

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEISHES AND NESSES OF FIFE—THE MACNEECES OF ULSTER
 —THE MACNISHES OF ARGYLL—THE MACKNIGHTS—DR ROBERT
 MACNISH—THE NEISHES OF CANADA—THE MACNEISHES OF
 ARRAN—MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS OF THE CLAN—PROMINENT
 MEMBERS OF THE CLAN—CRESTS—TARTAN.

NEISH or Nes is also an old Fifeshire sur-
 name; many belonging to this branch
 now spell their name Ness; both forms however
 still occur in the county.

Before surnames were fixed in Fife, we find
 a Malfnacht or Malfnath (Maol-neis or Maol-
 nacht) on record as a tenant of lands in Fife,
 that were granted to the Priory of St Andrews
circa 1200 (8).

1491. Johne Neis served on a Brief of Inquest
 of the Abbot of Dunfermline on the 11th
 February 1491 (45).

1510. John Neis, an owner of tenements in Cupar, is mentioned in a charter by John Fouty, burgess of Cupar, to the Parish Church, of an annual rent out of tenements adjoining those of John Neis (17).

1553. On the 17th July, Agnes Moffat, relict of umquhil (the late) Thomas Nesche, sometime citizen of St Andrews, and conjunct fiar of a tenement lying within the said city and on the south side of the Market Street, resigned the same in the hands of John Moffat, one of the bailies of the said city, reserving her life-rent, which resignation being made, the said bailie cognosced William Nesche as son and heir of Thomas Nesche and to the said tenement; thereafter William resigned the same in the hands of the said bailie, reserving the said life-rent and power to himself to redeem according to the tenor of a Letter of Reversion to be made thereupon. The bailie gave sasine of the tenement to Jonet Nesche, sister-german of the said William, &c. (29).

1558. William Nesche held a tenement on the south of Market Street in St Andrews (Jarden sasine, dated 1st July, 'Cal. of Charters').

1559-68. The following forms occur in the St Andrews Kirk Session Records: Neche, Neische, Nesche, and Niesche.

1570. On 2nd January the King confirmed the charter by James, Commendator of St Andrews, to the College of St Leonard there, of the annual rents, including one of 7s. out of the tenement of Wil. Neische, in St Andrews. At the monastery of St Andrews, 20th May 1562 (17).

1592. A dispute between the Magistrates and a majority of the inhabitants of St Andrews, and certain persons of the same city, among whom is Alexander Neishe, of tymmerman, anent improvements and repairs in the said burgh, dated 24th March (21).

1608. David Nes, junior, a burghess of Cupar,

was a witness to a Baxter of Cupar charter, at Cupar, 25th May (17).

1632. Alexander Neische, servitor to Sir James Lundine, is a witness to a charter by John Lundine of that ilk, to the said James Lundine, of an annual rent out of the Maynes of Lundine, &c., Fifeshire. At the Manor of Lundie, 27th February 1632 (17).

1660. William Nysche, citizen of St Andrews, sold to John Black of St Andrews a tenement of land lying on the south side of the Market Street; to be holden from the granted, of the Lord of the Regality of St Andrews, dated 29th January (29).

1678-80. James Ness, in Tassis, and Thomas Ness, in Sassintully, were prosecuted for attending conventicles, and were declared fugitives. Thomas Ness was suspected to be accessory to the death of Archbishop Sharp; he craved liberation, and his release was ordered.

A Thomas Ness was tenant in Nether Praters of Lundy, in Fife, about this time (21).

ARGYLLSHIRE.

There appears to have been an old MacNish family settled for many centuries in Argyll; from this family are probably sprung the McNeecees of Ulster.

1593. Randal McNeece, the chief of the Scots of the Glynnns in Ulster, under Angus McDonnell.

MacNeece: An Ulster family of MacDonald connection.

Neece was an Ulster MacDonald phonetic corruption of the Gaelic form of Angus ('Clan Donald,' vol. 3, p. 409).

McNish, McNeice, McNiece, Mannice, and Minnis are present-day Ulster forms of the name.

The MacNishes and MacNeishes of Argyll, Arran, and Ulster, possibly derive their name from "son of Angus," and they do not appear to have sprung from the older Neis or MacNeish stock of Perthshire.

1793-1800. Archibald, lawful son to Neill McNiesh and McKinvin in Margmora-gachan, was baptised 15th December 1793.

John, lawful son to Niell McNish and Chirsty McKinnon in Margmonach, baptised 4th January 1797.

Niell, lawful son to Niel McNiesh, tenant in Margmonagach, was baptised 2nd June 1800 (Killean and Kilchenzie Births).

Archibald McNiesh and Catherine Munro, both in Margmonagachan, were married 31st June 1795.

Niell McNish, in Kilcalmonell parish, and Christian MacQuilkan, in the parish of Clonaig, were married on 6th February 1797.

1724. Duncan McKecht, in Auchaline, Inishael (58).

1892. The Rev. Dr Neil MacNish, LL.D., of Cornwall, Ontario, came from Killean, Kintyre. He was one of the leading Canadian Gaelic and classical scholars.

MACKNIGHT.

The MacKnights of Ayrshire and Galloway are a branch of the MacNaughts of Carrick, who were descended from a MacNes.

James MacKnight, D.D., a learned biblical critic and author, the son of the Rev. William MacKnight, minister of Irvine, was born in 1721.

He was ordained minister of Maybole in his native county in 1753; he was, in 1769, chosen Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. For upwards of thirty years he was engaged in the preparation of his last and most important work, 'The New Literal Translation from the Greek of all the Apostolical Epistles, with Commentaries and Notes,' which was published in 1795. He died in the year 1800.

Thomas MacKnight (1829 - 1899) was a political writer.

A small sept of MacNeids lived in the northern parts of Dumbartonshire during the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The descendants of these have modernised their name MacKnight.

Donald McKnett, in Easter Ardincaple, 1607 (21). Robert McNait, in Stron of Luss, in 1614, was fined for resetting some MacGregors.

In 1621 Patrick McNeid, in Meikle Innerlawren, and Robert, in Kirkmichael - Stirling, and Robert McNeid, in Over Innerlawren, native tanners, were declared rebels for refusing the authorised instruction in tanning (21).

ROBERT MACNISH, LL.D.

Robert MacNish, "The Modern Pythagorean," physician, and miscellaneous writer, was the second son of John MacNish, an eminent surgeon of Glasgow, and was born in Henderson's Court, Jamaica Street, on the 15th February 1802.

He received the elements of his education partly in his native city and partly at Hamilton Academy, obtaining a degree of Master in Surgery when only eighteen years of age, when

he became assistant to Dr Henderson of Clyth, Caithness. He remained there for about eighteen months, and then went to Paris for a year, with the view of completing his medical studies.

On his return to Glasgow in 1825, he became assistant to his father, having, the same year, obtained his diploma from the Faculty of Physicans and Surgeons of Glasgow, when he gave in, as his inaugural thesis, "An Essay on the Anatomy of Drunkenness." Two years afterwards, that is in 1827, this essay, extended and improved, was published at Glasgow, when it formed a thin octavo of fifty-six pages. It met with a very flattering reception from the public, and was still further enlarged in subsequent editions. Translations of it have appeared in the German and French languages.

Dr MacNish's earliest literary attempts were contributed to the 'Inverness Journal' when he was in the north, and afterwards to the 'Literary Melange,' and 'The Emmet,' two Glasgow periodicals.

In 1826 he forwarded his first article to 'Blackwood's Magazine,' being a tale entitled "The Metempsychosis." It appeared with the signature of "A Modern Pythagorean," the name affixed to all his after-productions in that and other magazines.

In 1827 he became acquainted with Dr Moir of Musselburgh, afterwards his biographer. In 1830 Dr MacNish published at Glasgow a treatise entitled 'The Philosophy of Sleep,' which was equally as well received as his former work; this also went through several editions.

In 1834 appeared 'The Book of Aphorisms,' some of which had originally been contributed to 'Fraser's Magazine.' The same year he visited the Continent, and in 1835 he made a tour in Belgium, Holland, France, Switzerland, and Germany.

His last publication was a small treatise in 1835, entitled 'Introduction to Phrenology,' to which science he had become a convert.

From Hamilton College, United States, he

at this time received the degree of LL.D. He died of typhus fever, 16th January 1837, in his thirty-fifth year, and his remains were interred in the burial-ground of St Andrew's Episcopal Chapel, Glasgow.

His Tales, Essays, and Sketches were published at Edinburgh in two volumes in 1838 under the title of 'The Modern Pythagorean,' with a memoir of the author by his friend, Dr Moir of Musselburgh, the "Delta" of 'Blackwood's Magazine.'

Robert's father was John (son of John), who was born in 1776; he became M.F.P.S.G. in 1796, President of that Faculty, 1823-30, Professor in Glasgow. He died on the 11th July 1860, at 47 Greenlaw Place, Paisley Road, Glasgow.

The following record appears in the Matriculation Register of Glasgow, under the date 1789: John MacNish, eldest son of John MacNish, merchant, Glasgow (probably John Killian MacNish, son of John MacNish, surgeon, not merchant).

Alexander MacNish, second son of Andrew

MacNish, farmer in Kirkholm, county of Galloway, matriculated at Glasgow in 1790.

Edmond Dodd, the lawful son of John MacNish, surgeon; Bertha Dodd was born 27th April 1846 (Glasgow Register of Births).

THE NEISHES OF NOVA SCOTIA.

The Neishes of Nova Scotia are descended from a Dundee family, probably a cadet of the Tannadyce branch.

David Neish, in Dundee, left two sons and a daughter:—

1. Elizabeth, married ——— McIntosh; issue, David Neish McIntosh, now in Andover, Massachusetts.

2. David, the eldest son, was born in Dundee in 1842; he was educated for the Presbyterian Church at St Andrews (two years), Glasgow (five years), and Edinburgh (two years) Universities. He subsequently took Orders in the Church of England, and emigrated to Nova Scotia. He married Sarah S. Wiswell of Halifax, N.S., who was the maternal granddaughter of James Smith of Old Meldrum,

Aberdeenshire. The Rev. David Neish died at Londonderry, Nova Scotia, on the 8th January 1901, leaving two sons and three daughters :—

- (1) Ethel, died.
- (2) Frances, married.
- (3) Ethel S.
- (4) Charles Wiswell.
- (5) Robert A.

The two sons are both clergymen of the Church of England, within the diocese of Nova Scotia.

The Rev. Charles Wiswell Neish, of Petite Riviere, Nova Scotia, is married, with issue, two sons and two daughters.

THE NEISHES OF CANADA AND JAMAICA.

Arthur C. Neish, Professor of Chemistry at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario (1924), is descended from a Rotherham (England) family of Forfarshire origin.

The following information of this family has been communicated by Professor Neish.

The earliest records we know of our family start with my grandparents, George and Jane Neish. George Neish, born in 1795, died 21st October 1862, and was interred in Rotherham cemetery. His wife, Jane, died 5th June 1866, at the age of seventy, and was also interred at Rotherham. This George had a brother named William. George and Jane Neish had, to the best of my knowledge, three sons, William, James, and George. William Neish left England in September 1867, and arrived in Quebec, going direct to Kingston (Ontario), where his brother James Neish owned and operated a newspaper called 'The Daily News.'

William Neish had six children, three girls born in England, and the three sons in Canada. The six children are :—

Alice Jane, Laura Teresa, and Ada Eleanor,
now of Kingston.

William, died in Pittsburgh *circa* 1899.

George Melvin Neish of Newark, N.J.

Arthur C. Neish of Queen's University,
Kingston.

George, son of George Neish, born 1841, died in Rotherham, 1913, with issue, one son and two daughters.

Dr James Neish, son of George (1795-1862), came to Canada before 1867, and was interested in newspaper work. While Editor of the 'Kingston News' he attended the Medical College of Queen's University, and graduated in 1865. He was a member of the staff from 1866 to 1874, holding the title Professor of Medicine and Professor of Descriptive and Regional Anatomy.

In 1881 he accepted the post of Medical Health Officer for the port of Kingston, Jamaica.

Dr James Neish left five sons and four daughters:—

George, William, and Donald Neish (deceased). These three brothers were doctors, and they held Government positions in the Island of Jamaica.

(4) Dr James Neish.

(5) Herbert Neish.

- (6) Hattie.
- (7) Isa. (Mrs Hay), deceased.
- (8) Carrie, married.
- (9) Jennie, married.

The Neishes of Saskatchewan and Kelowna, British Columbia, are cadets of the Tannadyce family.

They are many MacNeishes in the province of New Brunswick, in Canada; they are descended from John MacNeish and his spouse, Mary Carr, who left the Isle of Arran with their eldest son, two years old, about the year 1829; they settled in New Brunswick, and had issue: John, William, Mary, Thomas, Alexander, Ann, and Daniel.

Angus MacNeish, son of John, is a big salmon-fisher in the province, where there is a railway stop known as "MacNeishes' Station," in the northern part of that province, near the town of Dalhousie.

MacNeish is an uncommon surname in the Isle of Arran. In 1766 John McNish appears on the rental rolls as tenant in Easter Clauland, and in 1773 John McNinch (probably the

same man) was a tenant in Birrican in the same island.

The form MacNinch also occurred in Ayrshire in the sixteenth century.

The following is the inscription on a gravestone in the cemetery at Scutarie, in Turkey.

“Sacred to the memory of W. L. MACNISH, Lieut. 93rd Highlanders, who was drowned at Scutarie, May 19th 1854. This tablet was erected by his brother officers.”

The 93rd, or Argyll and Sutherland, Highlanders served in the Crimean War, and distinguished themselves as the Thin Red Line at the battle of Balaclava, on 25th October 1854.

MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS OF THE FAMILY.

1505. Donald M'Nethe was a tenant of the lands of Terradaill in Ross-shire (23).

The name, however, was not perpetuated as a surname in the north of Scotland.

1526. A Precept of Remission was granted to Alexander and William Nesche; they had assisted the late David Home of Wedderburn, Berwickshire, in a raid (44).

1543. Escheat of John Nech and others (45).

It is impossible to locate the district in which he lived.

1579. Complaint of Dame Elizabeth Betoun, relict of James, Lord Invermeith, John Stewart, her son, and others, including John Neische; upon James Gray, son to Patrick, Lord Gray, her second husband (21).

The barony of Innermeith was situated in the south of Perthshire.

1590. John Neishe, tailor, was a witness to a Bond of Caution for 500 merks by James Gordon of Knokaspeck, for Robert Gordon in Towie, his brother. Dated at Knokaspeck in Aberdeenshire, 20th March 1590 (21).

The Neishes were never numerous in Aberdeenshire.

156 *History of the Clan Neish or MacNish.*

1598. Thomas Nysche, Sergeant-Major of the Scots, received £80.

Thomas Niche, formerly Lieutenant of Captain Murray (his company), received his commission as Sergeant-Major on the 6th October 1598. He was probably killed before Rheinberg in 1601, for Prince Maurice there appointed Archibald Erskine to succeed him on the 22nd July 1601 (57).

In those days a Sergeant-Major was an important commissioned officer.

1598. Neish (no doubt the Sergeant-Major or Adjutant) succeeded Stewart as Captain about the year 1600.

Sergeant John Nies was a witness to a baptism on the 16th July 1730.

Sergeant John Niesh (the same man) was a witness to a baptism at Veulo on 16th August 1732.

Lieutenant John M'Kinsh (a Galloway form of the name) served in the Scots Brigade in 1694 (57).

1602. Extract from a complaint by William Ros (now Rose) of Kilraak (now Kilravock, in the county of Nairn) against Allaster McEane Oig of Glenko and his followers (MacDonalds of Glencoe).

“and from Nesie McNesie, three horses, four heads of goods, with his whole plenishing, and tyrrit himself, his wife and bairnes, his wife being new delyverit of ane bairne.”

Dated 23rd June 1602 (21).

This is the latest record of the use of the name Nes or Nesie as a christian name. The descendants of the above Nesie probably adopted the surname MacNishie, which occurred in that district in the early part of the nineteenth century.

1606. Gillie Genach MacNicht, in the Lewis, appears on the list of Highlanders who attacked the Lowland settlers in Lewis; he was put to the horn (outlawed) (21).

1629. Rev. David Neish was enrolled on the exercise at Haddington on the 11th March

158 *History of the Clan Neish or MacNish.*

1629; he became minister of Eddleston, in the Presbytery of Peebles, in 1639.

1766. Some McNishes were among the earliest colonists in a Scottish settlement at Salem, New York, *circa* 1766.

1835. B. R. McNees was appointed 2nd Lieut. in the 4th Regiment of the British Auxiliary Legion of Spain in July 1835 ('Hist. of the British Legion and War in Spain,' A. Somerville, 1839).

F. G. P. Neison, F.L.S., author of 'Contributions to Vital Statistics,' a Kilmarnock man, was a well-known statistician and the author of several pamphlets between 1840 and 1850; an account of him is given in MacKay's 'History of Kilmarnock.'

Neison is a very uncommon form of the surname MacNeish; some of the name settled in and about London many years ago.

The surname Neisson still occurs in some of the Scottish settlements in the United States of America.

The following are well-known members of the clan: Sir Charles Henry Lawrence Neish, K.B.E., C.B., Registrar of the Privy Council since 1909. He is the third son of the late William Neish of Tannadyce, and was Private Secretary to the Lord Chancellor from 1905 to 1909. He married Rosalie, daughter of the late Sir Edwin Henry Galsworthy. Lady Neish is the well-known writer on feminist topics, Rosalie Neish, whose work is always distinguished by womanly charm and a shrewd wit.

Dr David MacNish, M.A., M.B., C.M., J.P., F.R.G.S., late temp. Captain R.A.M.C., of London.

Colonel George McNish, C.B.E., T.D., J.P., of Glasgow, son of the late Robert McNish of Ardenlea, West Kilbride, Ayrshire, was born in Glasgow in 1866. He married Margaret, eldest daughter of William Frew, Inspector to the Northern Lighthouse Commissioners.

Lieut.-Colonel Francis Hugh Neish, late Gordon Highlanders, of London, fifth son of

the late William Neish of Tannadyce. He registered his coat-of-arms, &c., with the Lyon King-at-Arms in 1892.

Edward William Neish, Sheriff-Substitute of the Lothians and Peebles since 1921, younger son of the late William Neish of Tannadyce.

CRESTS.

The following crests are given in Fairbairn's 'Book of Crests,' 1905:—

M'Nish. Scotland. An arm embowed and couped in fess ppr., vested az., holding an oak-sprig vert, fructed or.

M'Nish. An eagle rising ppr.

Motto—*Animo non astutia* (By courage, not by stratagem).

Neish. Cupid with his bow and arrow, all ppr.

Motto—*Amicitiam trahit amor* (Love draws friendship).

M'Naught of Kilquharity, and M'Knight.

A lion's head erased, arg., langued gu.

Motto — *Omnia fortunæ committo* (I commit all things to fortune).

The 'Rothesay Herald' (F. J. Grant, Esq.) says (*in lit.*):—

The crests given by Fairbairn are not by any means all of legal authority. The crest given for McNish was, I find, invented by Alexander Deuchar, a seal engraver, who flourished in Edinburgh about a century ago.

The crest generally adopted by the MacNishes for the last hundred years is the second crest given by Fairbairn, "An eagle rising ppr."

TARTAN.

The ancient tartan of the Neishes and MacNeishes of Perthshire is now unknown. It probably fell out of use after the massacre of the clan by the MacNabs.

Frank Adam, in 'Clans and Septs of the Scottish Highlands,' allocates the Neishes, MacNishes, &c., to the MacGregor clan.

Adam does not cite any authority for including

the Neishes and their allied forms as septes of the Clan Gregor.

They were probably included because of the McNeis-McIlduy entries in the list of MacGregor retainers in the records of the Privy Council.

The MacNeishes of Athol were connected with the Stewarts of Athol as well as the MacGregors.

The Arran and Kintyre families are probably sprung from a branch of the MacInnes (MacAngus) clan.

Members of the clan MacNish or Neish may wear the tartan of either the MacGregors or MacInnes.