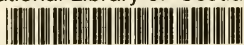


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THE *Address*  
CLAN AND NAME  
OF  
FERGUSON.

An Address,

DELIVERED BY  
JAMES FERGUSON, Esq.,  
YR. OF KINMUNDY,

To the Clan Fergusson Society, on 14th April, 1892.

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GLASGOW;  
W. M. FERGUSON, 116 ST. VINCENT STREET.  
1892.






## THE CLAN AND NAME OF FERGUSON.

“And certes, they suld weil have pryse  
That in thar tyme war wicht and wyse,  
And led thar lif in gret travale,  
And oft in hard stour of battale  
Wan grat pryse of chevalry,  
And voidit war of cowardy.”

—(*Barbour's Bruce.*)



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## The Clan and Name of Ferguson.

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THE above title has been selected for the following notes, because I have felt the difficulty of defining, in the case of a surname of undoubted Celtic origin, but of frequent occurrence in the Low country, how much should be included in the term Clan. Many years ago, I was informed by an official of the Lyon office, now alas, no more, whose knowledge of Scotland and of Scottish families was inferior to that of few, that it was the practice of Scottish heralds, when approached in reference to grants of arms, to consider carefully the name with which they had to deal. If it was clearly of Saxon derivation, and taken from an occupation, as Baxter or Baker, Webster, Smith, Wright, and many others which can easily be imagined, there was no presumption of a common origin or clan connection with others similarly designed. If, however, it was a Clan name, and especially if it were one of the recognised Highland patronymics, there was a presumption in favour of a common origin, or such connection as was denoted by the sobriquet of the "Bow o' Meal" Gordons, recognised by the official guardians of genealogy and its handmaid heraldry, in Scotland.

It must, on the other hand, be admitted that we Fergusons are, I fear, "a broken Clan," and that the traces of our common ancestor are at least as indistinct as the indications of a previous existence discerned by Wordsworth in the child of his "Ode to Immortality":—

"The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar."

The seat of the Fergusons, as a Highland Clan, recognized among the septs, was almost in the centre of Scotland, in Athol, and on the banks of the Isla. But as the name has been found

certainly from the days of the War of Independence, in Aberdeenshire in the north, and Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire in the south, I think you will agree with me that it is safest, as well as most accurate, to follow the example of the old chronicler of the House of Forbes, and to embrace what fragments of tradition and history we can recover, under the correct and comprehensive title of the "Clan and Name of Ferguson."

I cannot, I fear, in this paper do more than set an example for papers of greater interest and value which may follow, but it is necessary to make a beginning, and is perhaps desirable that general information already in print, but scattered here and there, should be collected, before it is supplemented by the results of more detailed researches. My aim is, therefore, to submit to you, what I have been able to find in books about the Fergusons as a Clan, to supplement it by some general notes, indicating the leading families of the name who appear in local history, and to add a few facts about individuals who may have done some service to their country, and some credit to their name.

*The Name.*—The names of Fergus, MacFhearghusa, or Fergusson, are really the same, and indeed down to two centuries ago, the forms Fergus and Ferguson were used indiscriminately in some families. The name is sometimes derived from *feargachus*, wrathful, or of a fiery disposition, *fearg* in Gaelic signifying anger, or wrath, and *feargach*, one of a bold, irascible, haughty, or imperious temper. According to Logan, it is a personal appellation, in its secondary sense implying a hero, but primarily signifying a spearman, being compounded of *fear*, a man, and *gais* or *geis*, a spear, the weapon carried by the *gais geach*, or heavily armed warrior among the Highlanders.

"The name," says that author, "may vie with any in point of antiquity and honour, for who has not heard of the renowned Fergus, the founder of Scotland's monarchy? We shall not insist on the existence of the first of that name, whose era is placed 300 years before the advent of Christ; it is matter of no slight pride, to be able to authenticate the reign of a second prince who flourished 1300 years ago. The Kinglet of Dalriada was formed in the north of Ireland *anno* 210, when the Scots had been forced to abandon their native (?) isle, and in 503 Fergus,

the son of the then king, came over to Argyle and re-established their dominion in Caledonia. From him, as the first and most distinguished of his name, the Fergusons assert their origin, a descent in which the most noble of the land may glory." Logan may not be absolutely accurate as to the precise year of the arrival of the historic King Fergus, which later historians place in 498 A.D., and may also be inaccurate in describing Scotland as the original native isle of the purely Scotie branch of the Celtic race, but for our purposes, his statement is substantially correct.

*The Stem.*—The Irish pedigrees also deduce "the stem of the Ferguson family" from the old royal race of Ireland, and subsequently of Scotland. In Hart's Irish Pedigrees the septs are traced, not from "Fergus the first, absolute King of Scotland of the Milesian race," as he is termed in the Annals of the Four Masters, but from his uncle, another Fergus. "Fergus," says Hart, "a son of Eoghan, who is No. 88 of the O'Neill of Tyrone pedigree, was the ancestor of Mac Fearghusa, anglicised Mac Fearghus, Fergus, and Ferguson." Eoghan was a son of Niall Mor, or Niall of the Nine Hostages, said to be the 126th monarch of Ireland. From Fergus his son (No. 89) the generations are given by name down to No. 105, Fearghus, and No. 106, his son Aodh Mac Fhearghusa. The Fergus who founded the line of our Scottish kings—the deep attachment of their people to whom is so quaintly expressed by the old Covenanter Bailie, when he says, "Had our throne been void, and our voices sought for the filling of Fergus's chair, we had died ere any other had sitten down on that fatal marble but Charles alone,"—was Fergus Mor Mac-Earca brother of Muchertach (Murtogh) Mor Mac-Earca, the 131st monarch of Ireland, and son of Muredach, son of Eoghan the father of the other Fergus. It is curious that Scottish and Irish traditions should agree so nearly in deducing the Ferguson stock from the old royal house of Ireland. The name was undoubtedly a favourite one among the pure Scots, though it is also found among the Picts, and it may perhaps be interesting to quote the physical characteristics of the true Milesian race, in opposition to the other elements of the Irish population, from a passage "taken from an old book," and preserved in

O'Curry's "Memoirs and Customs of the ancient Irish,"—"Every one who is white of skin, brown of hair, bold, honourable, daring, prosperous, bountiful in the bestowal of property, wealth, or rings, and who is not afraid of battle or combat, they are the descendants of the sons of Miledh in Erin." We may, I think, conclude, that the original stock of the Fergusons was of the unmixed Scottish race, of what is known in Ireland as the pure Milesian strain, as distinguished from the Picts who inhabited the north-eastern Lowlands of Scotland and a portion of Ulster, and who supplied the substratum of the population of Galloway. Many representative families of the name are found in Antrim, and the counties which formed the ancient Dalriada. In Scotland the Clan, if not a numerous one, is certainly very widely spread. It is found in the confines of Scottish Dalriada, it is numerous in Ayrshire and the south-western counties, where many pure Scottish names are found, there having been a large immigration from Dalriada among the ancient British and Pictish populations of these districts. It is found in Fife, and on the Braes of Balquhiddy, is numerous in Athol and Mar, and has been settled for long in the Garioch district of Aberdeenshire, from which it spread to Buchan. The late Dr MacLachlan, an eminent authority on Celtic tradition and literature, once told me that he had come across old women of the name living in Highland huts, whose circumstances were of the poorest, but who rejoiced in pedigrees which put to shame not only the best Norman descent, but even the blood of many chiefs of Highland clans.

The tartan of the Clan is one of the most beautiful of all the Scottish tartans, the *set* being a dark purple blue, traversed by black and green bands, and upon the green a *sprainge*, or white stripe edged with black, and two red stripes, one on either side of the white. The *Suaicheantas* or badge given by the books is the little sunflower (or rock rose), *Helianthymum Marifolium*, or in Gaelic *Ros-gréine*. I have, however, heard it said that the poplar was used as a badge.

The arms which are always given as those of the Clan are *az. a buckle argent between three boar heads coup'd, or*, the silver buckle and gold boar heads upon a blue field, borne by the house of Kilkerran, and with appropriate differences by the Aberdeenshire families. The earliest entry I can find in the Lyon Re-

gister of arms of families now represented bearing the boar heads, is that of Major Ferguson, of Balmakelly, in 1691. Those of Kilkerran are entered in 1719, and those of Pitfour, between 1734 and 1755. "The armorial bearings," says Logan, "vary in several families of the name. Fergus bears *Argent a lion rampant gules; Crest, a demilion proper, crowned with a mural diadem or*, which is believed to denote the royal descent. The Fergusons also in some instances carry a lion, as Craighdarroch." To this class of bearings belong those of Raith and Spitalhaugh. The Craighdarroch arms are registered in 1673, and those of the descendant of the famous divine, David Fergusson, who bandied witticisms with the Scottish Solomon, which show the boar heads between 1672 and 1678. The Lyon Register contains also three other entries of arms belonging to other branches of the Aberdeenshire family, of those of Isle, of Ferguson Home of Bassendean, of Fergusson-Pollock, of a cadet of Craighdarroch, and one or two others whose precise origin cannot now be traced.

It has been stated\* that "the Clan Mhic Fhearguis of Athole, along with the MacDiarmids of Glenlyon, are admitted by all authorities to be the oldest Clans known in the Highlands." The vicinity of Dunkeld, and the confines of Perth and Forfar were undoubtedly their special *habitat* as a Highland Clan. They appear as an "unruly clan" in the roll drawn up in 1587, of "the clannis that hes capitanes and chieftanes quhom on they depend." In the Act of the same year, by which certain "landlords and bailies in the borders and in the Highlands, on whose lands broken men dwell," were ordered to find caution "that they shall keep good rule in the country, and make themselves and their men answerable to justice," there occurs the name of "Baron Ferguson in £3000." The "Laird of Fergusson" appears among the roll of "landit men" drawn up in 1590. On 11th November, 1590, caution was given by Sir John Murray of Tullibardin "for certain men in Athole," among whom was John Ferguson of Darcloch (Derculich) *alias* Baroun Fergusson, that they would find the required caution by the 10th December next.

The Fergussons joined Viscount Dundee's army immedi-

\* Note in possession of member of the Clan resident in the Strachur district, quoted in the *Oban Times* of 4th February, 1891.

ately after the battle of Killierankie. It may perhaps be interesting to note, that the Laird of Craigdarroch of the time was killed in that battle fighting on the side of William of Orange, and that Captain James Ferguson, afterwards General Ferguson of Balmakelly, who was serving in one of the Scotch regiments in the service of Holland, and had come over with William of Orange, was then a prisoner in the Highland camp, having been detained when the Highlanders released their other prisoners, "on account of his more than ordinary zeal for the new establishment." As he is found six months later commanding the expedition to the West Coast, which defeated the Jacobites in Mull, and commenced the construction of Fort-William, he must soon have escaped or been released. In a MS. account of his family descended from "Baroun Fergusson," drawn up in 1775 by the Rev. Adam Ferguson, minister of Moulin, he says, "it has been said, but cannot I believe be instructed," that there was an old connection between those of the name in Athole and their namesakes in Aberdeenshire.

My information as to this account by Mr Adam Ferguson was obtained from an Aberdeenshire gentleman resident in Ontario, who sent the following extract,—“Baron Fergusson, whose ancestors had extensive lands, viz., Dunfallandy, the ten pound land of Dereulich, the ten pound land of Dalshian, and the third of Strathairdle and Glenshee, is our stem. Ferguson of Ballyoukan was a son of his, and another son predecessor to the branch of which Professor Adam Ferguson, Finlay of Middlehaugh, and others are, and said to have sprang from the stem at the same time. Bellechandy is said to have been a son of the first Ballyoukan, and if not a son he certainly was a brother. Ballyoukan that now is has no relation to the Baron, unless you suppose Thomas Fergusson of Aberdeenshire to be from that stem, which, though it has been often said, and may be true, cannot I believe be instructed.”

In the return of Owners of Lands and Heritages (Scotland), published in 1873, the following members of the clan, or their representatives, appear (as landowners of properties, which are clearly larger than glebes or ordinary feus),—

*In Perthshire—*

John Ferguson of Easter Dalnabreck.



Samuel R. Fergusson of Middlehaugh, Pitlochry.

Thomas Fergusson of Baledmund, "

Margaret Fergusson of Dunfallandy, "

*Aberdeenshire—*

Wm. Ferguson of Kinnmundy.

*Aberdeenshire and Banffshire—*

Colonel George Arthur Ferguson of Pitfour.

*Ayrshire—*

Sir James Fergusson of Kilkerran, Bart.

John Ferguson of Fulwood, Stewarton.

*Dumfriesshire and Kirkcudbrightshire—*

R. Cutlar Fergusson of Craigdarroch, Moniaive.

R. S. D. Fergusson of Isle.

*Fife, Elgin, and Ross shires—*

Ronald Crawford Munro Ferguson of Raith and Novar.

*Kincardineshire—*

Mrs Jane Ferguson of Altens.

*Peeblesshire—*

Sir William Ferguson, Bart., of Spittalhaugh.

*Lanarkshire—*

James Ferguson of Auchinheath.

*Wigtownshire—*

The Trustees of the Ferguson Bequest Fund.

It is interesting to compare with this return of 1873, the references in the Scottish Acts of Parliament to landholders of the name. There are several in the troublous times of the 17th century to the families of Kilkerran and Craigdarroch, of whom the first appear in tribulation before the Restoration, and the latter before the Revolution. James Ferguson, designed of Badifurrow in 1696, and of Pitfour in 1704, appears as a Commissioner of Supply for Aberdeenshire; and Colonel James Ferguson of Kirkmichael or Kirktonhill (*i.e.* Balmakelly), as a Commissioner for Kincardineshire in 1696 and 1698, his son returning to Aberdeenshire about 1723. A David of Glen-shynroche is mentioned in 1587, and a John of Downie in Athole in 1672. Paul of Rochalgreen was a Commissioner of Supply for Perth in 1690; James of Fourmerkland for Dum-

fries in 1704; and John of Dowalton for Wigtownshire in 1685. John of Barclauchanan was a Commissioner of Militia for Carrick in 1689; and John of Rainstoun appears as a J.P. for Wigtownshire. William, the successor of Thomas of Caitloch, in Dumfriesshire, was fined £1000 and forfeited after the Restoration, but restored after the Revolution; as was also Thomas of Finnarts. Thomas of Finnage, Hew of Mains, and John of Millander, all in Ayrshire, were fined, the two former £600, and the latter £1000, in 1662; and John of Isle voted against the Union in 1707. References are found elsewhere to Fergussons of Trochraigue, of Dalduff, and of Woodhill.

Members of the Clan have represented the following Scottish constituencies in Parliament,—

*In the Old Scottish Parliament—*

Inverurie, 1661–1663.\*

Inverkeithing (Robert Ferguson), 1579 and 1587.

Dumfriesshire, 1640, 1648–51, 1661–63, 1665, 1667, 1669–72, 1678; † 1702, 1707. ‡

*In the Imperial Parliament—*

Aberdeenshire, 1790–1820. ||

Banffshire, 1789–1790, 1832–1834, 1835–1837. ||

Ayrshire, 1774–1774, 1790–1796, 1854–1857, 1859–1868. §

Edinburgh, 1784–1790. §

Sutherlandshire, 1734–1736. §

Dumfriesshire, 1715–1722. †

Kirkeudbrightshire, 1826–1838. †

Fifeshire, 1806–7. ¶

Kirkealdy Burghs, 1806–1830, 1831–1834, 1837–1841, 1841–1862. ¶

Haddingtonshire, 1835–1837. ¶

Ross and Cromarty shires, 1884–5. ¶

Leith Burghs, 1886–1892. ¶

It is interesting to compare the numbers of the Clan with those of other wellknown Scottish surnames. The most numerous name both in England and Scotland is Smith. From a

\* Badifurrow.

† Craigdarroch.

‡ Isle.

|| Pitfour.

§ Kilkerran.

¶ Raith.



rough examination of the latest returns at the Register House, I estimate that the number of Smiths born, during the last year for which they are available, was 1760, of Macdonalds 1000, and of Fergusons 620. In a Report submitted by the Registrar-General in 1869, some interesting statistics were given of Scottish nomenclature. It was estimated, that in 1863 there were 44,268 Smiths. I compare the Fergusons with four other wellknown Scottish names. There were 36,624 Macdonalds, 30,212 Campbells, 14,476 Fergusons, 10,444 M'Gregors, and 9520 Gordons.

Let us now look more in detail at the various families of the name who appear in our Scottish records. It is a very curious fact that, while, so far as I have been able to ascertain, no definite link of connection can be traced between them, four families, found located respectively in Dumfriesshire, in Ayrshire, in Perthshire, and in Aberdeenshire, all cherish independent traditions, connecting their fortunes with those of King Robert the Bruce. Our national poet, Robert Burns, describes the Fergussons of Craigdarroch as

“A line that has struggled for freedom with Bruce.”

King Robert the Bruce granted a charter of lands in Ayrshire “*Fergusio filio Fergusii*,” who was the ancestor of the family of Kilkerran. The representative of one of the Perthshire families once informed me that his family possess charters dating also from the days of King Robert.

The Aberdeenshire families of Pitfour and Kinmundy, and I believe another, now represented by the Rev. John Ferguson, the Dean of Moray, trace their descent from a family established in the Garioch for more than 300 years prior to the civil wars of the 17th century, which is said to have received possessions there from King Robert on account of services rendered to him when he defeated the Comyns at the battle of Inverurie in 1308. A curious old document narrates that one Walter Fergus or Ferguson of Crichtie “received hospitably in his own house the great avenger of his country, King Robert Bruce, setting out into that part of the country to curb the rebels, and with his sons and dependents in the memorable battle of Inverurie, in the year 1308, afforded ready and manly aid.” Whatever may be

the value of this document, the tradition was firmly held by various branches of the family in existence in last century, that the connection of their ancestors with Inverurie and the vicinity went back to the period of the War of Independence, and that they had fought at the battles both of Inverurie and of Harlaw. The name is frequently found in the old records of the locality, and when the Marquis of Huntly, the king's lieutenant in the north, hoisted the Royal Standard at Inverurie, during "the Troubles" in 1644, he stayed in the house of the William Ferguson from whom most of the Aberdeenshire families claim descent, and who subsequently represented Inverurie in the Scottish Parliament of 1661.

It is recorded that, in 1364 Thomas, Earl of Mar, granted a charter to Eugene, *i.e.* Eoghan or Ewen Ferguson, of the lands of Auchtererne, in Cromar, or as expressed in the confirmation by King David II. (son and successor of the Bruce), *Egoni filio Fergusii*. These lands, it is said, were held by this family till the reign of James V.

The lordship of the Garioch had descended to the Bruces of Amundale, from their ancestor David Earl of Huntingdon and Garioch, the brother of King William the Lion, through whom they claimed the Scottish crown, and before the battle of Inverurie King Robert was resting on his own estates. The policy which he pursued, was to settle his supporters upon the forfeited lands of his opponents, and he planted many families from the south in the north. Such were the Irvines of Drum, the Burnetts of Crathes, as well as the noble houses of Gordon, Keith, and Hay. The name of Johnstone was common in the Bruce country in Amundale, and is also found in the Garioch. Not a few of King Robert's followers bore Celtic names, and it is possible that the Ferguses or Fergusons had followed the Bruces to the north before, or at least did so when every available vassal had to be brought to combat the great house of Comyn.

It is very probable that the race crossed over from Scottish Dalriada to Carrick, spread to Dumfriesshire on the one hand, and northwards on the other; followed the banner of the Bruce to the north, profited by the forfeiture of the ancient lords of Athole, and were, as the old tradition records, rewarded for good service at the battle of Inverurie. These, however, are

general speculations. I proceed to give a few brief facts relating to the various families of the name, taken, of course, except in the case of my own, from sources which are public property.

*The Ayrshire Fergussons—Kilkerran.*—We have seen that this family was settled at Kilkerran in the time of Robert the Bruce. A later charter was granted by King James III. in 1466 to Fergus Fergusson and Janet Kennedy his spouse. The family, says Nisbet, suffered much by their loyalty in the reign of King Charles I., Sir John Fergusson of Kilkerran having, after he had contracted great debts for the service of the King, and had his estates sequestrated by the Usurper, retired abroad till the Restoration, a short time after which he died. The present house of Kilkerran are descended from a younger son of this Sir John (Simon of Auchinwin), the elder branch, the Fergussons of Auchinblain having made over their estate in 1700 to their cousin, Sir John Fergusson, who had a distinguished and fortunate career at the Scottish bar. His family, upon the extinction of the elder branch, became the lineal representatives. In 1703 he was created a baronet; and his son, Sir James, followed his profession with even greater distinction. He became member for the county of Sutherland in 1734, was the compiler of Kilkerran's decisions, and in 1735 was raised to the bench as Lord Kilkerran, being regarded as one of the ablest lawyers of his time. His eighth son also became a judge, under the title of Lord Hermand. He is described as one of the last of the old race of Scottish advocates, and his vast store of anecdotes and amusing stories, with a vein of dry caustic humour peculiarly his own, rendered his society most fascinating. He died in 1827. His elder brother, Sir Adam Fergusson, represented Ayrshire for 18 years, and the city of Edinburgh for four; and in the present head of the family the name of Fergusson is represented, not only in Parliament, but in the Government of the Queen.

*Monkwood.*—In Ayrshire there were also the Fergussons of Monkwood, one of whom was the author of useful works on certain departments of Scottish law; while another, John Fergusson of Doonholm, an enterprising Indian merchant, left a bequest which was the germ of the Ayr academy.

*The Aberdeenshire families—Badifurrow.*—Most of these trace

their descent to William Ferguson of Badifurrow, near Inverurie, who, as already mentioned, represented that burgh in the first Parliament after the Restoration. His name appears among those who took part in the ceremony when the remains of the great Marquis of Montrose, and Sir William Hay of Delgaty, were exhumed from the Burgh Mair, and buried in the church of St Giles. He had six sons, and a daughter who married her cousin, a John Ferguson, having, it is said, when he pled the cause of a friend, answered him as Longfellow's Priscilla answered the young man who advocated the suit of Miles Standish—"Gin ye would speak for yersel', ye nicht hae mair chance."

*Ferguson the Plotter.*—The eldest son, known to history as "the Plotter," was one of the most perplexing characters that has ever crossed the pages of English history. It would be impossible even to sketch his career in the limits of this paper, and I may refer those who care to pursue it to his biography.\* He went to England before the Restoration, and the connection with his father's family seems, for years, to have been completely severed. The property passed to the next brother, and then to his eldest son, who afterwards became the first of the Fergusons of Pitfour. "The Plotter" began life in England as an Independent clergyman, and wrote two or three able treatises on theological subjects. But, taking to politics, he became an active political writer, and was mixed up with the most dangerous and turbulent episodes of the period between the Restoration and the Accession of the House of Hanover, especially the Rye House Plot. He has been denounced by historians, particularly Macaulay, but recent years have brought to light a narrative by himself of the Rye House Plot, preserved in the State Paper office, which puts a very different complexion upon his share in that transaction. Having examined most carefully the whole of the evidence relating to the whole conspiracy, I came to the conclusion that there was nothing in the real facts previously known inconsistent with this narrative, and that it fitted in most accurately with, and explained much that was obscure and inexplicable upon the previous information. The

\* Robert Ferguson, the Plotter; or the Secret of the Rye House Conspiracy, and the Story of a Strange Career. Published by David Douglas, Edinburgh, in 1887.

historian of his native place quotes, *apropos* of his experiences, the old Scottish proverb that "it is a poor family that cannot spare one son to the pot and another to the gallows," and it is impossible to claim "the Plotter" as a creditable representative of his clan. But the tone of his private letters is high, and if his own account of these transactions is correct, he certainly saved his country from a great calamity, and the Whig party of those days from a dark crime. He was described by one of his contemporaries as "a man by himself, and of as odd a make and mixture as this age has produced." His career is full of strange episodes. He was noted for his hairbreadth escapes, and indeed, is said to have crossed to Holland in an open boat, after the battle of Sedgemoor, in which he had taken an active part, and of which he has left an account, not devoid of touches of dry humour. It is said that he was once in Edinburgh when a proclamation arrived offering a reward for his apprehension. The gates were shut, and diligent search made. But he had betaken himself to the rooms of an acquaintance in the old Tolbooth, the public prison, which he thought, rightly in the circumstances, was the safest place. His expedients were not confined to securing his own personal safety. It is said that, during the Western Insurrection, the Duke of Monmouth's army were at one time very badly off for provisions. The Duke was very dejected, and Ferguson offered, if the Duke would give him the command for five minutes, to provide for the next day. He immediately issued an order, that the army should observe the next day as a solemn fast, and pray for success.

*Balmakelley and Kimmundy.*—It would be difficult to find a greater contrast to the career of "the Plotter" than that of his brother, the third son of the Laird of Badifurrow, Major-General James Ferguson, of Balmakellie and Kirktonhill, whose descendants form the Kimmundy branch of the family. He served originally in the Scots Brigade, in Holland; and after the Scottish campaigns of 1689 and 1690, to which reference has already been made, and taking an important part in the pacification of the Highlands, which was acknowledged by grants of the freedom of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Montrose, was transferred to the Cameronian regiment after the battle of Steinkirk, and commanded it for 12 years. A list of the officers of his

regiment, drawn up in 1700, illustrates the old clannish spirit of Scotsmen, for his adjutant was a John Ferguson, and among the ensigus were John, Robert, and James Ferguson. Four years later, Lieutenant John Ferguson was present, and Lieutenants Robert, and Leonard Ferguson were wounded at the battle of Blenheim. General Mackay described him, in a letter to King William, "as a man of probity and honour, attached to the service of your Majesty." He "led up the first line of foot" at the assault on the Schellenberg, and commanded a brigade at Blenheim, being afterwards entrusted with the duty of conveying the army of French prisoners to Holland. The Marlborough despatches contain an interesting letter from the Duke, on the occasion of his death in the following year, in which he describes him as an officer of merit for whom he had a great esteem, and by whose death the public had suffered a great loss.\* It may be interesting to mention, that the original set of the wellknown song "Logie o' Buchan," began with the line,—

"O wae to Kimmundy, Kimmundy the Laird,  
He has ta'en awa Jamie, that delded i' the yaird,"

the reference being to the son of the General.

*Pitfour*.—Three members of the Pitfour family may be shortly noticed. One of them was a wellknown Judge in last century. When at the bar, he and his friend Lockhart went up to Carlisle and defended the Jacobites who were being tried for the rising of 1745. The English jury was ready to convict any one who wore the tartan, and it is said that the advocates dressed up their clerk in Highland garb, got him slipped into the next batch of prisoners, and then proved, by calling each other, that he had been at home all through the rising, and could not possibly have been "out." The device is said to have had a salutary effect upon the trials that followed. A distinguished successor, Lord President Blair, described Pitfour and Lockhart as "two of the greatest lawyers that ever did honour to this Court, men who stood long unrivalled at the head of the bar, and whose characters were equal to their legal knowledge." The eldest son of the Judge became the Father of the House of Commons, in which he sat for 30 years. He was a devoted supporter of the

\* See "Two Scottish Soldiers." Wyllie & Son, Aberdeen, 1888.



younger Pitt, and is said to have declared that he never voted against Pitt but twice, and on both occasions on reflection realized that he had been wrong and Mr Pitt right. He is said only once to have spoken in the House, but was well known as a humourist among the Members. When he rose, there were loud shouts of "hear! hear!" He looked round, exclaimed "I'll be d——d if you do," and sat down. It is said that on one occasion a number of Members were dining, when somebody announced that Mr Pitt was up. All hurried off except Pitfour. As the last left he asked, "What, are you not coming to hear Mr Pitt?" "No," was the reply, "he would not come to hear me." They told Pitt, who said, "Wouldn't I, if I got the chance." Although not an orator in the House, Pitfour was a very public-spirited man, and did a great deal for agricultural improvement in the North of Scotland. He figures, along with his servant John, in some of Dean Ramsay's stories, and the famous Duchess of Gordon is said to have made the following riddle upon his name:—

"My first is found upon the banks of Tyne,  
My second is scarce quite the half of nine;  
My whole, a Laird of Aberdeenshire race,  
An honest fellow, with an ugly face."

To his life, a striking contrast was afforded by the short but chivalrous career of his younger brother, Colonel Patrick Ferguson. After serving with great bravery as a young man in the Scots Greys in Germany, he, in 1776 invented, and took out a patent for the first breech-loading rifle that was used in actual warfare. During the American Revolution, he had a special corps armed with it, and put under his command. When on outpost duty, before one of the battles, an American officer, attended by a single orderly, rode twice within short range of his post. The men wanted to fire on him, but the Captain took a rifle himself, and walked out. He signalled to the American to stop, but he, after looking for a moment, rode off. Ferguson, whose skill as a marksman was famous in both armies, said he could have put two or three bullets into him, but he did not like to fire at the back of an unoffending individual, who was only acquitting himself very coolly of his duty, and let him go. He was himself badly wounded, a few minutes later, and when lying in hospital next day, learned from some American officers

who had been brought in, that the officer he had spared was General Washington. He subsequently distinguished himself in the Jerseys, and at the siege of Charleston, and when Lord Cornwallis moved northwards, was given an important command, and specially employed to organize the loyal militia of the Carolinas, where many Scottish Highlanders had settled, and the majority of the inhabitants were loyal to the British connection. His force consisted wholly of local militia, and a small body of "Provincials," or regular troops, raised among the loyal Americans. He was attacked by superior numbers, and in his anxiety to "cover a country in which there were so many well-affected inhabitants," took post upon King's Mountain, where his force made a desperate resistance, repulsing their assailants seven times. They were successful until their commander, having had three horses killed under him, fell pierced by seven wounds, any of which were mortal, when they surrendered. American historians point to this battle as the critical moment that marked the turn of the tide in the Revolutionary War, and it is a curious fact that, with the exception of the Scottish officer of the 71st Highlanders, who commanded the Royalist force, the combatants were all native-born Americans. A life of Colonel Patrick Ferguson was written by Professor Adam Ferguson, and a further account of him\* containing much additional information from American sources, as well as of General Ferguson of Balmakelly, was published a few years ago.

Among other descendants of the Badifurrow family, was a Captain John Ferguson, who in the Jacobite rising commanded a ship of war, which nearly caught Prince Charles Edward on two occasions, and captured Flora Macdonald on her return, and who was also in command of the party which captured the famous Lord Lovat; a Captain James Ferguson, who received "a very high compliment" from Admiral Rodney, for his bravery in the great naval battle in the West Indies in 1780; and another who rose to a good position in the Austrian army. Nearly a century after, one member of the family had gone to Poland to push his

\* See "Two Scottish Soldiers." D. Wyllie & Son, Aberdeen, 1888. Also "Colonel Patrick Ferguson," article in *Blackwood's Magazine* of September, 1882. "Memoir," by Dr A. Ferguson, 1816. General De Peyster's "King's Mountain." Lyman C. Draper's "King's Mountain, and its Heroes."



fortune, his grandson returned to this country, and it may be interesting to note an illustration of the fortunes of the Scot abroad. He had married a Polish heiress, and added a Polish name to his Scottish patronymic, had become the richest banker in the East of Europe, was a member of the Polish Diet, had purchased an estate in Prussia, on which he had just received the congratulations of Frederick the Great, had a son in the Russian Guards, and was the only Protestant who had ever been made a Knight of Malta. In a letter of 1786, one of his relatives in Scotland describes this Polish Scot as being "clannish to a very high degree," and as "a very great honour to our family in particular, and to the name of Ferguson in general, for, besides all his honour and riches, he is a very valuable, good man."

*The Dumfriesshire Fergussons—Craigdarroch.*—This family also were among the followers of the Bruce. Nisbet records having seen a charter granted to John Ferguson *dominus de Craigdarroch*, undated, but which, from the names of the witnesses, must be referred to the earlier half of the 14th century. In 1717 the representative of the family married Annie, daughter of Sir Wm. Laurie of Maxwellton, whose unsuccessful suitor, Douglas of Fingland, composed the original song of "Annie Laurie." Their descendant, Alexander Fergusson of Craigdarroch, "famous for wit, worth, and law," was the hero of Burns's ballad of "the Thistle." His son, Robert Cutlar Fergusson, went to the English bar, and being concerned in the escape of some persons charged with treason in the closing years of last century, was tried and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. He afterwards went to Calcutta, became the head of the bar there, and returning in 1826 to this country, was elected member for Kirkcubright, appointed Judge-Advocate-General in 1834, and died in 1838. General Sir James Fergusson, G.C.B. (1787–1865), a cadet of Craigdarroch, served with honour in the Peninsular war, specially distinguishing himself at the storming of Badajoz, and the assault of Ciudad Rodrigo, and was afterwards Governor of Gibraltar. Napier, in describing the taking of Badajoz, speaks of "the hardiness of Ferguson of the 43rd who, having in former assaults received two deep wounds, was here, his former hurts still open, leading the stormers of his regiment, the third time a volunteer, the third time wounded."

*The Fifeergusons—Raith.*—The present family of the name are said to have possessed the estate of Raith since 1707. Four of them have represented various local constituencies in Parliament, and one of them, Sir Ronald Crawford Ferguson, was a general officer under the Duke of Wellington, specially distinguishing himself at the battles of Roliça and Vimeira, where he commanded a brigade.

*Other Families—Rev. David Fergusson.*—The kingdom of Fife was the home, even if Dundee was the birthplace of the distinguished Scottish divine, the Reverend David Fergusson,\* minister of Dunfermline (to which charge he was appointed in 1560), one of the leading Scottish Reformers. He describes himself as “one of the six who first put their hands to the work.” He was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1573, and again in 1578, and is said to have been remarkable for his combination of sagacity, firmness, and knowledge, with a pleasant and humorous disposition, which made him a useful representative of the Kirk in negotiations with the Court. He is said to have begun the History of the Church of Scotland, which was carried out by his son-in-law, Row, and the perusal of a sermon of his by John Knox upon his deathbed produced the quaint and emphatic recommendation from the old Reformer—“John Knox, with my dead hand but glad heart praising God that of his mercy He leaves such light to His Kirk in this desolation.” David Fergusson was not a voluminous writer, but he has left some ecclesiastical publications, which have been printed by the Bannatyne Club. He was the author of the first collection of Scottish Proverbs, for which he had a great liking, and it was said that he both spoke and preached in proverbs. It is, however, by his wise and witty observations, especially when interviewing King James, that he is best known. It was he who gave to the bishops appointed, while the revenues of the sees were drawn by laymen, the name of “Tulchan Bishops,” and who answered King James, when he asked why the Master of Gray’s house shook during the night,—“Why should the Devil not rock his ain bairns?” He described the proposals for the reintroduction of Episcopacy, as like “the busking up of the

\* See notice prefixed to reprint of his Tracts by the Bannatyne Club.

brave horse" for the overthrow of Troy. In an interview with the King, referring to the feuds that were prevalent, he observed that it was the surnames that made all the commotion. "If you go to surnames," he said, jocularly, "I will reckon with the best of you in antiquity, for King Fergus was the first king in Scotland, and I am Fergus-son, but always, Sir, because you are an honest man, and hath the possession, I will give you my right." This, it is said, put King James in a good humour, and he exclaimed,—“See, will you hear him!” The Robert Fergusson who represented Inverkeithing in the Parliaments of 1572 and 1587, was very probably a relative of his. It is interesting to trace, if not a blood connection, yet a link as strong as that of adoption, which, in the days of old Rome, connected the elder and the younger Scipios, between this old Reformer and other distinguished men of his name. The last male descendant of the Minister of Dunfermline was Mr David Fergusson, Minister at Strickmartin, whose arms were registered between 1672 and 1678, who was one of the Episcopal Ministers ejected at the Revolution, and who died shortly after. In the MS. Memoirs of Mr Adam Ferguson, Minister at Logierait, it is stated that he, when a young man, was recommended to Mr David Fergusson, “who had a considerable stock in money, but had no child to enjoy it, except a brother’s daughter; and being very clannish, was much inclined to be beneficial to any of the name of Fergusson that were thought capable of liberal education, especially after his only son was lost on the ice in the North Loch, at Edinburgh.” (Mr David Fergusson, writer, was thus drowned on 11th February, 1682.) Owing largely to David Fergusson’s influence, a connection of whom was his professor, “and did reckon Mr Adam his relation that way,” Mr Adam made a good start in life. Adam Fergusson’s parents are said to have been descended from the Fergussons of Dunfallandy, an old family in Athole. It is said, that they had for generations pursued the vocation of smiths, an honourable one in a Highland village, “the first of them being John, son of Fergusson of Drumachoir, who was at the battle of Pinkie, and relieved Stuart of Balnakeillie from five Englishmen that were assaulting him.” Adam was subsequently settled at Crathie, and afterwards at Logierait, and was the leader in the Synod of the party opposed to the Erskines, at the time of the first

Secession. The youngest son of the young man whom the descendant of the Reformer had befriended, was Dr Adam Ferguson, the famous Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh.

*Dr Adam Ferguson (1724-1816).*\* Dr Adam Ferguson was the youngest of his family. He is said to have changed the spelling of his name by omitting the second (s), on the ground that it was unnecessary, and therefore unworthy of a philosopher. When a young man, he was appointed chaplain to the Black Watch (the 42nd Highlanders), recently raised, on account of his knowledge of Gaelic, and at the battle of Fontenoy is said to have seized a broadsword, and insisted, in spite of his commanding officer, on charging with the regiment. He was for some time Professor of Natural Philosophy, and afterwards of Moral Philosophy, in the University of Edinburgh; and was selected by the Government as Secretary to the Reconciliation Mission, which was sent out to America during the Revolutionary War. His principal works were the History of the Roman Republic, the Essay on Civil Society, Institutes of Moral Philosophy, and the Principles of Moral and Political Science. Perhaps we may trace a touch of the clannish feeling which had done so much for his father, in his Memoir of Colonel Patrick Ferguson, the young officer from Aberdeenshire who fell at King's Mountain. The friend of Adam Smith, Hume, Blair, and Gibbon, Adam Ferguson was one of the best known figures in the intellectual society of Edinburgh. A most interesting description of him is given by Lord Cockburn, in his Memoirs. He had a severe illness when in his fiftieth year, but strict care, and a vegetarian diet, enabled him to live for nearly fifty more. At 72, he set off in a strange sort of carriage, with no companion but his servant James, to visit Italy, for a new edition of his History. He had "to pass through a good deal of war, but returned in about a year, younger than ever." In his later years, his life was practically sustained by the interest he took in the Great War, and in the words of Sir Walter Scott, "the news of Waterloo acted upon this aged patriot as a *Nunc*

\* For an interesting article on Dr Adam Ferguson, see the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1867. Vol. 125.

*Dimittis.*" His son Sir Adam Ferguson was the intimate friend and country neighbour at Huntlyburn, so constantly referred to in Sir Walter Scott's *Journal*. He had served in the Peninsula, and Scott is said to have been greatly pleased on hearing that, when the *Lady of the Lake* first came out, Captain Ferguson, who was with his regiment in the lines of Torres Vedras when the work reached him, read the whole description of the battle in Canto VI. to his company, while lying on the ground exposed to the fire of the enemy's artillery. Another son was an Admiral, and the present representative of the family is the son of the late Dr Robert Ferguson (1799-1865), son of Robert Fergusson of Glen-Islay, Perthshire (a nephew of the historian), who wrote on natural history and medical subjects, and was for long Physician to the Queen.

*James Ferguson, the Astronomer* (1710-1776).\* Two other men of remarkable genius, whose gifts have adorned, and whose misfortunes have also saddened the history of their name, deserve more than a passing word of recognition. In the Banffshire herd-boy, who studied the stars when in the fields by night, who is still remembered in our schools as "the boy who made the wooden watch," and who for long supported himself and his family by taking portraits in Indian ink, we have one of the greatest self-taught mechanics that Scotland has produced. His works on mechanics and astronomy were numerous, but the most enduring interest of his life is found in the charming little autobiography which recounts his early efforts and struggles, and in the domestic calamity that overshadowed its later years, after he had won fame and honour, and had been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London. A full life of him has been published by Henderson, and it may be not uninteresting to note that my own family possess three pictures painted by him about 1740, being those of James Ferguson of Kimmundy, his wife, and son.

*Robert Fergusson, the Poet* (1750-1774).† If the north country

\* See *Autobiography*, 1773, and *Life*, by E. Henderson, 1867. Also Article "James Ferguson," in *Blackwood's Magazine* of August, 1883.

† See *Life* prefixed to *Poems* (ed. of 1821), by Gray. Also *Life* by Irving, 1801.

astronomer was known as "the Scottish Franklin," we can also claim the forerunner of Burns. Robert Fergusson was the son of William Fergusson, who came originally from Tarland, in Cromar, Aberdeenshire. Curiously enough, the Poet also owed his education to a bursary founded at Dundee by Mr David Fergusson, of Strathmartin, who had assisted the father of Adam Ferguson, the philosopher. The circumstances of his short and troubled life, and its sad and solitary end, are well known. It was left to Robert Burns to erect a stone to his memory, with the inscription,—

"No sculptur'd marble here, nor pompons lay,  
 'No storied urn, nor animated bust ;'  
 This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way  
 To pour her sorrows o'er her Poet's dust."

One cannot fail to be struck with the sensibility, the command of language, and the power of versification of Fergusson's poems. It is, however, in his Scotch pieces, that he is at his best, and perhaps if it had not been for Burns, whose genius he awakened, he would have remained a greater popular favourite. His "Farmer's Ingle Neuk" undoubtedly suggested the "Cottar's Saturday Night."

From poet to piper, is perhaps a natural transition, especially when their origin is in the same northern region. Donald Ferguson, from Corgarff, in Mar, was a cheerful volunteer in Prince Charles Edward's army in 1745. When a party of the Government troops were made prisoners at Keith, Donald was thrown in the skirmish off the bridge into the Isla, but kept blowing with vigour, and his inflated bag sustained him till he was rescued. He used afterwards to say, that so long as he could blow up his muckle pipes, he should neither die nor drown.

Among other men of the name, who by their actions or writings have benefited their generation and maintained the credit of their clan, was *James Fergusson*, Minister of Kilwinning, in Ayrshire, from 1643 to 1667, who was sprung from the House of Kilkerran, and is described as a man of eminent piety, "much admired for his great and singular wisdom and prudence, being reckoned one of the wisest men in a nation, most fit to be a counsellor to any monarch in Europe;" John Ferguson, of



Cairnbrock (1787-1856), founder of the Ferguson Bequest Fund; William Gouw Ferguson (1633-1690), a painter of still life, who spent most of his years in Holland; William Ferguson (1820-1827), a botanist and entomologist, who pursued his researches in Ceylon; William Fergusson, M.D. (1773-1846), who was born at Ayr, became Inspector-General of military hospitals, and wrote some useful medical treatises; his son, James Fergusson (1808-1886), the eminent writer on archaeology and architecture; and Sir William Fergusson, Bart., of Spitalhaugh (1808-1877), the distinguished surgeon, and voluminous writer on surgical subjects.

We have seen that a branch of the Aberdeenshire family was settled in Poland. Dr Adam Ferguson records, that when he visited Voltaire, the French philosopher "saluted me with a compliment on a gentleman of my family who had civilized the Russians," referring probably to an earlier Scotch Ferguson whom, in his History of Russia, he describes as helping Peter the Great to calculate eclipses, and as establishing at Moscow schools of geometry, astronomy, and navigation. Several individuals of the name have been connected with Holland. A year or two ago, if not still, the Dutch Ambassador in China was M. Jan Helenus Ferguson, whose family have been settled in Holland for two or three generations; who served in the Royal Navy of the Netherlands, and who has continued the traditions associated with the name in Scotland, by writing a comprehensive Manual of International Law, a Treatise on the Red Cross Alliance at Sea, and an able Essay on the Philosophy of Civilisation. His ancestor is said to have come from Kelso prior to 1735, and a brother went to America, his son becoming Lord Mayor of Philadelphia. M. Ferguson has, however, in his possession an old Dutch work written in 1675 by a Johan Jacob Ferguson, and he and his son have told me of drawings of coats of arms in the possession of relatives of theirs in Holland.

The name has also produced men distinguished in poetry, in antiquarian studies, and otherwise, in Ireland, and is honourably associated with the public life of Carlisle and Cumberland.

Such are the fragmentary notices which I have been able to collect of the Ferguson Clan and its members, who have left traces behind them. They show that, if not a numerous or a famous Clan, it has taken a respectable share in the national life on the battle-field and on the ocean, in the pulpit, the lawyer's gown, or the philosopher's chair, in science and in practical invention, in poetry, in art, and in medicine. It has produced not a few Scotsmen whose qualities and temper were peculiarly characteristic of their country, and who have served their generation well, till they fell on sleep. Montaigne, the famous French essayist, who gossiped so pleasantly and copiously about himself and things in general, describes himself as being "sprung from a family that had run its course without much distinction, and without making much noise in the world, but that had always been specially ambitious of a character for truth and uprightness." I have been struck, in collecting the materials for these notes, by the frequency of a pleasing vein of good Scottish humour among our clansmen, and with the impression that many of those whose lives I have had to examine made on their contemporaries, by apparently just the steady truthfulness and simple integrity of their personal character. And I cannot, perhaps, conclude these notes better, than by quoting one or two passages which afford the true use of genealogical study—which, of all forms of history, is surely that best entitled to the definition, that it is teaching by example. It was said of the Astronomer,—“He was a man of a very clear judgment in anything that he professed, and of unwearied application to study; benevolent, meek, and innocent in his manners as a child; humble, courteous, and communicative; instead of pedantry, philosophy seemed to produce in him only diffidence and urbanity—a love for mankind, and for his Maker.” It was said of the philosophic Historian, that at 90 years of age there “still burned in him a Roman soul.” “His last words,” says one writer, “as narrated to us by one who knew him well, are among the most remarkable on record. Turning to his daughters, who surrounded his death-bed, he exclaimed, ‘There *is* another world.’” He had, himself, preserved a striking passage from a letter of the young soldier whose life he had written, with which I end. “The length of our lives is not at our own command, however much the manner



of them may be. If our Creator enable us to act the part of men of honour, and to conduct ourselves with spirit, probity, and humanity, the change to another world, whether now or 50 years hence, will not be for the worse."





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