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A Restoration Duel

IN August, 1660, James, second Earl of Southesk, killed the Master of Gray in a duel. Of the dispute which led to it the following account is given by a contemporary diarist.

'Eftir the Kinges Majesteis return from Breda, quhilk wes upone the 25 day of Maij 1660 yeiris, and eftir his restoration to his thrie kingdomes and dominionnes, diveris and sindry persones, alsweill nobles, gentrie, as utheris, repairit to his Majestic, being than at Lunden, for offices, places, and preferment; quha, being mony in number, and his Majestic not being able to satisfie all, thair did arryfe great hartbirninges, animositie, and envy among thame, everieane contendand aganes utheris for preference. And among these and utheris seikaris, thair did arryse contention betuix the Erle of Southesk and the Maister of Gray, for the schirrefship of Forfar; and in that contention, they drew to parteis and provoked utheris to duellis, in the quhilk, the Erle of Southesk did kill the Maister of Gray upone this syde of Lunden.'—*Nicoll's Diary* (ed. 1836), p. 300.

Of the two combatants Gray appears to have been most deserving of the King's favour. He was the son of William Gray of Pittendrum, 'the most successful merchant in Edinburgh of his day,' had married Hume, Mistress of Gray, daughter of Andrew, seventh Lord Gray, and had commanded a regiment in the army of Charles II. during 1650-51. James, second Earl of Southesk, who succeeded to his father's title in 1658, had, as Lord James Carnegie, accepted the proposed union of Scotland and England, and had been one of the representatives chosen to carry it into effect (Douglas, *Peerage of Scotland*, ed. Wood,

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ii. 515; Fraser, *History of the Carnegies, Earls of Southesk*, i. 140; Terry, *The Cromwellian Union*, pp. 47, 183). This acquiescence in the establishment of the English government must have stood in Southesk's way when it was compared with the steady loyalty of his rival.

The duel took place near London in August, 1660 (*Lamont's Diary*, ed. 1831, p. 126). No account of it is to be found in the newspapers of the time, but a contemporary ballad, preserved in Anthony Wood's collection in the Bodleian Library, supplies a detailed narrative of the incident (*Wood*, 401. f. 100).

A NOBLE DEWEL

or,

An unmatched Combate betwixt Sir *William* . . . and the Earl of *Southest*. Being a true relation how this b . . . E. of *Southest* murdered Sir *William Gray*, Son to the Right Ho . . . the Lord *Gray*, which news is sad to the Nacion of *Scotland*, and how the . . . waites for trial for the same. Tune of, *Sir George Wharton*.

My heart doth bleed to tell the wo
or chance of grief that late befel
At *Biglesworth* in *Bedfordshire*,
as I to you for truth will tell,
There was two valliant Noble men,
that very rashly fell at words,
And nothing could appease their wraths
till they betook them to their Swords.

The one was called Sir *William Gray*,
the good Lord *Gray* his Son and Heir,
The other Sir *James* as they him call,
or *Earl of Southest* as I hear,
It seems their quarrel they began,
within the house of Parliament,
And till this Earl had kild Sir *Gray*,
he could not rest nor be contend,

About Religion they out fell,
the Earl he was a Presbyter,
Sir *William* did his ways deny,
he being a Loyall Cavalier,
For our late King as I am told,
in *Scotland* often kept his court,
At the house of Sir *William Gray*,
he and his Nobles did their resort.

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And for his true obedience then,
as I do wrightly understand
He made was the chiefest Governor,
in the *Northern* part of fair *Scotland*
It seems the Earl of *Southeist* calld,
did kill Sir *William* for this thing,
Because he Governor was made,
and much advanced by the King.

This Earl was governor before,
out of Commission late was thrown,
Even by this present Government,
so that he could not call 't his own,
And good Sir *Gray* put in his place,
and truth it brought him into thrall,
For through that cruel bloody Earl,
his rise was causer of his fall.

You see the bloody minds of those,
which lately had the Sword in hand,
And if they had it so again,
they quickly would confound the Land
For to find opportunity
this wicked Earl he did invent,
How he might Murther Noble *Gray*,
for truth it was his full intent.

The second part, to the same Tune.

Within the house of Parliament,
the Earl fell out with Noble *Gray*
But yet before they did depart,
they loving friends then went away,
It was not known the Earl did ow,
the least ill will at that same time
To noble *Gray* or unto his,
or any of his Royall line.

They rod together thirty Miles,
to *Beglisworth* from *London* town,
And in the way was no distast
until they sat there at the Crown.

They supped together too that night,
as peacefully as man could do,
But yet a sudden accidance
betime the morning did insue,

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The Earl he rose ith morn betime,
 with mischief harbored in his brest,
 He came into the Chamber where,
 sir *William Gray*, he lay at rest,

And call'd Sir *Gray* to go with him,
 unto the Fields to take the Ayr,
 And he God wot not thinking ill,
 did with him to the Fields repair,
 Like to a Lamb that went to dy,
 not thinking death to be so near,
 Even so befel the same ye see,
 to noble *Gray* as doth appear.

He left his man abed that morn,
 because he came in late at night,
 Desiring them to let him lye,
 till he returned back with the Knight,
 His bedfellow and Kindsman too,
 went as a second in the place,
 If that the Earl should offer him,
 any abuse or eke disgrace.

He did no sooner come in field,
 but both the seconds and the Earl,
 Do plot contrive against Sir *Gray*,
 his courage purposel to queal,
 The Earl began the quarrel then,
 and noble *Gray* did so outdare,
 And said he was a better man,
 then all the *Grays* in Scotland were.

And said to him come fight with me,
 thou cowardise which art no man,
 Which forced Valiant *Gray* to take,
 his glittering Sword within his hand,
 And so the battle fierce began,
 and Noble *Gray* he plaid his part,
 But yet at length unhappily,
 the Earl he thrust him to the heart,

This being done they dragd him too
 a stinking ditch which there was by,
 And robbed him of his Jewels rich,
 and then they presently did fly,
 Unto the Crown whereas their coach,
 stood ready for their safe convey,
 But by a man it was found out,
 which did them presently betray.

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When they was took they did them search
whereas they found them full of gold,
A golden watch and ring which cost,
five hundred pounds his man thus told,
They had them to the Justice straight,
and he did send them to the Gaol,
Whereas they wait for trial now,
I think there's no man will them bail.
And thus I will conclude my song,
I wish all Traytors to beware,
And not to murder as they do,
lest they fall in the hang-man's snare.

London, Printed for John Andrews at the White-Lyon neer
Py-corner.

Blackletter. 3 cuts.

Though it is impossible to test the truth of the story, there can be no doubt that the ballad represents the version current at the time. For according to the list of printers and publishers of ballads, contained in the *Catalogue of Lord Crawford's Collection of Ballads*, p. 535, John Andrews was in business from 1655 to 1666. The ballad is not in Lord Crawford's collection nor in the *Roxburghe Ballads*.

C. H. FIRTH.