

# FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS.

## GORDONS.

### The gay Gordons.

THE Gordons were so characterised by the people and by the old ballad-writers. In that of the *Battle of Otterburn*, they are styled 'the Gordons guid;' but in that case rhyme, as well as the occasion, might determine the poet—

'The Gordons guid, in English bluid,  
Did dip their hose and shoon.'

There is an old ballad, in which they are styled *gay*, and in which a fine trait of their personal manners is preserved:—

## GLENLOGIE.

Four-and-twenty nobles sit in the king's ha',  
Bonnie Glenlogie is the flower amang them a' :

In came Lady Jean, skipping on the floor,  
And she has chosen Glenlogie 'mong a' that was there.

She turned to his footman, and thus she did say—  
'Oh! what is his name, and where does he stay?'

'His name is Glenlogie, when he is from home :  
He is of the *gay Gordons* ; his name it is John.'

'Glenlogie, Glenlogie, an' you will prove kind,  
My love is laid on you ; I'm telling my mind.'

He turned about lightly, as the Gordons does a',  
'I thank you, Lady Jean, my love's promised awa'.'

She called on her maidens her bed for to make,  
Her rings and her jewels all from her to take.

In came Jeanie's father, a wae man was he,  
Says, 'I'll wed you to Drumfendrich, he has mair gold than he.'

Her father's own chaplain, being a man of great skill,  
He wrote him a letter, and indited it well.

The first lines he looked at, a light laugh laughed he ;  
But ere he read through it, the tears blinded his e'e.

Oh ! pale and wan looked she when Glenlogie came in,  
But even rosy grew she when Glenlogie sat down.

' Turn round, Jeanie Melville—turn round to this side,  
And I'll be the bridegroom, and you'll be the bride.'

Oh ! 'twas a merry wedding, and the portion down told  
Of bonnie Jeanie Melville, who was scarce sixteen years old.

Alexander de Seton, first Earl of Huntly, having been employed by King James II., with whom he was in high favour, to suppress several rebellions in the north, was successful in defeating that of the Earl of Crawford, at Brechin, in 1452, but was subsequently discomfited at Dunkinty by the Earl of Moray. Hume of Godscroft, in his *History of the House of Douglas*, gives a very interesting account of the latter incident. After the battle of Brechin, 'Huntly,' says he, 'had the name of the victory, yet could not march forward to the king as he intended, and that partly because of his great losse of his men, partly for that he was advertised that Archibald Douglas, Earl of Murray, had invaded his lands, and burnt the Piele of Strabogie. Wherefore he returned speedily to his own country, which gave Crawford leisure and occasion to pour out his wrath against them who had so treacherously forsaken them, by burning and wasting their lands. Huntly being returned to the north, not only recompensed the damage done to him by the Earl of Murray, but also compelled him out of his whole bounds of Murray; yet it was not done without conflict and mutual harm; for Huntly, coming to Elgin in Murray, found it divided—the one-half standing for him, the other half (and almost the other side of the street) standing for the Earl of Murray; wherefore he burnt the half which was for Murray; and hereupon rose the proverb—*Halfe done, as Elgin was burnt*.\* While he is there, Murray assembled his power, which consisting mostly of footmen, he sate down upon a hill some two or three miles off, called the Drum of Pluscardine, which was inaccessible to the horsemen. Huntly forrowed (*plundered*) his lands, to draw him from the hill, or at least to be revenged of him that way, thinking he durst not come into the plain fields, and not thinking it safe to assault him in a place of such disadvantage. But Murray, seeing Huntly's men so scattered, came out of his

\* It is observable from this, that Elgin, like some old Scottish burghs at the present day, then could boast of but one street.

strength, and falling upon four or five thousand horsemen, drave them into a bogue, called the Bogue of Dunkintie, in the bounds of Pittendriech, full of quagmires, so deepe, that a speere may be thrust into them and not find the bottom. In this bogue many were drowned, the rest slain, few or none escaping of that company. There are yet (1646) to be seene swords, steele-caps, and such other things, which are found now and then by the country people who live about it. They made this round rhyme of it afterwards:—

Where left thou thy men, thou Gordon so gay?  
In the Bogue of Dunkintie, mowing the hay!

#### THE CAMPBELLS.

##### The greedy Campbells.

The Campbells seem to have gained this odious designation in consequence of their rapid acquisition of lands in the Highlands immediately after their settlement in the country. Political talent has always been a distinguishing characteristic of the leaders of this clan, and is supposed in the Highlands, where such a quality was always despised, to have contributed more to their advancement in power and wealth, than the more honourable qualifications of a brave spirit and a strong arm. Hence they are also styled *fair and false*. The most remarkable feature in the history of this clan is its constant attachment, since the beginning of the Civil War, to the cause of civil and religious liberty, which partly gave rise to a saying of King Charles II.—‘That there never was a rebellion in Scotland without either a Campbell or a Dalrymple at the bottom of it.’

#### THE DALRYMPLES.

The Dalrymples, who share in the above accusation, and who owed the power which they enjoyed in Scotland for upwards of a century to high legal skill and political talent, have likewise been generally noted for a coarse kind of wit; whence they have been characterised as

##### The dirty Dalrymples—

sometimes softened into the Rough Dalrymples. From both of these characters there certainly have been many exceptions—the amiable Lord Hailes a brilliant one. This

family gradually gave place, during the last century, to the towering genius of the house of Arniston; which caused some homely wit to give out a stanza which a late judge used to recite as follows:—

First came the men o' mony wimples,  
 In common language ca'd Da'rimples;  
 And after them came the Dundasses,  
 Who rode our lords and lairds like asses!

The name Dalrymple—in Scotland pronounced *Darumple*—seems to have always been considered in a ridiculous light, probably on account of the middle syllable of the mispronounced word. In proof of this, and to show that the prejudice is not deficient in antiquity, an anecdote is told of King James V. A court gentleman having complained to that monarch that he was obliged to change his name, for the sake of an estate, into one less fine in sound or honourable in history, the monarch said, 'Hoot awa', man! if onybody wad make me heir to sic a braw estate, I wadna care though they should ca' me *Darumple*!'

Hew, as a Christian name, is prevalent in this family. It is not Hugh, as might be supposed, but a peculiar word, the origin of which is the subject of the following heraldic myth:—One of the early kings of Scotland, after an unsuccessful battle, took refuge in the Bass Island, whither he was pursued by his enemies. The king planted himself on the very top of the rock, where his pursuers could not reach his person without climbing one by one up a steep ascent. His only attendant, a Dalrymple, stood in the gap, and as every successive assailant came up, hewed him down with a sword. The king, seeing his safety depend on the strength of one man, called out, 'Hew, Dalrymple, hew!' and his defender, thus encouraged, accordingly hewed away at them with all his force, till the whole were despatched. The monarch, in gratitude, gave him lands, and ordained Hew to be thenceforth his first name. In allusion to this story, the crest of the Dalrymples is a *rock proper*.

#### THE GRAHAMS.

The gallant Grahams.

As such, they give name to a popular air. So, also—

' Oh ! the Grahams, the *gallant Grahams*,  
 Wad the gallant Grahams but stand by me,  
 The dogs might douk in English bluid,  
 Ere a foot's breadth I wad finch or flee !'

FINLAY'S *Old Ballads*.

A ballad in the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border bears the name of 'The Gallant Grahams.' When we think of Montrose, Dundee, and Lynedoch, can the claims of the family to this title be disputed ?

#### THE LINDSAYS.

##### The light Lindsays.

The Lindsays were a prompt and sprightly clan, celebrated for their warlike achievements. At the battle of Otterburn, their chief distinguished himself by personal prowess. The whole clan seems to have made a conspicuous figure on this memorable occasion :—

' He chose the Gordons and the Grahams,  
 With them the *Lindsay's light* and gay.

\* \* \* \* \*  
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The Lindsays flew like fire about,  
 Till a' the affray was done.'

*Ballad of the Battle of Otterburn.*

#### THE MORISONS.

##### The manly Morisons.

This is, or was, especially applicable to a family which had been settled for a long period at Woodend, in the parish of Kirkmichael, in Dumfriesshire, and become remarkable for the handsomeness of its cadets.

#### THE SOMERVILLES.

##### The pudding Somervilles.

An illustration of this phrase is presented in a passage in the manuscript memoirs of the Somervilles, which was omitted in the printed work at the request of the late Lord Somerville, who thought it too discreditable or ridiculous for publication.

' Noe house of any subject of what degree soever, for hospitalitie, came near to Cowthally, and that for the space of two hundreth years. I shall, to make good this asser-tione, adduce noe meaner witnesses than the testimonie of

three of our kings; namely, King James III., IV., and V. The first of these, in the storie of the Speates and Raxes, asserted that Lord S.'s kitchen bred moe cookes and better than any other nobleman's house he knew within his kingdom. The second, because of the great preparatiōne that was made for his coming to Cowthally, at the infare of Sir John of Quathquam, gave the epithete or nickname of LORD PUDDINGS to the Lord Somervill, and, out of ane pleasant humer, would need persuade him to carry a black and a white pudding in his armes, which gave the first occasiōne that to this day wee are still named the PUDDING SOMERVILLES. For King James V., from the eighteine year of his age to the threttie-two, he frequented noe nobleman's house soe much as Cowthally. It is true there was a *because*. The castle of Crawfuird was not far off, and it is weill enough knowne, as this king was a gallant prince, soe was he extremely amorous. But that which I take notice of as to my purpose is, that his majestie very frequently, when occasiōne offered to speak of housekeeping, asserted that he was sure to be weill and heartily intertained at Cowthally by his *Mother Maitland*, for so the king graciously and familiarly pleased to design the Lady S., then wife to Lord Heugh the first of that name. Albeit there needs no farther testimonies; yet take this for a confirmatione of ther great housekeeping, that it is uncontravertedly asserted they spent a cow every day of the year; for which cause, it is supposed, the house was named *Cow-dayly*.'

THE HAMILTONS.

The haughty Hamiltons.

THE ARMSTRONGS.

The sturdy Armstrongs.

THE HUMES, SCOTTS, KERS, AND RUTHERFORDS.

The haughty Humes,  
The saucy Scotts,  
The cappit Kers,  
The bauld Rutherfordds.

These characters of a set of Border families are constantly associated as in one distich, though no rhyme is

discernible. The peculiarity attributed to the Kers is a crabbed contentiousness.

Wha ever saw, in all their life,  
Twa *cappit* carlis mak sic ane stryfe!

Quoted by Jamieson from *Philotus*.

#### THE JOHNSTONS.

The gentle Johnstons.

This must have been ironical. It is at least little in consonance with the epithet bestowed upon them by a distinguished modern poet—

‘The rough-riding Scott, and the *rude* Johnston.’

It is stated that a rival chief, with whom they had long been at feud, once succeeded in cutting off a party, whose heads he caused to be severed from the bodies, and put promiscuously into a sack. The bearer of the bloody burden, chuckling at the idea of having completely and for ever quelled the turbulence of the clan, said significantly, as he slung the sack upon his shoulder, ‘Gree amang yoursells, Johnstons!’ which is still a proverbial expression in Annandale.

So exclusively are some districts inhabited by people of these names, that there are several villages without any other. It is said that an English traveller, one winter night, coming to a Border town called Lockerby, went to every house in search of lodgings, but without succeeding in rousing any of the inmates. At length an old woman looked over her window and asked what he wanted. He exclaimed piteously, ‘Oh, is there no good Christian in this town that will give shelter to a poor benighted traveller?’ ‘Na!’ answered the woman, ‘we’re a’ Johnstons and Jardines here!’ It is to be remarked that the mistake of the old dame was not unnatural, since the Christians are a pretty numerous clan in Cumberland, an adjacent district.

#### DOUGLAS.

The house of Angus was characterised as

The red Douglas;

that of Liddisdale as

The black Douglas.

'The last battell the Earl of Douglas was at, the Earl of Angus discomfited him; so that it became a proverb, "The Red Douglas put down the Black; those of the house of Angus being of the fairer complexion."'—*Hume's Hist. House of Douglas.*

THE DUFFS.

The lucky Duffs.

'Duff's Luck' is proverbial in Aberdeenshire, on account of the good fortune which seems to have attended numerous members of this family, in the acquisition of lands in that district.

THE SETONS.

Tall and proud.

The Setons were a fair-complexioned race, as appears from the family pictures in the possession of Mr Hay of Drumelzier; wherefore their characteristic pride does not agree with a common rhyme respecting complexions:—

Lang and lazy,  
Little and loud,  
Red and foolish,  
Black and proud.

THE MACRAES.

The black Macraes o' Kintail.

THE MACRAWS.

The wild Macraws.

Macrae and Macraw are but variations of the same name. This clan is said to be the most unmixed race in the Highlands, a circumstance which seems to be attended with quite a contrary effect from what might have been expected, the Macraes and Macraws being the handsomest and most athletic men beyond the Grampians.

THE HAYS.

The handsome Hays.

THE MONTEITHS.

The fause Monteiths.

Originating, probably, in the treachery of Wallace's



friend. From horror at the offence of Sir John Monteith, it was common in Scotland, till the last age, when presenting bread to a Monteith, to give it with the wrong side of the bannock uppermost. *The wrong side of the bannock to a Monteith* was a common saying.

## THE BOYDS.

The trusty Boyds.

So at least characterised by Henry the Minstrel.

## THE FRASERS.

The bauld Frasers.

## THE MACNEILS.

The proud Macneils.

## THE MACINTOSHES.

Fiery and quick-tempered.

## THE MACDONALDS.

The brave Macdonalds.

A hardly-earned and well-deserved epithet, which need not shrink before a rhyme popular among the Macgregors—

Grighair is croic,  
Domnuil is freuc.

That is—

Macgregor as the rock,  
Macdonald as the heather.

## THE MURRAYS.

The muckle-mou'ed Murrays.

The Murrays here meant are a branch of the family long settled in Peeblesshire, and of which a sub-branch has for two centuries possessed the baronial title of Elibank. Sir Gideon Murray, who lived in the time of James VI., and whose son was the first Lord Elibank, had a daughter, Agnes, to whom tradition ascribes a very large share of the family feature. She became the wife of Sir William Scott of Harden, under circumstances of a ludicrous nature, which James Hogg has wrought up in one of his best

ballads—the youth having been caught in a foray upon Sir Gideon's lands, and obliged to marry the muckle-mouthed lady in order to save his neck. All who remember Alexander, seventh Lord Elibank, will be ready to acknowledge that the feature of the family had, down to that time at least, lost nothing by transmission.

People of sense, affected by such peculiarities, generally make light of them. Such were the Crawfords of Cowdenhills in Dumbartonshire, to whom was attached a large mouth, of not less pertinacity than that of the Murrays. There is still in existence a silver spoon, of uncommonly large proportions, which a representative of the family, who lived two hundred years ago, caused to be made for himself and his heirs; and which, besides the date (1641), bears the following inscription:—

This spoone, ye see,  
I leave in legacie,  
To the maist-mouth'd Crawford after me.  
Whoever sells or pawns it, cursed let him be.

There was a similar spoon, with a similar rhyme, in the family of Craufurd of Craufurdland in Ayrshire. It is hardly necessary to remark, that the existence of such spoons and such inscriptions forms a somewhat better proof than is usually to be obtained of the alleged transmission of family features through a succession of generations.

#### THE MACLEANS.

It was alleged of the Macleans, by those who were not friendly to them, that they were addicted to a sort of ostentatious egotism, to which an untranslatable Gaelic epithet was affixed, not unaptly expressed by the word *Gasconade*. When they began to decline before their more politic neighbours and rivals, the Campbells, they designated themselves

An cinneadh mor 's am por tubaisteach.

Which, literally translated, means,

The great clan and luckless race;

but this was observed by their enemies to be only an instance of their incurable self-esteem—'the ruling passion strong in death.'

## MAXTON OF CULTOQUEY'S LITANY.

The small estate of Cultoquey, in Perthshire, is considered a sort of miracle in the Highlands, having been preserved entire by one family for five hundred years, though surrounded on all hands by those of about half-a-dozen large proprietors. A Lowlander, or a modern, can scarcely conceive the difficulty which this honourable old family must have experienced in keeping its ground in the midst of such powerful and avaricious neighbours, and through successive ages of barbarism and civil discord. That aggressions were not unattempted, or at least that the neighbours were not the most agreeable imaginable, is proved by an addition to the litany which Mr Maxton of Cultoquey made (upwards of a century ago), and which is here preserved, as illustrating in some measure the characteristics of certain Scottish families :—

From the greed of the Campbells,  
From the ire of the Drummonds,  
From the pride of the Grahams,  
From the wind of the Murrays,  
Good Lord deliver us !

The author of this strange prayer was in the habit of repeating it, with the rest of the litany, every morning, on performing his toilet at a well near his house ; and it was perhaps the most heartfelt petition he preferred. The objects of the satire were—Campbell of Monzie, who lived a mile and a-half from Cultoquey ; Campbell of Aberuchill, a judge of Session, and one of the greatest land-buyers of his time (eight miles) ; Drummond of Perth (four miles) ; Graham, Duke of Montrose, at Kincardine Castle (eight miles) ; Murray, Duke of Atholl, at Tullibardine Castle (six miles) ; and Moray of Abercairney, at Abercairney House (two miles). All these gentlemen took the joke in good part, except the Murrays, whose characteristic is the most opprobrious—*wind*, in Scottish phraseology, signifying a propensity to vain and foolish bravado. It is said that the Duke of Atholl, hearing of Cultoquey's Litany, invited the old humorist to dinner, and desired to hear from his own mouth the lines which had made so much noise over the country. Cultoquey repeated them, without the least

boggling; when his Grace said, half in good, half in bad humour, 'Take care, Cultie, for the future to omit my name in your morning devotions, else I shall certainly crop your ears for your boldness.' '*That's wind, my lord duke!*' quoth Cultoquy with the greatest coolness, taking off his glass. On another occasion, a gentleman of his Grace's name having called upon Mr Maxton, and used some angry expostulations on the manner in which his clan was characterised, Cultoquy made no answer, other than bidding his servant open the door, and *let out the wind of the Murrays!*\*

\* Imitations of the litany were common in former times. Mr Thomas Forrester, an eccentric clergyman of Melrose, about two hundred years ago, made himself conspicuous, and was expelled from his parish, on account of his satirical additions to the service-book. He and his verses are thus noticed in *A Description of the Parish of Melrose, in Answer to Mr Maitland's Queries* (1752):—'He was deposed by the Assembly, at Glasgow, anno 1638; and, as Honorius Regius acquaints us, "Classe Mulrossiana accusante, probatum fuit," that he had publicly declared that any servile work might be done on the Lord's day, and, as an example to the people, he had brought home his corn out of the fields to his barn-yard on that day; as also that he had said that the public and ordinary preaching of the Word was no necessary part of divine worship; that the reading of the liturgy was to be preferred to it; that pastors and private Christians should use no other prayers but what were prescribed in the liturgy. They charged him likewise with Arminianism and Popery, and that he said publicly that the Reformers had done more harm to the Christian churches than the Popes at Rome had done for ten ages. I am surprised that no notice is taken of his litany, which made a great noise in those times. Bishop Guthrie, in his Memoirs, only mentions it:

From Dickson, Henderson, and Cant,  
Th' apostles of the Covenant,  
Good Lord deliver us!

I have been at great pains to find out this litany in the libraries of the curious, but in vain. There was an old gentlewoman here who remembered some parts of it, such as—

From the Jesuit knave in grain,  
And from the she-priest cracked in brain,  
From her and a' such bad lasses,  
And a' bauld ignorant asses,  
Such as John Ross, that donnart goose,  
And Dan Duncanson, that duncy ghost,  
Good Lord deliver us!

For the understanding of this part of the litany, we are to observe that there was one Abernethy, who, from a Jesuit priest, turned a zealous Presbyterian, and was settled minister at Hownam, in Teviotdale; he said the liturgy of Scotland was sent to Rome to some cardinals to be revised by them, and that Signior Con had showed it to himself there—he is the "Jesuit." And as to the she-priest, this was one Mrs Mitchelson, who was looked upon as a person inspired of God, and her words were recited as oracles, not a few