THE RAE PRESS: TWO UNRECORDED PRODUCTIONS

by R. H. Carnie

In the twenty years which elapsed between G. W. Shirley's first paper on the Rae press at Kirkbride and Dumfries (1914)¹, and his second paper on the wider subject of 'Dumfries Printers in the Eighteenth Century' (1934)², only one additional Rae press item turned up. The discovery, therefore, of one additional Kirkbride item, dated 1713, and one more Dumfries production, dated 1715, seems worthy of a short note. The known output of the Rae press is not large; Shirley lists five items printed at Kirkbride between 1711 and 1713, and fifteen printed at Dumfries between 1715 and 1721. The total number of books and pamphlets known to have been printed by Peter and Robert Rae is now, therefore, twenty-two instead of twenty.

The two unrecorded pamphlets are contained in a calf-bound volume of Scottish theological tracts in the Brechin Diocesan Library. The titles, but not the places of publication, are listed in the first Appendix to the published Catalogue³ of that library. All the pamphlets in the volume are dated between 1705 and 1720, and were mostly published at Edinburgh or Glasgow. The volume contains the book-plate of the Rev. Archibald Wilson, minister of St. Margaret's, Lochee, in Dundee, 1864. Wilson bequeathed a collection of 1300 books to the Diocesan Library in 1866, but the collection had to remain in Dundee until 1877, before space was found for it in the library at Brechin⁴. Wilson's books are now back in Dundee, as the whole of the Brechin Library is now on permanent loan to the University Library there⁵.

A description of the two unrecorded productions is given below. A third Rae press publication, Thomas Howy's The present state of most professors (Dumfries, 1715), which is listed by Shirley in both his papers, is also in this volume. As Shirley does not give an adequate description of the physical features of this short book, I have ventured to add such a description here.
A FACTORY LIBRARY AT BLARNEY.
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

by R. J. Ph. Coyle.

The origin of the Blarney Works Library remains obscure, probably in existence in the eighteen forties. The cotton spinsters founded about 1785 by David Dale, were taken over by James Brannan in 1792, and although they prospered in their early years, they were eventually abandoned at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1845 the Second Statistical Account of Scotland mentions that an able library [has been] established for several years past and is now taken for extending it'.

The catalogue of the Library appears as an appendix to the published sheet-catalogue of the Livingstone Memorial Library. It is a modern compilation listing all the books of the Library, now in the possession of the Livingstone Memorial Library, but it is not entirely representative of the original collection, since there are few works printed before 1845 and the shelf numbers do not correspond with the number of books now extant. In spite of its imperfections, however, the catalogue tells us something about the nature of the demand for books that resulted in the foundation of factories during the nineteenth century before the advent of the public library and also about the kind of book that was considered to be suitable for the education of the industrial workers and their families.

As the Select Committee on Public Libraries was only in part justified in point out, many of the early accretions were probably 'given back to the people's shelves . . .' and old magazines of this kind, such as odd parts of Hogg's Weekly Instructor and the Monthly Magazine, were not forgotten nor did extensive circulation at the time. The story of Scottish life or events was bound to be of interest, but it is the novels aimed at improving the mind, such as Mary Brunton's Self Control, and Sir Walter