EDITORIAL

MONRO—His Expedition

As a schoolboy we first made the acquaintance of those immortal soldiers Dugald Dalgetty (ex "A Legend of Montrose" by Sir Walter Scott) and Decimus Saxon (ex "Micah Clarke" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle).

As examples of 17th Century soldiers of fortune they remain unsurpassed.

Happily the copy of "Montrose" which we first read had ample notes which informed us that Scott had modelled Dalgetty on Colonel Robert Munro whose "Monro—His Expedition with the worthy Scot's Regiment (called Mac-Keye's Regiment) levied in August 1626 by Sir Donald Mac-Keye, Lord Rhees, Colonel for his Majesties Service of Denmark, and reduced after the Battle of Nerling to one Company in September 1634, at Wormes in the Paltz" he had chanced upon in the Advocates Library in Edinburgh.

In consequence we wished to make Monro's acquaintance—especially as Decimus Saxon was also based on him—and for 50 years we sought him. Last month we found him, in an Antiquarian Book Shop, and having paid his ransom (from our own pocket and not from Corps Funds) we bore him home in triumph.

During the course of half a century one's knowledge and tastes inevitably change and readers may well wonder that when our brow was garlanded with the laurel leaves of success they did not wilt in the bitter air of disappointment and anticlimax.

The very reverse was the case, and few books have given us such pleasure. For this Monro is wholly responsible. His eye for details is only matched by the skill of his pen in recording them; further, as he wrote at a time when neither the use of words nor their spelling had been standardised, there is an individuality, vividness and freshness about this book which makes one feel that Monro is talking to one rather than that one is reading his narrative and that the intervening three and a half centuries do not exist.

Every page is crammed with adventures, anecdotes and those moral observations so much delighted in by his fellow Scots. Alas time only permits us in an Editorial to introduce Monro and a further account of his adventures must be deferred to a later date.

We may however add that Monro returned to Scotland safely after seven years service in the Low Countries. In our Civil Wars he saw much service and survived one adventure after another (including 5 years imprisonment in the Tower) and lived to reach his eighties.

But when the old warrior's time did come who can doubt that he had made a successful entry into Heaven (presumably by blowing in the Pearly Gates with a petard) and once there that he soon organised the Heavenly Host into "plattons, regiments and briggads" after the best manner of his master the immortal Gustavus Adolphus and that he leads them behind a Band of Angels to the strains of the "Old Scots March"? I played on harps for bagpipes being an invention of the Devilii are not, alas, to be found in Heaven.

i The "Old Scots March" now known as "Dumbarton's Drums" is the regimental march of the Royal Scots who are the direct descendants of Mac-Keye's Regiment. It is the oldest march in the British Army.

ii A majority opinion not necessarily that of the Editor.