

Preface

This dictionary is intended to exhibit and illustrate the whole range of the Older Scottish vocabulary, as preserved in literary, documentary, and other records, down to the year 1600, and to continue the history of the language down to 1700, so far as it does not coincide with the ordinary English usage of that century. Words not found before 1600 are also included when they are not current, or are not used in the same sense, in English of the period, or when they have some special bearing on Scottish history or life. The closing of the record with 1700 rests on the practical ground that after that date few traces of the older literary language remain, and Scottish survives only as a dialect, differing so much both in form and vocabulary from the earlier standard that the two periods can be fully and consistently treated only in separate dictionaries.

The full vocabulary of the language throughout this older period is included, because any attempt to limit it to words or senses entirely or specially Scottish would (in the lack of complete dictionaries of Middle and Early Modern English) constantly render selection difficult or arbitrary, and would also fail to exhibit fully the relationship between the languages of Scotland and England during the period when they were most distinct from each other.

In contrast to the closely related Northern Middle English, which has a copious literature throughout the fourteenth century, the continuous Scottish record begins only with Barbour's *Brus* in 1375 and the contemporary *Legends of the Saints*. Before that date the scanty evidence has mainly to be gleaned from the place-names and personal designations occurring in the Latin charters or other documents relating to the south-eastern counties, or from legal terms employed in a Latin context in the early laws. These sources have been carefully examined for this evidence, which enables the Scottish form of a considerable number of common words to be traced back to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. After 1400 the material, both literary and documentary, becomes copious, though not complete in every respect, since words which must have been commonly used in speech are often missing from both the literary and the other records, or rarely occur in them.

In a dictionary of this kind the dating of words and forms is important, but it has always to be borne in mind that this must to a certain extent be accidental. It is also necessary to distinguish between the evidence afforded by literary works and that based upon local records or dated documents. The latter are absolutely reliable (unless they happen to be later transcripts of the originals), whereas the literary works are frequently preserved only in copies much later than the date at which they were written. This naturally affects the form and spelling of many words in such texts, and even the words themselves may at times have been altered by the scribe or the printer. This applies to some important authors, such as Barbour, Henryson, and Dunbar, in the extant texts of whose works many forms occur which cannot be assigned to the author's own hand or time. In the dictionary each group of quotations is arranged in order of date, but this is not shown in the case of literary works where it does not vary, and can be ascertained from the

Register. The regular insertion of dates in these instances would have involved constant repetition and waste of space without corresponding advantage.

As the editors of Scottish texts, especially those taken from manuscripts, have not followed a uniform practice in certain respects, some inconsistencies in the form of the quotations have been unavoidable. In a few points, however, uniformity has been introduced, as in the regular use of *the* to the exclusion of *þe* or *ye*, of *s* in place of *ss* for the common final *β*, and of *ȝ* for *z*; in most instances *ȝ* might also be safely substituted for the consonantal *y*, but the latter has been retained when so printed in the texts. Absolute certainty with regard to some forms could only be attained by examination of the manuscript, especially when the expansion of contractions is not indicated by italics.

For reasons of space, as well as to indicate the relative importance of the words, those having only a limited currency are printed in smaller type. For the same reason, two methods of presenting the illustrative quotations have been adopted, the briefer form being employed for words which are not of historical importance, or do not differ materially in form and sense from the modern English equivalents. The difference between the two methods will be obvious on comparing the articles on ABBASY, ABBAY, and ABBOT with those on ABAK, ABHOR, or ABIDE.

Where two or more forms of the word are given in the heading of an article, the more etymological is placed first (e.g. ABADE, ABAID, *n.*; ABATE, ABAIT, *v.*), unless there are practical reasons for preferring the secondary form. Of the great number of variant spellings employed by the old Scottish scribes, only a few of the more important are entered in their alphabetic places; a complete index of such variants is given at the end of the volume, with a reference to the form under which each may be found.

In the etymological notes, the dates given for Middle English (ME.) and early Modern English (e.m.E.) forms are usually those of the earliest instances recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, but sometimes have been noted from other sources.

The dictionary, it will be obvious, is not merely a linguistic record. A large number of the words it contains are of historical or legal interest, are intimately connected with the older life of the Scottish nation, or are descriptive of the special features of the country. The history of many of these has hitherto been imperfectly traced, and much light is thrown upon them by the fuller evidence here presented.

The copious materials required for the compilation of the dictionary could not have been collected in any reasonable time without the co-operation of a number of voluntary workers, some of whom most generously devoted much time and labour to the work of reading and excerpting many volumes of records or literary texts. Among these the largest contributors were A. H. May, Esq., (15 Atholl Gardens, Glasgow), whose numerous and careful quotations from over fifty substantial volumes have throughout been of the greatest value, and the late Sir Bruce Seton (12 Grosvenor Crescent, Edinburgh), whose numerous excerpts in a briefer form from a still larger number of volumes were also of the greatest service by helping to ensure the completeness of the

vocabulary. Other substantial contributors were Miss May, daughter of Mr. A. H. May, and the Rev. G. Williams (Thornhill, Stirling), who dealt with some twenty volumes each; the late R. G. Whitwell, Esq. (of Oxford and London), Miss Anna Mill, Ph.D. (East Haven, Angus), who also provided valuable material from unpublished town accounts, and Miss Isdale (71 West Cumberland Street, Glasgow).

Two, three, or more volumes each were read by Miss Marjory A. Bald, M.A. (Edinburgh and Oxford), J. B. Hamilton, Esq. (11 Hatton Place, Edinburgh), the Rev. J. R. Macdonald (Eskmuir, Langholm), W. J. Macdonald, Esq. (15 Comiston Drive, Edinburgh), Professor R. L. G. Ritchie (University of Birmingham), J. Robertson, Esq., M.A. (Lerwick, Shetland), L. T. Sharp, M.A. (17 Marchmont Road, Edinburgh), George Smith, Esq. (Hillside, Milltimber, Aberdeenshire), Miss Soutar (39 Greenbank Crescent, Edinburgh), R. Morris Stewart, Esq., Mrs. A. Stuart (Craiglockhart Terrace, Edinburgh), the Rev. W. Thom (Tullibody, Clackmannanshire), Mrs. Torrance (Liverpool), Miss A. E. Walker (1 Westerton Road, Cults), W. A. Walker, M.A. (7 Booth Place, Falkirk), George Watson, Hon. M.A. (University of Chicago), who also supplied much material already recorded in earlier dictionaries, and A. M. Williams, Esq. (53 Sherbrooke Avenue, Glasgow). The Rev. J. B. Johnston (Falkirk), in addition to other material, contributed a number of early forms from his collection of place-names.

Single volumes were covered by the work of Mr. Ashton (Glasgow), Prof. P. F. Baum (Duke University, Durham, N.C.), Dr. George F. Black (New York Public Library), the Rev. Dr. G. Christie (2 Heriot Row, Edinburgh), A. Melville Clarke, M.A. (8 Harrison Road, Edinburgh), Donald Doull, Esq., G. M. Fraser, Esq. (Public Library, Aberdeen), Mrs. Kemshead (Oxford), A. Mackenzie-Catton, Esq., A. Russell, Esq., Mrs. Somerset (Oxford), Miss Sommerville (Edinburgh Ladies' College, Queen Street, Edinburgh).

The quantity of material contributed by these voluntary helpers, indispensable for the success of the undertaking, was largely augmented by reading done by myself, the copying of this being usually done by other hands. Several extensive and important texts, including Wyntoun and Hay, were copied entire by my sister, Mary Craigie, yielding many thousands of basic quotations, some of which usually appear on every page of the dictionary. The most extensive and important contributions, however, have been those made by Miss Isabella B. Hutchen, who has been specially engaged on this work since 1921, when she began to organize and direct the work done by the voluntary readers. Since then she has personally worked through some three hundred volumes of printed and manuscript material, which have yielded a vast number of valuable quotations, has copied out the glossaries to the publications of the Scottish Text Society, and has helped in the sub-editing of the earlier letters. Without her work on unprinted material in the Register House at Edinburgh many words would either have been imperfectly illustrated or altogether absent from the dictionary. In arranging the collective material, and in other ways, I have also from the beginning been greatly assisted by my wife.

The actual preparation of copy of the printer was begun at the University of Chicago in the winter of 1925–6, and was carried on more steadily after funds to provide assistance became available through the grants for research made to the University in 1927 by the

General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation. With this assistance, and the co-operation of the University of Chicago Press, it was found possible to commence publication in 1931. In the initial stages of this the services of Mr. George Watson were of much value in settling details of method and of printing, in the preparation of copy, and in the compilation of the register of works cited. Preparative work by Mr. Otto Schmidt, and from time to time by research students, also contributed to the progress of the work from 1928 onwards.

In addition to those already named, thanks are due to several well-wishers who have facilitated the use by Miss Hutchen of the resources in Edinburgh, viz. the late Rev. Dr. John Morrison, Church of Scotland Library, William Angus, Esq., H. M. Payton, Esq., and C. T. McInnes, Esq., of H. M. Register House, Dr. Henry W. Meikle, librarian of the National Library, Dr. C. Malcolm, of the Signet Library, and F. C. Nicholson, Esq., M.A., of the University Library. To these, as well as to the contributors, not only the editor but all users of the dictionary are greatly indebted.

In addition to the financial assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation, without which it would have been difficult to carry on the work at all, welcome contributions were made at an early stage of the undertaking by the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, and by the late Col. Walter Scott of New York.

Of earlier works which have proved useful in the preparation of the dictionary the most important are Dr. John Jamieson's well-known *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, which in the original or later editions has been a standard work for over a century, and the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The glossaries and notes to the publications of the Scottish Text Society have also been of the greatest value as a ready means of covering and dealing with the vocabulary of those texts.

In conclusion, it may not be superfluous to mention that in undertaking and carrying out this work I have had the advantage of a familiar knowledge of the Scottish tongue from my earliest years, and an interest in its older literature from the age of twelve.

WILLIAM A. CRAIGIE.

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