of a wasted son the hungry personal care which she had denied to her own.

This seems to be the theme of Mr. Hutchinson's new novel, and it needs to be carefully
stated, for it is easily misunderstood. As such, it is a legitimate thesis, a genuine problem;
so would be the converse – the tale of a woman who thought of nothing but her family and
25 saw every member of it go to the devil; in both cases success depends upon the method of
treatment. Mr. Hutchinson has the courage and intelligence to be a moralist. He realizes
that the conflict which makes drama is in the last resort a moral conflict. There is nothing
in his subject to prevent the book being a great novel.

Much of it is very well done – the childish imaginings of Rosalie, for example, the whole
30 episode of Mr. Simcox and the insurance business, a dozen of the minor characters like the
people at the boarding-house, Mrs. Ryke Pounce, Miss Keggs, and Miss Prescott. There is
power, too, in the handling of the wretched Hugo. But to the present writer the last third
of the book is a pure fairy tale. There is nothing inevitable in the deluge of tragedies, and
though as a moralist he may approve, as an ordinary human being he is not convinced.
35 Rosalie's egotism might conceivably have produced such dire results, but we are not shown
that it *must*, and as one catastrophe succeeds another the effect, in spite of the author's
earnestness, is so fantastic as to be almost comic. It is a fairy-tale *dénouement*, where
consequences do not follow causes.

Mr. Hutchinson has honourably won a world-wide public, and his new book makes one
40 speculate about the reasons of a great popularity. Good literature may or may not be
popular, but some of the best books are the most widely read, and there must be certain
indisputable and fundamental merits in a writer who can cast a spell over vast masses of
men. Precision and beauty of style, profundity of thought, an austere logic in the
development of character are not essential. But there is something common, say, to
45 Dickens* and Victor Hugo* which is not found in Flaubert* and Henry James*, and that
something is a merit. In a passage in his *Journal* Sir Walter Scott wrote: "I am sensible that
if there be anything good about my poetry, or prose either, it is a hurried frankness of
composition which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active
disposition. I have been no sigher in shades."* "A hurried frankness of composition" –
50 what is that but gusto, which is the passport to the plain man's affections? It is most
obvious, of course, in the romance of adventure, but it will be found in all novels which
make a universal appeal; the author clutches the reader by the arm and hurries him along,
treats him like a friend, establishes a mutual confidence. Inform gusto with a moral
purpose, and you get what for want of a better word we may call "unction". It is not a
55 quality to be despised. It is apt, indeed, to be fatal to careful architecture, it usually
involves bad lapses of style and much misty, excited, spasmodic psychology, and the lack of
any spiritual *askesis** leads to strained situations and mechanical solutions. But for all that
it is a priceless quality, for it reproduces as no bloodless analysis can something of the
speed and passion of real life. *David Copperfield* and *Les Misérables** have an infinity of
60 faults, but they rank by universal consent among the great novels of the world.

Mr. Hutchinson has the quality. He has many others, for the author of the first half of *The
Clean Heart** has notable gifts of humour and insight, and the man who wrote a story
which appeared a few months ago in *Blackwood** has a great power of tragic narrative. But
it is his unction which has won him his millions of readers. If he will permit us, we would
65 make two suggestions. A book written too patently to expound a thesis is a dangerous
experiment for a writer of his type. His power is narrowed down to a single purpose and by

its success he stands or falls. There have been many good novels and a few great novels with a central theme more unconvincing than that of *This Freedom*, but they have been saved by the excellence of their "side-shows." Mr. Hutchinson is an adept at side-shows, but in this case he has denied himself and stressed a single theme, with the result that his most conspicuous talents are not given full play. The second suggestion is that unctious carries with it certain perils which he does not always escape. He apostrophizes his characters* too often, and descants* on them and fondles them till he slips sometimes into a manner which can only be called kittenish. Also the drama is not heightened by writing "Strike on" in a paragraph by itself at the end of each phase of catastrophe like a legend in a moving picture. These things read as if he were caricaturing himself.

Footnotes

45 *Dickens*: Charles Dickens (1812-70), English novelist and journalist (CBD 27 August 2013).

45 *Victor Hugo*: French novelist and poet (1802-85) (CBD 27 August 2013).

45 *Flaubert*: Gustave Flaubert (1821-80), French novelist (CBD 27 August 2013).

45 *Henry James*: American novelist (1843-1916), who moved to England in 1869 (CBD 27 August 2013).

46-49 *In a passage....no sigher in shades*: Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), Scottish novelist and poet, kept a journal from November 1825 to April 1832, which was first published as a separate work in 1890. The passage quoted here is from the entry for Friday, 16 June 1826 (*The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*. Ed. WEK Anderson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972: 159).

57 *askesis*: (now usually spelt *ascesis*) the practice of self-discipline (OED 27 August 2013).

59 *David Copperfield and Les Misérables*: novels by Charles Dickens and Victor Hugo, published in 1849-50 and 1862 respectively (CBD 27 August 2013).

61-62 *The Clean Heart*: an earlier novel by Hutchinson, published in 1914 (27 August 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

62-63 *a story....in Blackwood*: the story was Hutchinson's 'The Swordsman', which was published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in March 1922. It was subsequently collected in *The Eighth Wonder and Other Stories* (1923).

72-73 *apostrophizes his characters*: addresses them directly in apostrophes (OED 27 August 2013).

73 *descants*: comments, discusses (OED 27 August 2013).

ARTICLE 22

'Adventure Stories: From Defoe to Stevenson'

John O'London's Weekly 16 (4 December 1926): 274, 276. Signed.

Headnote

This is the first of several occasional articles on literary genres, such as the historical novel (see Article 23), Christmas stories (A64), and traditional ballads (B72), which Buchan wrote in the latter part of his journalistic career. It was published in *John O'London's Weekly*, a literary magazine which took its name from the pseudonym of Wilfred Whitten, the journalist and editor who founded it in 1919. The magazine soon became established as a leading popular literary periodical of the inter-war period, and featured contributions from many of the best known authors of the day, including Arnold Bennett, Winston Churchill, Somerset Maugham and Rebecca West (27 August 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

By the time of this article in the mid-1920s, Buchan himself was one of the most popular writers of the period, having established his reputation during the First World War with *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915) and *Greenmantle* (1916). After the war, when he had settled down at Elsfield Manor, Buchan began writing a succession of novels which were published every year from 1921 until 1936, by which time he had taken up his appointment as Governor-General of Canada. The only exception was 1928, when instead of a novel he brought out a collection of short stories, *The Runagates Club*. Usually published in the summer to take advantage of the holiday market, the annual Buchan became a regular purchase for his loyal readers (Smith, *Biography* 251; Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 194). In this article on adventure stories, then, Buchan was able to write with authority as a popular and respected author about a literary genre in which he excelled.

ADVENTURE STORIES: FROM DEFOE TO STEVENSON

In a sense every good novel is a novel of adventure; for there is action in it or it would not be a novel, and the action contains surprises and dramatic moments, or it would not be a good novel. But in our ordinary speech we have specialized the word "adventure." There are great books where the action moves almost wholly in the mind, where the drama is
5 mainly or entirely concerned with spiritual processes. In some of Conrad's stories, though the scene is laid on wild seas or in wilder jungles,* the true drama is to be found in the mental processes of the protagonists – in the "reactions", as the phrase goes, to the strange and terrible events, not in the events themselves. A certain modicum of psychology there must be, of course, in any tale, but in these the psychology is not the
10 background to the play, but the play itself.

There are great books, too, where the action is homely and commonplace, being no more than the trivialities of our daily life. Such are Jane Austen's novels,* in which a carriage drive, a country house visit, a ball, make up the external movement. Yet I find Jane Austen desperately exciting. When the time comes that I have forgotten, say, "Persuasion,"
15 sufficiently to permit me to re-read it, I am enthralled by every stage of the slow courtship of Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth. I am on tenterhooks to see how it will end, just as much as if it were a romance of Indians or pirates. So we cannot make the *differentia** of the adventure story either a remote and savage setting or a strong dramatic interest, for Conrad is not a novelist of adventure in the ordinary sense, or Jane Austen in any sense.

20 We must define the thing quite arbitrarily, I think, as a rapid, close-textured narrative in
which the bulk of the incidents involve physical violence and peril, and in which the interest
is centred upon these incidents and their immediate human "reactions." Let us add that
the incidents should themselves be strange and romantic, or, if they are commonplace,
they must have a strange and romantic setting. I add this proviso because there are certain
25 stories which justify the requirements of our definition but cannot fairly be called books of
adventure.

Take Mr. Wells's "Wheels of Chance."* That is a picaresque story of a knight errant and a
journey, where the narrative moves with the most enthralling speed and the reader's
interest is deeply pledged to the hero. But the events recorded are not in themselves
30 arresting, for the author's purpose is primarily social comedy. In "Mr. Polly" the purpose is
the same, and though that delightful work rises to an almost epic height of adventure in
the story of the hero's struggle with Uncle Jim, yet the incidents are not set in the romantic
key, and it is more properly classed as social comedy. Indeed, I would hazard a further
definition, that in the best books of adventure (as in the best short stories) the mere bald
35 summary of the plot should strongly attract us. The quality does not only lie in the
handling; in the novel of adventure the very core and essence is the imaginative conception
of the incidents themselves.

This definition rules out detective stories, which are primarily the explanation of dramatic
events and not their chronicle. It rules out, too, most of the greatest historical novels
40 which aim at giving a picture of the manners of a past age. In such there is often a story of
adventure intertwined. There is such a story in "Old Mortality"* – Drumlog and Bothwell
Brig and Morton's imprisonment among the Covenanters; there are the Glasgow and
Aberfoyle chapters in "Rob Roy," and the conclusion of "Red-gauntlet"; but these books
are conceived on a broader scale than a mere romance of action. For, let us frankly admit
45 it, the adventure story is not one of the major types of literature; it cannot compare with
the greater novels any more than a story in verse like "The Lady of the Lake"* can compare
with Homer.* It may be perfect of its kind, but its kind is in the second class. If it succeeds
it will move us with its appropriate emotion, but not with the wide range of emotion that
we get from "The Heart of Midlothian" or "Vanity Fair" or "War and Peace."*

50 The story of adventure is, therefore, a story which depends upon a plot which has those
qualities of strangeness and surprise which we call romantic, in which the psychological
"reactions" are only sketched and not elaborated, and in which the narrative moves with a
peculiar certainty and speed. Scott has in his "Journal"* a confession which does not do
justice to his best work, but which accurately describes the quality of this special class. Any
55 merits he possesses, he says, "come from a hurried frankness of composition, which
pleases soldiers and sailors, and young people of bold and active dispositions."

Stevenson* was, of course, a past-master of the adventure tale. "Kidnapped" is a model
performance – each character nicely differentiated, a fine briskness of narration, a central
conception in a high degree romantic, no *longueurs*,* no checks and snags in the strong
60 current of drama. When he mixed up this kind with another kind he failed. "The Master of
Ballantrae" is in some respects his best book, but its excellence lies in the first three-
quarters, which are not a story of adventure; the pure adventure part at the end, the
business of the winter journey in the Adirondacks and the resuscitation of the corpse, is
crudely done. For this is a highly sensitive form; a little overloading of the psychology, a
65 little creaking of the machinery, and the glamour goes. It gives us life with certain sides
abstracted, and with a strong emphasis placed on the conflicting categories of space and

time. It is artificial, but after all every literary form is artificial, even the type of novel which photographically reproduces the commonplace.

When I think over the novels of adventure of our own day I seem to detect two classes.

70 One skims the cream, is content with a minimum of detail, and trips unashamed within easy distance of unreality. The friendly blindness of the reader is taken for granted, and it is assumed that the pace at which it moves will carry the narrative over the crevasses of the improbable. The other type follows the "Robinson Crusoe"* tradition and is at immense pains to give verisimilitude* by a multitude of concrete details. I hesitate to pronounce
75 between the two; the one by its speed stifles our prosaic questions; the other invites and answers them, and gives us many little nuggets of detail which abide pleasantly in the memory.

To the first school belongs "Treasure Island."* It has the true, bold, classical romance – mystery intruding into the quiet moorland tavern, a boy's wits set against grown villains,
80 the right difficulties to surmount, a bewitching environment, episodes when the reader is in dire suspense, and, at the end, a really satisfying treasure. It is all done according to an ancient pattern, but with what superb virtuosity! A second example is an early story of "Q's," "The Splendid Spur,"* to which I have been long attached. It opens brilliantly with an autumnal Oxford garden – an obvious nursery for romance, and then it swings joyfully
85 along the high-roads to the West, where the strife of King and Parliament does not altogether break the secular routine of Old England. Delia is all that a heroine should be, singing her French songs, and afraid of nothing except mice and thunder. Stock pattern, doubtless, but who cares? A third is Anthony Hope's "The Prisoner of Zenda."* The dreary progeny which it has begotten should not blind us to its shining merits. In a style of
90 incomparable lightness it carries its debonair hero through adventures stranger than the "Mysteries of Udolpho"* to the steps of a throne. It explains little, because there is no need for explanation; the right key is set and we gladly take the thing on trust.

The second school are artists in verisimilitude. Theirs is the documentary method, a skilful leading up to the marvellous from little, convincing, homely details, an air of plain, matter-
95 of-fact veracity. I take "King Solomon's Mines"* for one example. The book is so familiar that most of us forget how extraordinarily good it is, immeasurably better than anything else which Rider Haggard ever wrote. The setting is exactly right – the talk on the Cape coasting steamer, the humble beginnings of a great adventure, like Saul's when he went out to seek his father's asses and found a kingdom.* There is just enough familiar detail to
100 lead up naturally to the unfamiliar, and the unfamiliar, when it arrives, is treated with the same forthright simplicity. The supreme merit of the story is that the artifice is concealed; events succeed events not in a dapper sequence, but with something of the inconsequence of life, and yet it is worked out cunningly to a strong climax. My second example will be Erskine Childers's "Riddle of the Sands,"* which I beg leave to think the best story of
105 adventure published in the last quarter of a century. It is a tale of the puzzling out of a mystery which only gradually reveals itself, and not till the very end reaches its true magnificence; but its excitement begins on the first page, and there is a steady crescendo of interest, while, assisted by the admirable charts, the reader's mind itself is actively engaged on surmises and solutions. As for the characters, I think they are the most fully
110 realized of any adventure story that I have met, and the atmosphere of grey Northern skies and miles of yeasty water and wet sands is as masterfully reproduced as in any story of Conrad's.

The worst of adventure stories of the highest kind is that they abide so clearly in the memory that after a time re-reading becomes vain – we remember too well what is coming

115 next. I should like to be able to forget them utterly and start at the beginning. In that case
 I should not waste them on a railway journey, but should choose the hour of reading as
 carefully as one chooses the right weather in which to view a great landscape. In America
 such books are prescribed for "the tired business man," and the prescription is just, for
 they are best enjoyed after a certain kind of fatigue. Not worry or mental fatigue – for that
 120 I should choose poetry. Give me a peaceful hour after dinner on some day when one has
 been having hard exercise, tramping the moors or following hounds. It must be winter
 time. One must not be sleepy, only pleasantly weary. Give me a bright fire, a deep arm-
 chair, a pipe, a dog on the hearthrug, and one of those books which, by a happy miracle,
 has been blotted from my memory; and let it be mine to sail again the shallow Baltic with
 125 Davis and Carruthers, to climb Sheba's Breasts with Quatermain and his friends, and to
 hear Pew's stick tapping on the frosty road.*

Footnotes

5-6 Conrad's stories....jungles: Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) wrote several stories with settings at sea (eg *Typhoon*, 1903) or in the jungle (eg *Heart of Darkness*, 1902) (CBD 27 August 2013).

12 Jane Austen's novels: Austen (1775-1817) had four novels published anonymously during her lifetime, and two under her name posthumously. *Persuasion* is one of the latter, written in 1815 but published three years later, after her death (CBD 27 August 2013).

17 differentia: a distinguishing mark or characteristic (OED 27 August 2013).

27 Mr Wells's 'Wheels of Chance': Herbert George (HG) Wells, English author (1866-1946). His *Wheels of Chance* was an early comic novel published in 1896. Buchan also discusses Wells' *The History of Mr Polly* (1910), another comedy of social criticism (CBD 27 August 2013).

41 Old Mortality: a historical novel by Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), Scottish novelist and poet, published in 1816. Buchan also mentions two other historical novels by Scott: *Rob Roy* (1817) and *Redgauntlet* (1824) (CBD 27 August 2013).

46 The Lady of the Lake: a romance in verse by Sir Walter Scott (see note above), published in 1810 (CBD 27 August 2013).

47 Homer: the Greek poet to whom the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are attributed (see Article 16, note to lines 43-44).

49 The Heart of Midlothian or Vanity Fair or War and Peace: The Heart of Midlothian (1818) is another historical novel by Sir Walter Scott. *Vanity Fair* (1847-48) is a social satire with a historical setting by the English novelist William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63). *War and Peace* (1863-69) is a novel by the Russian author Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), also with a historical setting (CBD 27 August 2013).

53 Scott has in his Journal: here Buchan uses the same quotation from *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, with minor changes to the wording, that he used in his review of *This Freedom* over four years earlier (see Article 21, note to lines 46-49).

57 Stevenson: the Scottish novelist Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94) (see Article 1). His historical romance *Kidnapped* was published in 1876. Buchan also discusses another of his historical novels, *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889) (CBD 27 August 2013).

59 longueurs: lengthy or tedious passages of writing (OED 27 August 2013).

73 *Robinson Crusoe*: a novel by the English author Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), published in 1719, which tells the fictional story of a mariner shipwrecked on a remote island (CBD 27 August 2013).

74 *verisimilitude*: the appearance of being true or real (OED 27 August 2013).

78 *Treasure Island*: another historical romance by Robert Louis Stevenson (see note to line 57), first published in 1883 (CBD 27 August 2013).

83 'Q's', *The Splendid Spur*: 'Q' was the pseudonym of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (1863-1944), English literary academic and writer, who used it when publishing his historical romances, including *The Splendid Spur* (1889) (CBD 12 September 2013).

88 *Anthony Hope's The Prisoner of Zenda*: this is Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins (1863-1933), English novelist, whose romance set in fictional Ruritania, *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894), was a great popular success (CBD 12 September 2013).

90-91 *the Mysteries of Udolpho*: a gothic romance by Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) published in 1794, when such novels were extremely fashionable and popular (CBD 12 September 2013).

95 *King Solomon's Mines*: an adventure novel by Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925), who spent five years as a colonial administrator in South Africa when he was a young man. He made use of his African knowledge in *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), his first success, and in several extremely popular later novels (CBD 12 September 2013).

98-99 *like Saul's....and found a kingdom*: the first Book of Samuel in the Old Testament of *The Bible* relates how Saul, a young Israelite, was sent out by his father to search for their lost asses. While doing so, Saul met the prophet Samuel, who had a vision from God that Saul would become the first king of Israel and duly anointed him (12 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org.uk>>).

104 *Erskine Childers's Riddle of the Sands*: Robert Erskine Childers (1870-1922) came from an Anglo-Irish family. He had a passion for sailing and fought in the Boer War before publishing *The Riddle of the Sands*, his only novel, in 1903. It is a spy story which develops when two men go on a sailing trip in the Baltic. Childers subsequently became an ardent supporter of Irish Home Rule and was executed in 1922 for his involvement with Sinn Fein and Irish republicanism (CBD 12 September 2013).

124-26 *to sail again....tapping on the frosty road*: here Buchan references three of the novels he has discussed earlier in the article. Davis and Carruthers are the two men on the Baltic sailing trip in *The Riddle of the Sands*; Quatermain is the hero of *King Solomon's Mines*, whose expedition to Africa climbs a mountain peak, one of 'Sheba's Breasts'; and blind Pew's stick taps on the frosty road in Chapter III of *Treasure Island* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 1989, and 1985 respectively).

ARTICLE 23

'The Most Difficult Form of Fiction'

Listener 1 (16 January 1929): 21-22. Signed.

Headnote

After the First World War, exhausted by his work at the Department of Information, Buchan largely withdrew from public life. He was now an established author of popular fiction, and his writing career provided a steady source of income together with his continuing directorship of Nelson's the publishers. He was also a director of the Reuters news agency, which he had joined during the war. But by 1927 Buchan felt sufficiently reinvigorated to return to public life, and he became Conservative Member of Parliament for one of the three Scottish University seats. This required him to take a particular interest in educational matters, and as part of this remit he became a member of the Central Council for Broadcast Adult Education (Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 145, 147, 155, 206).

It was in his capacity as the representative of literature on the Central Council that Buchan wrote this article for the first edition of the *Listener*, which an asterisked footnote appended to his name at the head of the original article makes clear. The *Listener* was a weekly magazine established by the BBC in January 1929 primarily to provide a textual record of talks broadcast on its wireless service, but it also published articles of general cultural interest. Buchan's essay begins the section on 'Books and Authors', and he takes this opportunity to write one of the occasional articles on genres of fiction, this time the historical novel, to which he largely confined himself when writing about literary matters in the latter stages of his journalistic career.

Buchan subsequently became a member of the BBC General Advisory Council when it replaced the Central Council for Broadcast Education in February 1935, before his departure for Canada in October that year (Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 223). Meanwhile, the *Listener* attracted contributions from many other well-known literary figures in its early years, including GK Chesterton, TS Eliot, EM Forster, George Orwell, George Bernard Shaw, and Virginia Woolf, and soon established itself as a distinguished journal on a par with the *Spectator* and the *New Statesman*, though without their political associations. But cultural changes in Britain from the 1960s onwards led to an inexorable decline, and it ceased publication in 1991 (16 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

THE MOST DIFFICULT FORM OF FICTION

I am told that the historical novel is a little out of favour to-day. It is suspected of dulness by those simple souls who like their fiction to be an elaborated form of what they can read in their evening paper; it is accused of shallowness by those subtler spirits who believe that the word "modern" denotes not a period in time, but a stage in values. This is to be beaten
5 on both sides of the head. For the complaint against the historical novel used to be that it found its romance too cheaply, that it was apt to be a sword-and-cloak affair, a raw chronicle of adventure. It is hard that the popular taste should shy at it because it is believed to be high-brow, and the high-brow condemn it on the ground that it is popular.

We must define the thing more carefully. An historical novel is simply a novel which
10 attempts to reconstruct the life, and recapture the atmosphere, of an age other than that of the writer. The age may be distant a couple of generations, or a thousand years. The

novel may find its drama in swift external incident, or in some conflict of the spirit. It may be picaresque* or domestic; a novel of manners, or of action, or of the heart. Its technique may be any one of the twenty different ways in which tribal lays* and other things are
15 constructed. But the point of difference is that the writer in every case has to construct for himself, imaginatively, not only the drama, but the atmosphere and the modes of living. These do not exist for him, ready-made, as part of his normal life. Mr. X., living in Chelsea and writing one of his delectable tales about that suburb, finds no difficulty in almost unconsciously visualising his details; but if he were writing about Chelsea in the reign of
20 Queen Anne,* he would have to read books and think about them. His task would become akin to that of Mr. Lytton Strachey.*

If we review the great novels of the world it is surprising how many we shall find belonging to this demoded* school. *War and Peace** is an historical novel; so are most of Victor Hugo's.* So is *Vanity Fair*, for Thackeray wrote a generation or two after Waterloo;* so, of
25 course, are most of Scott's;* so is some of the best work of Flaubert* and Anatole France.* If we take the successes of our own day, many, I think, fall under this class. Mrs. Wharton's brilliant studies of bygone New York* are historical novels, as is Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, and even her *Lost Lady*.* If the sword-and-cloak romance is a little discredited, we have various reconstructions of the past which are at once good history and
30 good fiction. I need only mention three dissimilar achievements, Mr. Neil Munro's *The New Road*,* Mr. Hergesheimer's *Java Head*,* and Mr. R.H. Mottram's *Our Mr. Dormer*.* The method varies from Herr Feuchtwanger's* massive coagulation of incident to the delicate spiritual analysis of Mr. Thornton Wilder's *Bridge of San Luis Rey*.*

The historical novelist has imaginatively to reconstruct modes of life and thought with
35 which he cannot be personally familiar. So, it may be said, has the novelist of contemporary life whenever he strays outside the narrow orbit of his own experience. But there is a difference. The man who deals with contemporary life has the key nearer to his hand. He is concerned with things which are roughly within the same world of experience. The details may be strange, but access to them is simple. The historical novelist has to
40 think himself into an alien world before he can expound its humanity.

Therefore I am compelled to believe that the historical novel is the most difficult form of the art of fiction. The complaint against the common brand of it is that it is too easy.

The past, by its difference from the present, offers a cheap type of picturesqueness, and Wardour Street romance* and "tushery"* seize upon it avidly. Odd clothes, fantastic
45 speech, the facility for trite adventure, are false guides to drama. But the real trouble about the historical novel is that it is almost too difficult. A man who has read himself into the heart of a past age may come to value his discoveries for their own sake, and overload his tale with accurate but artistically irrelevant bric-à-brac. Mr. Hergesheimer is not exempt from this antiquarian fault any more than Sir Walter Scott. The historical novel
50 demands a scrupulous gift of selection.

It also requires an austere conscience. It is easy to play tricks with the reader and startle with false colour and meretricious invention. The reader cannot check the result by his own experience. He is in the writer's hands, and a point of honour is involved. This view may be the pedantry of an historian, but I have always felt that consciously to pervert the
55 past is more heinous than to pervert the present, for the crime is harder to detect. Above all it needs a strong independent imagination. It is fatally easy to project the mind of one's own age back into the past, and produce what is no more than a fancy-dress party. The fault of the *Idylls of the King** is the commonest fault in historical romance. The people in *Romola** have the clothes and setting of the Italian Renaissance, but their minds are those

60 of mid-Victorian England. Past modes of thought are harder to realise than past modes of living.

The great novels of the world are in the truest sense timeless. It was a profound instinct which made the Greek tragedians cling to a dozen traditional tales, for the great stories are few. I have always had a theory that every great novel has at bottom the plot of one or
65 other of the classic fairy tales. We can never get away from the fundamentals, the Aristotelian "recognition" and "reversal of fortune."* The danger of the historical novel is that it may acquire the antiquarian habit and revel too much in the bric-à-brac of the past. But does not the contemporary writer run the risk of revelling in the bric-à-brac of the present? The "turbid mixture of contemporaneousness"* is at least as inimical to true art
70 as historical pedantry. When I am told that a novel is "pulsing with actuality," that it "turns a searchlight into the depths of modernity,"* then I know what to avoid. Fiction must be a criticism of life, not of its trivialities. The historical novel in the hands of a master does at least permit that isolation of essentials from accidentals, and that critical detachment, which is of the essence of the novelist's art.

Footnotes

13 *picaresque*: a genre of narrative fiction dealing episodically with the adventures of an individual, usually an attractive rogue (*OED* 13 September 2013).

14 *lays*: short lyric or narrative poems intended to be sung (*OED* 13 September 2013).

19-20 *the reign of Queen Anne*: the last Stuart monarch, who reigned 1702-14 (*CBD* 13 September 2013).

21 *Mr Lytton Strachey*: Giles Lytton Strachey (1880-1932), English biographer, whose *Eminent Victorians* (1918) was an important development in the art of biography, turning it from an accumulation of facts into a literary genre (*CBD* 13 September 2013).

23 *demoded*: something that has gone out of fashion (*OED* 13 September 2013); in this case, the historical novel.

23 *War and Peace*: a novel by the Russian author Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), published 1863-69, but set mainly during the period of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 (*CBD* 13 September 2013).

23-24 *Victor Hugo's*: the two best known works by the French author, Victor Hugo (1802-85), are both historical novels. *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831) is set in the 1480s, while *Les Misérables* (1862) covers the period 1815-32 (*CBD* 13 September 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

24 *Vanity Fair... Waterloo*: *Vanity Fair* by William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63) was published in 1847-48, but is set in the period of the Battle of Waterloo (1815) (*CBD* 13 September 2013).

25 *Scott's*: Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), Scottish novelist and poet best known for his historical novels, which began with *Waverley*, published in 1814 (*CBD* 13 September 2013).

25 *Flaubert*: the French novelist Gustave Flaubert (1821-80). Although his most famous novel, *Madame Bovary* (1857), has a near contemporary setting, two of his other well-known works are historical novels. *Salammô* (1862) is set in Carthage during the third century BC, while *Sentimental Education* (1869) covers the period of the 1848 revolution in France (*CBD* 13 September 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

25 *Anatole France*: French writer (1844-1924), whose works include the historical novels *Thaïs* (1890), based on events in the life of St Thaïs of Egypt, a legendary fourth century convert to Christianity; *At the Sign of the Reine Pédauque* (1890), a novel of life in eighteenth century France; and *The Gods are Athirst* (1912), about Paris during the French Revolution (13 and 26 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

26-27 *Mrs Wharton's....New York*: Edith Wharton (1862-1937), American short story writer and novelist, wrote many chronicles of old New York society, beginning with *The House of Mirth* (1905). Perhaps the most well-known, *The Age of Innocence* (1920), is set in the New York of the 1870s and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for literature (CBD 13 September 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

27-28 *Willa Cather's....Lost Lady*: Willa Cather (1873-1947) was an American author whose *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927) is based on the work of two French missionaries in mid-nineteenth century New Mexico. Her earlier novel, *A Lost Lady* (1923), looks back to the pioneering era in America and the building of the railroads (13 and 26 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

30-31 *Mr Neil Munro's The New Road*: a Scottish novelist and journalist, Neil Munro (1863-1930) published *The New Road* in 1914. It is set in 1733 and its title refers to the English General George Wade's military road through the central Highlands of Scotland, part of his plan to pacify the region after the Jacobite rebellion of 1715 (CBD 13 September 2013).

31 *Mr Hergesheimer's Java Head*: Joseph Hergesheimer (1880-1954) was an American author whose *Java Head* (1919), about ship-owners in Salem, Massachusetts in the 1840s, was a critical and popular success (13 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

31 *Mr R H Mottram's Our Mr Dormer*: Ralph Hale Mottram (1883-1971) was a bank clerk in Norwich who wrote poetry before the First World War, turning to novels in the 1920s. *Our Mr Dormer* (1927) began a trilogy of historical novels about banking life in the early 1800s, being followed by *The Boroughmonger* (1929) and *Castle Island* (1931) (13 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

32 *Herr Feuchtwanger's*: this is Lion Feuchtwanger (1884-1958), German novelist and playwright, who was a prominent figure in the literary circles of Weimar Germany in the 1920s. His historical novel, *The Ugly Duchess* (1923, English translation 1927), about the fourteenth century Countess of Tyrol, Margarete Maultasch, was a great success in Britain (CBD 13 September 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

33 *Mr Thornton Wilder's Bridge of San Luis Rey*: the American playwright and novelist, Thornton Wilder (1897-1976), published his second novel, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, in 1927. It centres on a fictional event – the collapse of an Inca rope bridge in Lima, Peru, in 1714. The novel was a best seller and won the Pulitzer Prize (CBD 13 September 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

44 *Wardour Street romance*: the tendency of some modern writers to use pseudo-archaic language in writing historical novels (OED 13 September 2013).

44 *tushery*: meaning sentimental or romanticised writing, this is a term originally coined by Robert Louis Stevenson in 1883 for the excessive use of affected archaisms in historical romances, such as 'tush!' for an exclamation of impatient contempt (OED 13 September 2013).

58 *the Idylls of the King*: the twelve narrative poems which form the 'Arthurian sequence', written by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92) at various stages of his career and published between 1859 and 1885. They retell the legend of King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, and the Knights of the Round Table, and have often been interpreted as an allegory of mid-Victorian society (CBD 13 September 2013 and <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Here Buchan seems to be suggesting that, by projecting Victorian values onto a legend of the past, the *Idylls of the King* reproduces the most common fault of historical romance.

59 *Romola*: a historical novel by George Eliot (1819-80), set in fifteenth century Florence (CBD 13 September 2013).

65-66 *the Aristotelian 'recognition' and 'reversal of fortune'*: terms used by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (see Article 16) to describe two key elements in the plot of tragic drama. 'Recognition' (*anagnorisis*) occurs when the hero makes a crucial discovery about his own true nature or that of another character. 'Reversal of fortune' (*peripeteia*) is a turning point in the plot which brings about a reversal of circumstances for the hero or another character (13 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

69 *The 'turbid mixture of contemporaneousness'*: a phrase used by James Russell Lowell (1819-91), American poet and essayist, in his collection of literary and historical essays *Among My Books* (1877), to describe the great works of Greek literature which exclude 'all turbid mixture of contemporaneousness, and have become to us pure literature, our judgment and enjoyment of which cannot be vulgarized by any prejudices of time or place' (177) (CBD 13 September 2013 and <<http://archive.org>>).

70-71 *'pulsing with actuality....the deeps of modernity'*: I have been unable to trace the two phrases in quotation marks here. They are probably descriptions invented by Buchan to typify what he thought was the pretentious language used in some modern criticism.

ARTICLE 24

'Conservatism and Progress'

Spectator 143 (23 November 1929): 754-55. Signed.

Headnote

When Buchan wrote this article he had been Conservative Member of Parliament for the Scottish Universities for some two and a half years, but his interest in politics stretched back far longer. He had given careful thought to a political career while he was in South Africa, and as early as June 1904, soon after his return to London, he had been approached to be the Conservative and Unionist parliamentary candidate for South Edinburgh. But at that time Buchan had no private income and, as MPs were not paid until 1911, he could not afford to accept the offer. However, he kept up his political interests and contacts, and was elected to the Political Economy Club in 1909. When another opportunity came in March 1911 to be the prospective candidate for Peebles and Selkirk, he took it. By now he had a salaried income from Nelson's the publishers as well as his journalism for the *Spectator* to provide the finance. He nursed the constituency for over three years until the outbreak of the First World War, even though there was no election during that period and there seemed little prospect of overturning the fairly comfortable majority of the incumbent Liberal MP, Donald Maclean, father of the future Cambridge spy of the same name. After the war, Buchan was exhausted and needed to recuperate, so he did not return to politics until his election as an MP in 1927 (Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 88, 104, 106).

Buchan was never especially partisan in his political views. When he talked of going into politics before becoming a parliamentary candidate in 1911, there were doubts among his political friends as to which party he would support. He held some particularly progressive views for a Conservative candidate, favouring in principle reform of the House of Lords and the old age pensions, health and unemployment insurance introduced by the pre-war Liberal government (Smith, *Biography* 180, 182). When he eventually became an MP in 1927, he took the opportunity as a university member to 'sit a little loose to parties' and be 'independent in fact if not in name' (*MHD* 222).

Something of the dichotomy of Buchan's political views can be seen in both the title of this article, 'Conservatism and Progress', and its content, which shows how he reconciled these two contradictory aspects of his political beliefs. It was written for a special edition of the *Spectator* entitled 'Outlining a Better World', which contained contributions from other well-known commentators of the day, including John Galsworthy, Aldous Huxley, and Clough Williams-Ellis.

CONSERVATISM AND PROGRESS

Let me begin by saying that I dislike the word "Conservatism." It seems to connote the duty of preserving always, at any cost, when the real duty may be that of ruthless destruction. It suggests an antagonism to rational change. It implies an approval of the lack-lustre moderate who refuses to take risks. As for the political usage of the word, I should prefer to be called a Tory, which originally meant an Irish robber,* since even a bandit seems to me to have a more hopeful attitude to life than he who cherishes relics which should long ago have been buried or burned.

Yet there is no reason why we should limit a term to its degraded use. I am inclined to think that to-day we are less slaves to words than our fathers were. We examine more
10 rigorously the counters of thought, and the change is due to an honest shrinking from dogmatic absolutism in every sphere – in science, art, politics and religion. The choice is not between despotism and anarchy, a blind authority and a ruthless licence. Everyone, whatever his label, recognizes that progress is a law of life, and that the power to change is essential to preservation.

15 But while this is generally admitted, the emphasis will be differently placed according to a man's temperament. There will always be Apollo and Dionysus* – on the one side, the mind which especially loves law and order and exults in the continuity of things, and, on the other, the adventurous mind which sees in the world a perpetual new birth. Each has its defects; each has its shining virtues; together they are capable of great achievements.
20 The one brings to the common stock prudence, knowledge and discipline, the other freedom, originality and courage. Society can no more do without both attitudes of mind than a man can do without both sides of his head.

I believe that no lasting progress can be attained in any sphere except by the conflict, and ultimately the co-operation, of the two temperaments. Here I am concerned with the first
25 alone, and solely on the political side. Let me set down briefly what seem to me the contributions to political progress made by that which we may call Conservatism, the school which does not under-rate authority and tradition, and which believes that to break with the past is to break with the future.

In the first place this respect for tradition will save us from a barren intellectualism. There
30 is much political truth in Newman's favourite quotation,* "*Non in dialectica complacuit Deo salvum facere populum suum*" – Not in cold logic is it God's will that His people should find salvation. It is easy enough to devise schemes of progress which are formally perfect; there is no gap in the logic of the deduction; the fault lies in the imperfect understanding of the data. Human society, like all organic things, is a complex growth which cannot be fully
35 comprised by any set of categories. There is much in it which must remain unrationalized, and perhaps not rationalizable. The conservative accepts certain things as facts, even things that do not square with any theory, for he knows that blindness to facts will sooner or later bring to failure the most elaborate structure erected on the most impeccable theory. He is inclined to be suspicious of mere logic and highly suspicious of all
40 abstractions. He dislikes undue simplifications and anything that savours of mechanism, for he knows that the mechanical is simple and the organic subtle and intricate, and it is the organic with which he is concerned. The problem in all politics is how to give to actual human beings the chance of a worthy life. It is four-square human beings whom we have to deal with, not whimsies such as the "political" man or the "economic" man, and it is
45 human beings with a long descent behind them and with history in their bones. If the past has no meaning for a man, all problems will be considered on the supposition that human nature is like a mathematical quantity, and that a solution can be reached by an austere mathematical process. The result will be inhuman, and therefore a tyranny, whether it be erected in the name of reaction or of revolution.

50 Conservatism has, of course, its dangers on this side. We may appreciate the value of tradition and the potency of the illogical, and content ourselves with that. Hence the "standpatter,"* the blind devotee of things as they are. There is a perpetual duty for the intellect to examine the bequest of tradition and to get rid of whatever has outlived its usefulness. The motto of true Conservatism is Lord Falkland's saying,* "Where it is not
55 necessary to change it is necessary not to change." But the necessity for change is

continuous, and to prune tradition and get rid of dead wood needs a constant mental vigilance.

In the second place, a reasoned conservatism will ensure our practical usefulness. The pure reason is not the practical reason. The conservative reformer should be very close to realities. He is not intoxicated by his ideals, for he knows that he is living in an imperfect world. He is aware that, if failure is to be avoided, it is necessary to build on old foundations and use old material; or, to adopt a more accurate metaphor, that there should be no violent disruption, that growth should be continuous like the growth of a plant. With a living thing you cannot have changes which are too drastic, just as you cannot transplant easily a well-grown tree; and you cannot have cessation of growth, for that means death. The hasty idealist believes that he can wipe the slate clean and write on it what he pleases; but never in history has that feat been achieved; the old writing shows through and makes nonsense of the new. The point is not whether this slate-cleaning is desirable or not, but that it cannot be done.

The conservative may well be a violent innovator. He has no passion for change for change's sake, and he has not the itch of the restless progressive to be always tinkering at the fabric. But when the case for change is clear he will act boldly, for he sets no sentimental value on a tradition which has lost the stuff of life. But he will insist on continuity, on preserving in the new whatever is still valuable in the old, since he dislikes waste, and does not believe that a new world can be built out of human beings and human institutions as if they were squares in a child's box of bricks. He wants its roots to be deep.

In the third place, he does not disregard the foibles of human nature. Mankind does not give its loyalty to an abstract ideal, but to familiar and concrete things – a country, a society, a church, a monarch, institutions. If we are to advance to a better state of things it seems to me essential that we should carry these loyalties along with us, so that, in Plato's words,* "the quest of truth shall not lack the warmth of desire." An ideology with no background of emotion is a feeble thing. Take a man's patriotism. It is not based on a cold perception of the merits of his particular government, or the supposed qualities of his nation. Primarily it rests upon small things: his affection for his native parish or village, the memories of his youth, his companionships, the love of what Burke called "the little platoon"* in which he was first brigaded, a whole world of lesser loyalties. He is a Yorkshireman or a Scot before he is a Briton, and a Briton before he is a citizen of the world; and he will not be a good Briton unless he is first of all a good Yorkshireman, or a good cosmopolitan unless he is a good Briton. That is the supreme value of tradition. It is surcharged with an emotion, which is one of the most potent things in life, and which cannot spring from mere intellectual conviction.

The two great problems of to-day in the widest sense are, I take it, the business of reaching a true democracy, where everyone shall be given a chance not only of a livelihood, but of a worthy life, and the business of building up some kind of world-wide *régime* which shall ensure peace and co-operation between the nations. In the first task the importance of tradition is obvious. Life is not an abstraction, but a richly differentiated thing, and every stage should inherit the emotion-charged loyalties which are rooted deep in the past. In the second task it seems to me that its value is not less manifest. Mankind cannot jump from national and local affections to an austere internationalism. The patriotism of humanity can only be obtained by broadening and enriching the lesser patriotisms. A "self-sufficing Empire,"* in the common sense of the word, might indeed be a fatal bar, since it would perpetuate on a colossal scale racial jealousies and local rivalries. But the British Empire, on the true view of it, seems to me the natural stepping stone to the wider union,

105 since it broadens our natural loyalties, and at the same time gives to these loyalties the glamour of a long ancestry and a rich emotional content.

Such seem to be the merits of the attitude of mind which we may call conservative, traditional, or, as I should prefer, historical. Let me add that it has very little to do with current party divisions. I have known members of my own party who had no trace of it, and members of the Labour Party who were inclined to carry it almost too far.

Footnotes

5 *Tory...Irish robber*: Tory is an Anglicised spelling of the Irish word *tóraidhe*, meaning one of the Irish who, dispossessed of their land by English settlers in the first half of the seventeenth century, became outlaws robbing and plundering the English colonists and soldiers (*OED* 13 September 2013).

16 *Apollo....Dionysus*: Buchan is referring to a philosophical dichotomy, most often associated with Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), which is based on the different characteristics of these two gods of ancient Greek mythology, who were both sons of Zeus. Apollo, the god of the sun, represented order, logic and reason, whereas Dionysus, the god of wine, represented chaos, emotion and creativity (13 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Buchan develops these contrasting characteristics further in this paragraph.

30 *Newman's favourite quotation*: the quotation appears on the title page of the 1874 edition of *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, a seminal work in defence of religion as a legitimate product of rational human activity, first published in 1870 by the English theologian John Henry Newman (1801-90), who became a Roman Catholic Cardinal in 1879. The quotation is from *De Fide ad Gratianum Augustum* (On Faith, To Gratian Augustus) by St Ambrose (c340-397), Archbishop of Milan, religious advisor to the Roman Emperor Gratian, and one of the most influential ecclesiastical figures of the fourth century (*CBD* 13 September 2013, <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>, <<http://archive.org>>; and 16 September 2013 <<http://www.academia.eu>>).

51-52 *the 'standpatter'*: a term used mainly in the United States to describe a person who adheres to an existing policy or state of things, refusing to consider any proposals for change (*OED* 13 September 2013).

54 *Lord Falkland's saying*: Lucius Carey (c1609-43), Viscount Falkland, was an English statesman who took the king's side in the Civil War and was killed at the battle of Newbury. This saying has not been authoritatively sourced, but it probably comes from one of Falkland's parliamentary speeches in opposition to the Root and Branch Bill for the abolition of episcopacy (church government by bishops) in 1641 (*ODNB* 9 July 2013, and 16 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Buchan had previously quoted the saying, together with his assertion that it is the motto of true conservatism, in his biography of *Montrose* (1928): 23.

80-81 *in Plato's words*: Buchan appears to be mistaken here. The words quoted are not Plato's, but those of Benjamin Jowett (1817-93), an English scholar of Greek who translated Plato's *Dialogues*, which were published with his own introductions in four volumes in 1871. A revised five-volume edition appeared in 1875 (*ODNB* 16 September 2013). In his introduction to Plato's *Symposium* (also known as *Banquet*) in the second volume of this revised edition, Jowett summarises the principal theme of the *Symposium*, that it is not impossible to unite the contrasting characteristics of reason and passion, so that 'there may be some few – perhaps one or two in a whole generation – in whom the light of truth

may not lack the warmth of desire' (19) (16 September 2013 <<http://archive.org>>). This is very close to the words which Buchan attributes to Plato here. He had previously used them in connection with a reference to Plato's *Banquet* in his historical novel *The Path of the King* (1921): 107.

85-86 what Burke called 'the little platoon': Edmund Burke (1729-97), the British political philosopher and statesman, in his *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790) wrote: 'To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country, and to mankind' (London: JM Dent, 1910: 44) (CBD 13 September 2013, and 26 September 2013 <<http://archive.org>>).

100-01 A 'self-sufficing Empire': I have been unable to trace a specific source for this phrase. It was originally associated with the controversial Protection policy launched by the former Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain in October 1903, which advocated the imposition of tariffs to shelter the Empire from the competition of protectionist countries such as Germany and the United States. This policy for a 'self-sufficing Empire' was revived in the 1920s, but was again proving to be controversial at the time that Buchan was writing this article (26 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Here he seems to be suggesting that a protectionist, self-sufficient British Empire developed in accordance with this policy would be a bar to any further international synthesis, whereas a more broadly conceived free trade Empire could be a stepping stone to a wider union.

ARTICLE 25

'England's Changing Face'

Graphic 129 (2 August 1930): 190. Signed.

Headnote

By the time Buchan began writing a series of fortnightly articles for the *Graphic* magazine in April 1930 he was an MP and close friend and advisor not only of the Conservative party leader, Stanley Baldwin, but also Ramsay Macdonald, the Labour leader and fellow Scot, who had succeeded Baldwin as Prime Minister in June 1929 (Smith, *Biography* 327-32). The *Graphic* articles concentrate mainly on politics and economics and, because of Buchan's position as a political insider, they provide an interesting commentary on the political crisis and economic depression that engulfed Britain in the early 1930s as a consequence of the Wall Street Crash in America.

This particular article for the *Graphic*, though not overtly political, reflects one of Buchan's special concerns at this time. Living in the countryside at Elsfield, near Oxford, he took a keen interest in the growing movement which sought to preserve the rural landscape from modern road development and house-building. He became involved in the Oxford Preservation Trust and its fund-raising events, sat on the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, and was the first President of its Oxford branch. In February 1930 he had spoken in the parliamentary debate on the Rural Amenities Bill, arguing in similar terms to this article that, although rural England is not a 'museum' (line 35), it is a source of 'refreshment' for the ordinary citizen (line 13), and a balance needs to be struck between preserving the countryside and building roads and houses (Lownie, *Presbyterian Cavalier* 215-16, 236). He followed this up with two further articles for the *Graphic* in which he supported the call for a national Board of Amenities (G86) and, reflecting his local interest, reviewed the *Regional Planning Report on Oxfordshire* (G94).

ENGLAND'S CHANGING FACE

We are all agreed that the face of England is changing. Not, I hope, the heart. But the aspect which the English countryside wears to us is not that which it wore to our fathers.

It looks as if we had suddenly become awake to the beauty which we are in danger of losing. There are numerous new societies for preserving rural England, for regional
5 planning, for ridding the highways of their ugliness, for making new buildings conform to the laws of decency and good taste. That is, at any rate, something gained. But, as usually happens, men's eyes are only opened to what they are losing when a good deal has already been lost. Is the rural beauty of England slipping away under our hand?

It is a wholly unique thing, this English loveliness. I have travelled in a good many lands,
10 and I have never seen any place with the peculiar quality of the English countryside. Englishmen have always realised it, but they have not troubled much about it. It has been a pleasant background to our life, taken for granted, like the changes of the seasons.

We knew it was there for our refreshment when we wanted it. We felt its spirit in all our
15 literature. It seemed a thing so deep-founded, so part of ourselves, that nothing could change it so long as England endured. But now it is threatened, and we have suddenly to

bestir ourselves in its preservation, and with that threat has come a keener consciousness of its value.

In the first place, the beauty of rural England is a subtle thing. It has not the obvious picturesqueness of a Highland glen or a Swiss valley. There is nothing violent in the appeal
20 of its low muffled hills, its slow streams, its wide blue distances. In May the wealth of blossom and greenery makes it shout aloud, but its voice is usually soft and secret. A winter ploughland, a pasture ringed with autumn woods, a June water-meadow; such things weave their spell slowly and imperceptibly over the mind of the beholder.

Secondly, it depends for its charm largely upon the visible evidences of the past. A
25 Cotswold village looks as if it had been there since the hills were made, for it is as integral a part of the landscape as a boulder in the field. Old manors and old churches, winding roads which originally linked farm to farm, fields which were first marked out in the time of Domesday Book,* mills which ground the corn of the monasteries – all such historic
30 memorials combine to give a dominant impression of continuity, of a dozen older Englands existing side by side with the new.

Rural England marries the centuries and reminds us of our long descent. But its historic glamour is as delicate a thing as the beauty of its landscape, and too much that is raw and novel will destroy it.

Lastly, rural England is essentially a habitable and inhabited place. Its appeal is not that of
35 solitude. Nor is it a museum piece. It has the air of a comfortable, long-settled land, the home of many people, with a snug and vigorous life of its own. Half the comfort of it comes from its air of well-being, and half its charm depends upon rural prosperity.

If these are the characteristics of rural England, what are the dangers which threaten them? Principally two – that towns and villages will lose their compactness and sprawl out
40 into the fields, thereby marring the pleasant harmony of the work of man and the work of nature, which our forefathers, by a happy chance, achieved; and that, on the other hand, rural life will so decay that the villages will become dormitories for urban workers, and the close tillage of an older England will return to prairie.

Then we shall have the kind of shaggy landscape which you find today in some parts of
45 America – roads flanked with shacks and posters instead of hedgerows, and beyond them unkempt, uncared-for fields. Such barbarism would be the end of the beauty of rural England, which is pre-eminently a civilised thing.

Changes there must be, as there have always been. The coming of the railroads set lovers of beauty shrieking, but the railway has fitted itself wonderfully into the landscape; a
50 wayside country station is as much a rural thing as a country inn. You cannot, as I have said, treat rural England as a museum piece. It is for use, not for ornament; or rather, it was so ornamental just because it was so useful.

By-passes and new motor roads, if properly handled, will not spoil it. Indeed, they may provide that sense of contrast between movement and rest, that link with a different
55 world, which is the essence of romance. And they may acquire something of the quality of the Roman roads, accentuating rural peace by their purposeful striding across the landscape. There will always remain plenty of the traditional rolling English roads which, according to Mr. Chesterton, were first made by the rolling English drunkard.*

The control of new building will soon, I hope, be the fixed policy of both national and local
60 authorities. There is neither economy nor beauty in the sort of thing which the enterprise

of speculative builders is now peppering about the land. People must be housed, but they need not be housed in eyesores. A town must grow, but not in a shapeless wen* which spoils its ancient amenities.

65 The need for supervision is the greater, for we cannot console ourselves with the thought that our worst modern buildings will soon crumble down. They have a horrible continuing power, and have probably a far greater chance of perpetuity than a Tudor cottage.

70 But to me the greatest menace to rural England is the decay of rural prosperity. If that goes everything goes. If the land can no longer support its old population the land will lose its beauty. The first guarantee for a continuance of the English landscape is not aesthetic but economic. Nature has its own peculiar harmonising power, and makes a harvest field reaped by the latest mechanical device as beautiful a thing as a field cut by the sickle; but the human life must be there, or nature is helpless.

75 We may hope for one good result from the closer contact today between town and country, in the wider recognition of the importance of English farming. The townsman has been too apt to regard it as something which did not concern him; presently he may realise that it is at the root of the rural charm to which he has become a convert.

80 I believe that most of the amenities of the English countryside can be preserved, but one, I think, must go. In how many English landscapes is not the chief feature a huge park, often surrounded by a massive wall, containing noble timber and wide strips of pasture, and at the heart of it a great house? At its gates several hamlets may cluster, and it is the focus of life for a whole rural community.

85 Well, it looks as if the day of such places had gone. Many have passed from the hands of their old masters, and the new owner, even if he lives in the house, retains only enough land to give him privacy and provide a few coverts.* The feudal dignity of the past has vanished and can never be resurrected.

How great a difference will this make to the face of England? Not very much, perhaps. The parks, if agriculture revives, may be put to a better use, and where, like Ashridge,* they are beautiful pieces of wild country, they may be, in part or whole, preserved for the use of the nation.

90 The great houses were never much a feature of the landscape, for the humble traveller could scarcely get a glimpse of them. It will be all to the good if the park walls decay. As for the structures, they will become schools or institutions, or, if they are allowed to crumble, they may be quarries out of which new houses are built.

95 Like all radical changes, this has its drawbacks, but it has also its compensations. If the great house goes there may be more lesser houses, whose owners will presently fall under the ancient spell of the English scene.

100 There is an historic parallel to comfort us, which goes deeper than the face of England. When, in the sixteenth century, the monasteries were dissolved and the ancient nobility decayed, many modest manor houses were built out of their ruins by new men, just as today new men are adapting old farmhouses into small country seats. And from these new manor houses came the Englishmen who made famous the age of Elizabeth and were the leaders in the Civil War.

Footnotes

27-28 *the time of Domesday Book*: this was a survey of most of England and parts of Wales carried out by order of William the Conqueror and completed in 1086. Its main purpose was to find out how much each landowner held in land and livestock so that taxes could be assessed (26 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

58 *according to Mr Chesterton....the rolling English drunkard*: a reference to a well-known comic poem by GK Chesterton (1874-1936), first published as 'A Song of Temperance Reform' in the *New Witness* in 1913. It was subsequently included in Chesterton's novel, *The Flying Inn* (1914). The poem's first two lines are: 'Before the Roman came to Rye or out to Severn strode, / The rolling English drunkard made the rolling English road' (26 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>).

62 *wen*: a stain or blemish; a lump or tumour (*OED* 26 September 2013).

84 *coverts*: thickets or similar places which give shelter to wild animals or game (*OED* 26 September 2013).

87 *Ashridge*: a country house with a five thousand acre estate situated in the Chiltern Hills some two miles north of Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire. It was in the ownership of the Egerton family from 1604 until 1921, when the estate passed to the National Trust while the house was acquired by a private trust established by Andrew Bonar Law, who became Conservative Prime Minister in 1922-23. In 1929 the house became Bonar Law College, a political education centre under the auspices of the Conservative Party. Today it is Ashridge Business School, an independent non profit-making organisation (26 September 2013 <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). Buchan gave two lectures at Bonar Law College in 1930-31, which were published in the *Ashridge Journal* (*Blanchard* 191, item D124; and 192, item D148). He also wrote a short article for the journal on the October 1931 General Election campaign (**G103**).