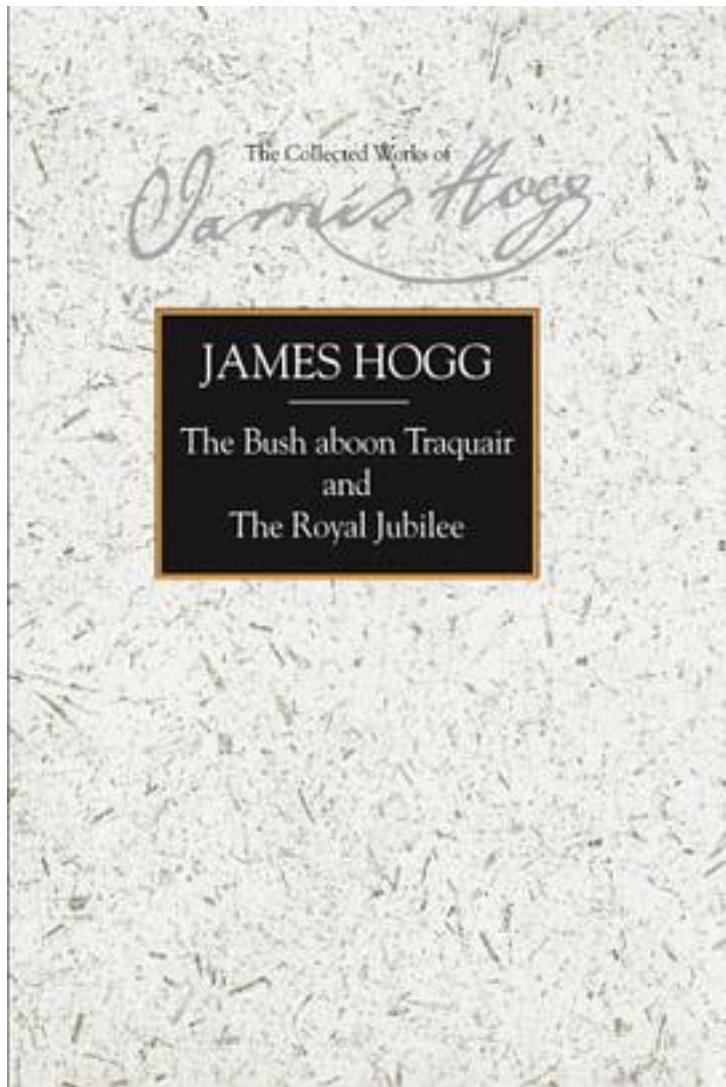


The Bush Aboon Traquair and the Royal Jubilee



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The Bush aboon Traquair, like Allan Ramsay's The Gentle Shepherd, is a pastoral drama with songs, and in this play Hogg celebrates the life of the people of his native community in Ettrick Forest. At times earthy and at times hilarious, The Bush focuses on rural courtship, and it derives part of its energy from its presentation of a contrast between the old ways and an emerging (but not always admirable) modernity. Here, as elsewhere in Hogg's writings, the shepherds and ewe-milkers of Ettrick Forest operate in a pastoral world that is noticeably realistic and convincing. They pursue their love adventures as ardently as if they were inhabitants of the more literary pastoral world of the Forest of Arden, but as they do so they also have to cope with some very unpoetical and very troublesome sheep. It appears that The Bush was first drafted around 1813, but the first publication of Hogg's play came when a bowdlerised version was included in his posthumous Tales and Sketches (1837). Douglas Mack's edition includes the first-ever publication of the unb Bowdlerised version of The Bush aboon Traquair. Written on the occasion of George IV's famous royal visit to Edinburgh in 1822, The Royal Jubilee is another pastoral drama with songs. In this 'Scottish Mask', Hogg brings a group of representative Scottish spirits to a 'romantic dell' on Arthur's Seat. The spirits (including an Ossianic Highlander who has suffered dispossession, and the ghost of an old Covenanter) give expression to past Scottish grievances against royalty, while indicating their hope that the King's visit will bring renewal and a fresh start. This potentially ambiguous expression of loyalty is further complicated by various Jacobite references and echoes as the spirits prepare to welcome a Hanoverian king, returning to the ancient kingdom of his Stuart ancestors.

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