

*Scottish History Society: Fifty Years, 1886-1936*

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(from the Society's volume for 1936)

In *Weir of Hermiston* Louis Stevenson said of his country-men: 'That is the mark of the Scot of all classes—that he stands in an attitude towards the past unthinkable to Englishmen, and remembers and cherishes the memory of his forbears, good and bad; and there burns alive in him a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation.' One result of the national character is the great number of historical and antiquarian societies which our small country has produced since the foundation in 1780 of the Society of Antiquaries, still flourishing in youthful vigour. In the nineteenth century came the printing clubs, the Bannatyne Club (1823), the Maitland Club (1828), the Abbotsford Club (1833), the Spalding Club (1839), the Wodrow Society (1841), the Spottiswoode Society (1843), the Scottish Text Society (1882), and the many other societies whose work has been recorded by Professor Sanford Terry in his *Scottish Historical Clubs*.

The Scottish History Society had its origin in a letter from Lord Rosebery, which appeared in the *Scotsman* of February 3, 1886. Some public discussion had arisen with regard to the publications of the Scottish Text Society. After referring to this matter, Lord Rosebery went on to say: 'I think this an excellent opportunity for making a suggestion which is constantly present to my mind. We should have a Society in Scotland for printing the manuscript materials for Scottish history, especially social history, which are believed to exist in such abundance among us. I do not allude to charters, which gratify but few. I am thinking rather of letters or diaries of the seventeenth, eighteenth, or early nineteenth centuries. There is, I believe, a vast collection of these in existence; but every day brings peril to them of some kind or another, from the too negligent or scrupulous custodian. If these were printed they would not only be preserved from these risks, but would form a collection which would almost raise the wistful shade of Sir Walter himself.

'Why should we, then, not start such a Scottish Manuscript Society?' It would preserve the perishable; it would form a collection valuable to the literature of the whole world, but profoundly attractive to Scotsmen; and it would raise a national monument, even more consistent and durable than those spectral and embarrassed columns which perplex the tourist on the Calton Hill.'

Lord Rosebery's proposal was supported by a letter from the Bishop of Edinburgh, Dr John Dowden, cordially endorsing his suggestion. On February 17, on the invitation of Bishop Dowden, a meeting was held in the Forbes Library, Rosebery Crescent, Edinburgh, to discuss the proposal. Professor Masson presided, and among those present were Mr George Burnett, Lyon King of Arms Canon Bell; the Rev. Dr Cazenove; Mr J. T. Clark, Keeper of the Advocates' Library; the Rev. A. W. Cornelius Hallen; Mr Forbes Irvine of Drum; Bishop Jermyn of Brechin; Mr T. G. Law, Librarian of the Signet Library; Sheriff Æneas Mackay; Canon Murdoch Mr John Russell; and the Rev. Dr Sprott of North Berwick. Letters expressing approval and support were received from Mr T. W. Dickson of the Register House Colonel Alexander Fergusson, the Rev. Dr Cameron Lees, Dr W. F. Skene, Professor Kirkpatrick, and others. After discussion, it was resolved to form a Society for the printing of unpublished documents

illustrative of Scottish history in the widest sense of the term, and a Committee was appointed, consisting of Professor Masson, Mr Law, Mr Burnett, Mr Russell, and Bishop Dowden, to consider the whole question, prepare a draft constitution of the Society, and submit the results to a general meeting to be summoned when the labours of the Committee should be complete. The results of its work were laid before a meeting held in the Signet Library on April 21, 1886, when the Society was formally constituted. The object of the Society was defined as 'the discovery and printing, under selected editorship, of unpublished documents illustrative of the civil, religious, and social history of Scotland.' It was arranged that the affairs of the Society should be managed by the Office-bearers and a Council of twelve elected members. The membership was to be limited to 400 (a restriction which has since been removed); the subscription to be a guinea. An average annual output of two octavo volumes was proposed.

Lord Rosebery accepted office as President of the Society. The Chairman of the Council was Professor Masson. Mr T. G. Law became Honorary Secretary; and Mr J. J. Reid, Advocate, the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, Honorary Treasurer. Mr Reid died in 1889 and was succeeded as Treasurer by Mr J. T. Clark.

The Society was fortunate in its officers. Lord Rosebery was an ideal President. In 1886 he was the most famous and popular man in Scotland. He was first and last a great Scotsman. As John Buchan wrote of him when he died: 'In the early eighties, after the famous Midlothian campaign, in which he played Eugene to Mr Gladstone's Marlborough, he was by far the most interesting and promising figure in politics.' In 1881 he had become Under-Secretary in the Home Office, where he had devoted himself specially to Scottish affairs. In 1885 he had entered the Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal and First Commissioner of Works, and in the short-lived Gladstone Government of 1886 he had become Foreign Secretary. It is not, however, with his political life that we are here concerned. From his youth he had taken a keen interest in Scottish history. So early as 1871, he had delivered, at the opening of the session of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, an address on the Union of Scotland and England. The address is printed in his collected *Miscellanies*. It is a remarkable performance for a man of twenty-four. It shows not only a knowledge of the standard authorities, but a wide acquaintance with the fugitive literature of the time, its personalities, and its currents of opinion; and after sixty-five years his reflections on the Union have not lost their savour. Another memorable address on Scottish history was delivered as Lord Rector of Aberdeen University in 1880. He had laid the foundation of that famous collection of Scottish books, which now, by his generous gift in 1926, is one of the chief treasures of the National Library of Scotland, and he was developing the wide knowledge of historical sources, far outside Scottish limits, and the accomplishment as a historical writer, which were to give us the *Pitt*, the *Napoleon*, and the *Chatham*.

From the beginning Lord Rosebery took an active part in the work of the Society and gave us of his best. In the early years of the Society he presided when possible at the Annual Meeting and reviewed the year's work. The announcement of his presence always attracted a large and interested audience. His addresses are recorded in the Society's Annual Reports. One of special interest was the address delivered in 1897 on the gaps in Scottish history, especially regarding the Jacobite movements and the

social life of the eighteenth century, and the extent to which they have been filled by the work of the Society. This address has been printed in his *Miscellanies*. In 1889 he presented to the Society a volume of exceptional interest, *A List of Persons concerned in the Rebellion, transmitted to the Commissioners of Excise by the Several Supervisors in Scotland in Obedience to a General Letter of the 7th May 1746*. The List was printed from a manuscript in Lord Rosebery's own possession, the MS. being annotated by the Rev. Walter Macleod. Lord Rosebery himself wrote a preface, which is a notable contribution to Scottish history, outlining the events of the Rising and discussing its origins, the chances of its success, the causes of its failure, and the character of Prince Charles Edward.

Professor David Masson, who became Chairman of the Council, was the acknowledged *doyen* of Scottish historians and men of letters. The friend of Carlyle and of Thackeray, and the first editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, he had been Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature at Edinburgh since 1865. He was the author of the monumental *Life of Milton*, of lives of Chatterton and of Drummond of Hawthornden, and of many other volumes of literary biography. From 1880 to 1899 he was editor of the *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*. In 1898 he was appointed Historiographer Royal for Scotland. He was throughout a tower of strength to the Council.

But it was, above all, to Mr Thomas Graves Law that the Society owed its success. Mr Law had in early life taken orders in the Roman Church, and had been for more than twenty years a member of the congregation of the Oratorian Fathers at Brompton. There, while devoting himself to the active duties of a priest, he found his chief interest in historical and critical research. While at the Oratory he prepared a catalogue of its library, and undertook the arrangement of a valuable collection of sixteenth century MSS. belonging to Cardinal Manning. In 1878 he left the Church of Rome. In 1879 he was appointed Librarian of the Signet Library, where he showed himself the true successor of David Laing. In 1886, in a fortunate hour, he became Secretary of our Society. For the rest of his life the Society was, next to his official duties, the chief interest of his life. His work for us cannot be better described than in the words of Professor Hume Brown in the Memoir prefixed to the *Collected Essays and Reviews of Thomas Graves Law L.L.D.* (Edinburgh, 1904): 'In association with Professor Masson and Bishop Dowden, Mr Law threw himself enthusiastically into the work of founding the Society, and pledged his interest in its future by accepting the post of Honorary Secretary. When he undertook the duties of the post, he perhaps hardly realised the amount of labour it would entail. He conceived these duties, indeed, in the most exacting sense: not content with his strictly secretarial work, he virtually made himself co-editor of the successive publications of the Society. For seventeen years Mr Law was engaged in what was emphatically a labour of love—on the constant watch for materials for the Society's publications, and sparing no pains to present them to the world in worthy form. From the beginning it was realised by the members of the Society that its success was mainly due to his ability, tact, and enthusiasm; and in 1903 they gave substantial proof of their recognition of his services by presenting him with a silver bowl and a purse of two hundred guineas. In making the presentation, Lord Rosebery expressed with his usual felicity the collective feeling of the Society: "There is not a person here," he said, "and there is

not a person conversant with the work of this Society outside, who does not know the deep debt, the eternal debt of gratitude we owe to our Secretary, Mr Law, who has been the life and soul of the Society. He has acquired documents, he has superintended their printing, he has weeded the documents he has chosen, and from day to day and from hour to hour, all through the years the Society has existed, Mr Law has been its moving spirit." From first to last forty-four volumes were issued by the Society under Mr Law's supervision—a monumental contribution to the materials of Scottish history, with which his name will ever be honourably associated. Another distinction received by Mr Law should not be passed over, as he himself regarded it with peculiar pleasure: in 1898 the University of Edinburgh conferred on him its highest honour, the degree of Doctor of Laws, "in recognition of his learned labours and indefatigable industry."

The first Council of the Society included Bishop Dowden; Dr W. F. Skene, Historiographer Royal, the historian of Celtic Scotland; Dr Thomas Dickson, Curator of the Historical Department of the Register House; Dr George Burnett, Lyon King of Arms; Sheriff Æneas Mackay, the biographer of Stair and historian of Fife and Kinross; Professor John Kirkpatrick; J. T. Clark; Sir Arthur Mitchell; G. W. T. Omond, advocate, author of *The Lord Advocates of Scotland* and *The Arniston Memoirs*; J. R. Findlay of Aberlour; Colonel P. Dods; John Russell, author of *The Haigs of Bemersyde*; and John Maitland Thomson, who was for many years editor of the *Register of the Great Seal*, and who in 1895 succeeded Dr Dickson in the Register House. Among the corresponding members of Council were Mr Osmund Airy, Principal Cunningham of St Andrews, Professor George Grub, the Rev. Dr Sprott of North Berwick, Professor Veitch of Glasgow, and Professor Robertson Smith.

The Society soon attracted to the membership most of the men in Scotland who were actively interested in historical work. One notes some more of the names which appear in the early lists of the Council and of workers for the Society:-

Professor (afterwards Sir George) Prothero was Professor of History at Edinburgh from 1894 to 1899, and became President of the Royal Historical Society and Director the Historical Section of the Foreign Office. Professor (afterwards Sir John) Rankine was Professor of Scots Law at Edinburgh from 1888 to 1922, and was the author of the classic *Law of Landownership in Scotland*. James Ferguson of Kinmundy, Sheriff of Argyll, was the author of several legal works and of *Robert Ferguson the Plotter*, *Two Scottish Soldiers*, *Records of the Clan and Name of Ferguson*, and of various studies in military history. He edited for the Society *Papers illustrating the History of the Scots Brigade in the Service of the United Netherlands* in 3 volumes (1899–1901). G. M. Paul, afterwards Sir George, became Deputy Keeper of the Signet. He edited for the Society an excerpt from Johnston of Wariston's *Diary*, which appeared in the Miscellany volume presented to the Society by Messrs T. & A. Constable in 1896, and another volume of the *Diary* in 1909. James Balfour Paul, afterwards K.C.V.O., in 1890 succeeded Dr Burnett as Lyon King of Arms. He was the author of standard works of heraldry and of the *History of the Royal Company Archers*, and editor of the *Scots Peerage*. He edited the *Diary of George Ridpath, Minister of Stichel, 1755–176* issued by the Society in 1921. Sir Arthur Mitchell, K.C.B., distinguished alike as a civil servant and an archaeologist, was the author of *The Past in the Present*, based on the lectures given by him as the first Rhind Lecturer. He edited for the Society the

three volumes of *Macfarlane's Geographical Collections* (1905-1906), and he collected and arranged the material which after his death was edited by Mr C. G. Cash and printed by the Society under the title of *A Contribution to the Bibliography of Scottish Topography* (1917). Donald Crawford, sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford was Member of Parliament for N.E. Lanarkshire from 1885 to 1895. He became Sheriff of Aberdeen, Kincardine and Banff in 1895. In 1900 he edited for the Society the *Journal of a Foreign Tour in 1665 and 1666, etc.*, by Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, a most entertaining travel book. The Hon. Sir Hew Hamilton Dalrymple still renders eminent public service as Chairman of the Trustees of the Scottish National Galleries and as Vice-Chairman of the Trustees of the National Library. Peter Hume Brown, who in 1901 was appointed the first Fraser Professor of Ancient History and Palaeography in the University of Edinburgh, was the leading Scottish historian of his time, famous as the author of lives of Buchanan and John Knox, and of a standard *History of Scotland*. In 1908 he succeeded Masson as Historiographer Royal. In 1912 he edited for the Society a volume of *Letters of the Earl of Seafield and Others*, illustrative of the *History of Scotland* during the Reign of Queen Anne. David Patrick was the editor of Chambers's *Encyclopaedia*, Chambers's *Cyclopaedia of English Literature*, and Chambers's *Biographical Dictionary*, and was himself a man of encyclopaedic learning. His most notable single work in history was the edition of the *Statutes of the Scottish Church*, which he edited for the Society in 1907. J. R. N. Macphail, after-wards Sheriff of Stirling, Dumbarton and Clackmannan, was an expert in genealogy and peerage law, and had a wide knowledge of Highland history and documents. He did much work for the Society. He edited four volumes of *Highland Papers*, also the volume of *Selections from the Papers of the late Sir William Fraser*, presented to the Society by Sir William's Trustees (of whom Mr Macphail was one) in 1923. He was Chairman of the Council from 1922 to 1926. David Hay Fleming was eminent as a specialist on the periods of the Reformation and the Covenants. His *Mary Queen of Scots* is one of the land-marks of Scottish historical research. He edited for the Society *The Kirk Session Register of St Andrews* (2 vols., 1889, 1890), and the second volume of the *Diary of Johnston of Wariston* (1919). Robert Fitzroy Bell – of whom Professor Saintsbury wrote that 'he knew nothing bad, except that he died so soon' – was Secretary to the Scottish Universities Commission of 1889, and was the founder of the *Scots Observer* (Henley's *Scots Observer*, not the more recent periodical of that name). He edited for the Society the *Memorials of John Murray of Broughton*, issued in 1898.

An invaluable recruit was Walter Biggar Blaikie, head of the printing firm of T. & A. Constable. He was not only a keen and competent historical worker, but it was said of him with justice that he had brought to his trade 'the skill of an engineer, the eye of an artist, and the taste of a scholar.' The Society's books were from the beginning printed by Messrs Constable. Blaikie took end less personal trouble about them, with the result that every volume is a beautiful example of the printer's craft. His *Itinerary of Prince Charles Edward* and his *Origins of the '45* are notable contributions to the Society's publications.

A complete list of the Society's publications is issued to members from time to time along with the new volumes, and it need not be repeated here. It will, however, be of

interest to glance at some of the books issued during the first ten years, as illustrating the range and variety of the Society's work.

The first volume, the *Tours in Scotland, 1747, 1750, 1760* of Dr Richard Pococke, Bishop of Meath, edited by D. W. Kemp, issued in 1887, records the impressions and experiences of an observant visitor to the Scotland of this eighteenth century, and is illustrated with many antiquarian sketches by the author. *The Diary of William Cunningham of Craighends*, Commissioner to the Convention of Estates and Member of Parliament for Renfrewshire edited by the Rev. Dr James Dodds (1887), illustrates the social and economic conditions of life in the house of a Presbyterian laird in Renfrewshire under Charles II. *The Grameid* is James Philip's heroic Latin poem describing the campaign of Killiecrankie, translated and edited by the Rev. Alexander D. Murdoch (1888).

The two volumes of the *Kirk Session Register of St Andrews*, edited by Dr Hay Fleming (1889, 1890), cover the period from 1559 to 1600, and present a vivid picture of ecclesiastical government and discipline in the early days of the Reformed religion, and of the misdeeds of fornicators, observers of Yule, Papists, Sunday golfers, and other delinquents. There were differences of opinion: the famous Mr David Black, minister of St Andrews, describes some of his colleagues as—'Pynt-aill ministers, bellie-fallowis, sycophantis, gentillmenis ministeris, leideris of the pepill to Hell; and that a grait part of them were worthie to be hangit.'

*The Diary of the Reverend John Mill*, Minister of Dunrossness from 1740 to 1803, edited by Gilbert Goudie (1889), contains much information regarding life in Shetland from 1740 to 1803, including the alarms of the islands during the French and American wars. Mr Mill's experience included an interesting interview with Satan, who talked to him by the mouth of a 'possessed' woman. One is glad to note that the valiant minister 'called him (as indeed he was) a damned rascal for his lying impudence.' He records one very human trial 'I left my wife at Lerwick till the manse was got in order for her reception, supposing a married state would ease me in a great measure of worldly cares. But I soon found it rather increased them. The charge of repairing the manse straitened a little, but we soon got over it. The greatest plague was with cross-grained naughty servants being thievish and mischievous, and liker wild beasts than Christians.'

*The Narrative of Mr James Nimmo, 1654-1709*, edited by his descendant, W. G. Scott Moncrieff (1889), is a characteristic record of the religious experiences of a devoted Covenanter.

*The Glamis Book of Record*, edited by A. H. Millar (1890), contains a diary written by Patrick, first Earl of Strathmore, and other documents relating to Glamis Castle during the years 1684 to 1689.

John Major's *Greater Britain* (1892) is a translation by Archibald Constable of Major's *Historia Maioris Britanniae*, printed in 1521 and dedicated to King James V. Sheriff Æneas Mackay contributed a learned biography of Major, and Mr T. G. Law added a bibliography of the works of Major and his disciples, and an appendix of documents.

*The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, holden in Edinburgh in the years 1646 and 1647*, edited by the Rev. Dr A. F. Mitchell and the Rev. Dr James Christie (1892), record the proceedings of the Church in a time of trouble and danger. The volume includes some of the letters of the Assembly's Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly.

*The Court Book of the Barony of Urie in Kincardineshire, 1604-1747*, edited by the Rev. Douglas Gordon Barron (1892), throws much light on the conditions of life on a north-country estate during a century and a half, and illustrates in detail the working of the old system of heritable jurisdictions which came to an end after the Forty-five.

*The Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Baronet, Baron of the Exchequer, extracted by himself from his own Journals, 1676-1755*, were edited by Mr J. M. Gray, afterwards Curator of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, in 1892. Clerk was one of the Commissioners for the Union; as a young man he took an active part in politics, and as one of the Barons of Exchequer he was for many years an honoured public servant. He had travelled widely in his youth; he was a classical scholar, a musician, and an artist, and a zealous antiquary; in his old age he writes that 'I may truly say that I was never so happy as when learning something out of a book.' His Memoirs are a record of Scottish life, public and private, in the first half of the eighteenth century, as seen through the eyes of a public-spirited and accomplished Scottish gentleman.

*The Journal of the Hon. John Erskine of Carnock, 1683-1687*, was edited by the Rev. Walter Macleod (1893). Its chief interest is the account of the author's share in Argyll's disastrous enterprise in 1685, and of his subsequent escape to Holland. He returned to Scotland after the Revolution, and lived to become the father of John Erskine, the author of the *Institutes of the Law of Scotland*.

The first of the Society's Miscellany volumes was issued in 1893. It contains, with many other papers, the contemporary Catalogue of the Library of King James VI; documents illustrating Catholic policy in 1596-1598; letters of Sir Thomas Hope, Lord Advocate, 1627-1646; letters of Lauderdale to Archbishop Sharp; and various papers relating to the Civil War and to the Risings of 1715 and 1745.

*The Account Book of Sir John Foulis of Ravelston, 1671-1707*, edited by the Rev. A. W. Cornelius Hallen (1894), is a mine of information about the life of a happy and prosperous private family during a period of much public strife and bitterness. It is pleasant to read of intelligent and industrious estate management, friendly hospitality to rich and poor, study and sport, hunting, fishing, and golf, during the troubles of the later Stuart reigns and the days of the Revolution and the Union. After eight generations few entries in the Register of the Privy Council are more interesting than Sir John's note on December 7, 1672: 'For a golfe club to Archie, 6s.' or on February 9, 1691: 'To William for ye football, 14s.'

In 1894 appeared, under the editorship of Dr Samuel Rawson Gardiner, the distinguished historian of the Civil War, *Letters and Papers illustrating the Relations between Charles the Second and Scotland in 1650*, a collection of documents intended to illustrate the relations between Charles and the Covenanting government in

Scotland, especially during the negotiations carried on at Breda in the spring of 1650. In 1895 it was followed by *Scotland and the Commonwealth*, edited by C. H. Firth, afterwards Sir Charles, a series of letters and papers relating to the military government of Scotland from August 1651 to December 1653.

The *Jacobite Attempt* of 1719, edited in 1895 by the present writer, is a collection of letters of the second Duke of Ormonde and other papers illustrating the abortive enterprise which ended in the defeat at Glenshiel.

Perhaps the most permanently interesting of all the Society's publications is the *Lyon in Mourning*, edited in three volumes by Mr Henry Paton (1895-1896). This is the famous collection of journals, narratives, and memoranda relating to the life of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, during and after the Rising of 1745, which was compiled through many years of laborious research by that devoted Jacobite, Robert Forbes, Bishop of Ross and Caithness. Bishop Forbes died in 1775. In 1806 his collection was purchased from his widow by Sir Henry Steuart of Allanton, who in turn sold it to Robert Chambers. Chambers used it in his *Jacobite Memoirs of the Rebellion of 1745* and in his well-known *History of the Rebellion*, and ultimately bequeathed the ten manuscript volumes to the Advocates' Library. Chambers had used about a third of the contents of the *Lyon*. The Society now printed the text in its entirety. Bishop Forbes said of his work: 'I have a great anxiety to make the Collection as complete and exact as possible for the instruction of future ages in a piece of history the most remarkable and interesting that ever happened in any age or country.' Consisting as it does chiefly of first-hand narratives, often taken down from the lips of the actors concerned, the *Lyon* is the chief source of the personal history and folk-lore of the Forty-five, and will always remain one of the *fontes* of Scottish history. Lord Rosebery said of it that .if the Society had done nothing more than reprint the *Lyon in Mourning* it would have fully justified its existence.

In 1897 the *Lyon* was followed by Walter *Blaikie's Itinerary of Prince Charles Edward Stuart*, based on Bishop Forbes's material, in which the movements of the Prince are traced day by day, from his sailing for Scotland on June 22, 1745, till his final departure on September 20, 1746.

At the Annual Meeting in 1897, after the Society had been at work for ten years, Lord Rosebery was in the chair. In the course of his speech he said: 'I feel rather reminded of the speech by the late genial Sir George Harvey, the President of the Royal Scottish Academy, which I heard him make at one of the banquets of the Academy, which have unfortunately fallen into abeyance. Sir George Harvey was delighted with the exhibition, and he made a speech which amounted in brief to this—There never was such an Academy, and there never were such pictures. Well, that is my view of our Society. I shall express it quite frankly—there never was such a Society, and there never were such publications. I very much doubt if anyone can find any serious fault with anything that the Society has done or with any publication that the Society has put forward, and I venture to ask you of what other society known to you can so much be said?

That is what Matthew Arnold would have called a 'heightened and telling way of putting things,' and was not meant too seriously, but the series of books recorded

above seems to justify the President's satisfaction. He continued: 'I flatter myself that we have done much more than simply instruct by our publications. We have done something in the way of inspiration to writers and of inducing many to tread the field of Scottish history who might not have been so attracted except by our publications.'

In its later years, the Society has fulfilled the promise of its youth, and for half a century has continued to add to the historical wealth of Scotland. Lord Rosebery once divided its publications into three categories—'read-able books, books that are partly readable, and books that are wholly unreadable.' 'Do not think,' he added, 'that I undervalue the category of unreadable books, because you require a great number of unreadable books for reference.' It has always been the task of the Council to preserve a due proportion between books which are full of human interest and those—equally valuable—which are simply repositories of chronological or topographical facts. A more difficult task has been to hold the balance between the varying interests of members. One man is interested in medieval chartularies, another in Covenanted controversy, another in Jacobitism, another in eighteenth century domestic gossip. The Council has throughout tried to effect a reasonable compromise, not unsuccessfully.

The Society has issued in all 107 volumes—61 in the First Series, 1886 to 1909; 20 in the Second, 1909 to 1919; and 26 in the Third, the current series, which began in 1919. Notable issues, other than those which have been already mentioned, have been *Macfarlane's Genealogical Collections concerning Families in Scotland*, presented to the Society by Sir William Fraser's Trustees in 1899, and edited by Mr J. T. Clark; *Macfarlane's Geographical Collections*, edited by Sir Arthur Mitchell; Bishop Dowden's learned edition of the Chartulary of Lindores; the *Proceedings of the Justiciary Court from 1661 to 1678*, edited by Sheriff Scott-Moncrieff; Sir Thomas Craig's *De Unione Regnorum Britanniae Tractatus*, translated and edited by Professor Sanford Terry; the *Contribution to the Bibliography of Scottish Topography*, edited by Sir Arthur Mitchell and C. G. Cash; and the volumes of the *Correspondence of Mary of Lorraine*, edited by Miss Marguerite Wood and Miss Annie I. Cameron.

New sources of knowledge were opened by Professor W. R. Scott's *Minute Book of the New Mills Cloth Manufactory*, Dr G. P. Insh's *Darien Papers*, Professor Hannay's *Rentals of the Archbishopric of St Andrews and the Bishopric of Dunkeld*, Dr W. C. Dickinson's *Sheriff Court Book of Fife*, Dr C. A. Malcolm's *Justices of the Peace for Lanarkshire*, and the *Calendar of Scottish Supplications to Rome, 1418-1422*, from the Vatican archives, edited by the Rev. and Hon. E. R. Lindsay and Miss Cameron.

There have been five volumes of *Miscellanies*.

In 1914 the Society was passing through a period of diminished prosperity, and in the early months of the War there was some ground for anxiety about its future. These forebodings were not fulfilled. At the date of the Annual Meeting in 1918, just after the Armistice, there were only seven vacancies in our membership, as then limited; we had a substantial balance in hand; and all our publications were up to date.

All editorial work done by members of the Society, and all the work done by the officials, has been done without fee or reward. In the case of gratuitous work, done by

busy men, it has not always been possible to keep the issue of expected volumes closely up to date. Indeed on one occasion—it would not be judicious to indicate the date; it was a long time ago—the Council was asked to consider the advisability of ‘obtaining the services of younger, more active, and less occupied men to act as editors.’ Still, from year to year the Society has seldom failed to fulfil its undertaking to issue to members two volumes annually. In some years it has issued three, or even four, and it has at present ample work in hand.

The Society has kept to its own business of collecting and editing historical material. It took an active share, however, in the representations which led to the recent improvements in the Historical Department of the Register House. The Council’s attitude regarding this matter may be sufficiently indicated by the observations made by Mr John Buchan, as Chairman of the Annual Meeting in 1930. ‘All historical work in Scotland,’ he said, ‘is carried out under greater difficulties, I think, than in any other land. No British Government has been kind to us in respect of our national records. The Historical Department of His Majesty’s Register House, for example, is seriously understaffed, and but for the disinterested devotion of its curators, from Thomas Thomson down-wards, the situation would be much worse. There is neither the staff nor the funds to compile those indexes, without which the records of a nation are not truly accessible to the student. It seems to me to be in an especial degree the business of the Scottish History Society to press, in the interests of patriotism and of scholarship, for a fairer treatment of the land north of the Tweed.’

The Society also associated itself with the appeal issued in 1935 by the Trustees of the National Library, endeavouring to secure the preservation of Scottish legal, historical, and literary manuscripts now in private hands.

Lord Rosebery remained President of the Society until his death in 1929. He was succeeded by Mr John Buchan, now Lord Tweedsmuir and Governor-General of Canada, who, on his retirement in 1933, was succeeded by Sir Robert Rait, Principal of the University of Glasgow. Sir Robert died on May 25, 1936.

Professor Masson died in 1907, and was succeeded as Chairman of the Council by Bishop Dowden. On the Bishop’s death in 1910 he was succeeded by Sheriff Crawford. Sheriff Crawford held office till 1918, when he resigned on grounds of health. On his retirement the rule was adopted that in future the Chairman of Council should hold office for four years only, a limitation which now applies also to the office of President. The subsequent Chairmen have been Sir James Balfour Paul (1918-1922), Sheriff Macphail (1922-1926), Mr James MacLehose (1926-1930), Lord Sands (1930-1934), and the present writer.

Mr J. T. Clark held the office of Treasurer from 1889 to 1917. He was succeeded by Mr C. S. Romanes, who in 1922 was succeeded by the present Treasurer, Mr J. M. Howden.

After the death of Dr Law in 1904, Mr Clark acted for some time as interim Secretary. In the following year Mr Hay Fleming was appointed to the office. In 1908 Dr Maitland Thomson was appointed Secretary, with Mr Francis Steuart as his colleague. Mr Steuart retired in 1913. Mr Maitland Thomson held office till 1920, when

Professor R. K. Hannay became Secretary, with Mr William Angus, now Keeper of the Registers and Records of Scotland, as his assistant, and later as Joint Secretary. Professor Hannay and Mr Angus resigned in 1928, and Dr H. W. Meikle, now Librarian of the National Library, became Secretary. He was succeeded in 1931 by the present Secretary, Mr E. W. M. Balfour-Melville.

The origins of the Society are receding into the p of Scottish history, and the men who founded it are with Tullus and Ancus. Looking back over fifty years have good reason to be satisfied with the way in which the Society has carried out what Lord Rosebery called 'the humble and unobtrusive task of letting every man know, in every degree of life, so far as in us lies, and far as documentary evidence exists, how our forbears lived and worked and carried on the business of the country in their separate spheres.' Abundant material still awaits research, and popular interest in the history of Scotland is greater than ever. It is to be hoped that for many years to come the Society will endure to carry on its work, in the spirit of its original motto, *Colligite fragmenta, ne pereant*.