

METHVEN CASTLE

and Its Many Owners

THE name of Methven is a puzzle. In old days no one seemed to know exactly how to spell it, and there is still some doubt as to how to pronounce it, and much doubt as to what it means.

The name has been spelt *MEFFIN*, *MEQUEN*, *MEGFEN*, *MEFFANE*, *METHUEN* and *METHVEN*. It was spelt *MEQUEN* in a charter dated 1312, and *Megfen* in 1324. There is a farm on the property still called *MECKPHEN*, which may be yet another variation of the spelling.

It is common nowadays, but quite incorrect, to pronounce the name as *Methven*, with a strong accent on the first syllable and an emphasis on the *thv*. Whenever I have occasion to ring up my relations on the telephone, I say: "Meffen 6, please": to which the operator always replies "What?": and when I repeat "Meffen 6," the operator asks: "Do you mean *Methven*?" and I reply: "No! Meffen!"

I think I am right. At least, as long ago as the sixteenth century King Henry VIII. of England used, it is said, to speak rather contemptuously of his brother-in-law, Lord Methven, Queen Margaret's husband, as "The Muffin man."

I remember also the late Miss Emily MacGregor, a well-known Perth lady, telling me that, sometime in the forties of the last century, she went over with a party of friends to Methven, and that they looked in through a window and saw "Old Muffin toasting by the fire." It was not a very respectful allusion to my uncle, Mr. Robert Smythe; but it showed how they pronounced Methven in the forties.

It is possible that the change of pronunciation came in with the railways, for porters were told, for the convenience of the public, to call the names of stations as they were spelt; and so Ciceter became Cirencester, and Daentry, Daventry, and possibly Meffen, *Methven*. Any way, I mean to go on calling it Meffen in spite of railway porters and telephone operators; just as I mean to go on pronouncing S.M.Y.T.H.X Smith in spite of what anyone may say.

The meaning of the word Methven is more puzzling still. Some derive it from the root "Avon," water, as being near the Almond; but this seems futile as neither the village nor the Castle is within a mile of the Almond's banks. Some again derive it from a Gaelic word meaning "white," from the white lilies of the valley which grew in Methven wood, but this also seems rather far-fetched.

A more plausible derivation is from a Gaelic word meaning "middle," as being the centre of the Vale of Strathmore. This is more reasonable if Strathmore be taken, as I believe it sometimes is, to cover the whole wide plain between Forfar and Stirling.

But the derivation that most commends itself to me is that suggested by a Perth lady who has lately made a study of the subject. It is that the name is derived from a well-nigh forgotten Celtic Saint, S. Mothven.

In support of this there are two facts: first that the annual autumn fair at Fowlis Wester was, till within the last thirty years, known as Methvenmas, and second that there is said to be, near Buchanty, the traditional site of a Chapel dedicated to S. Methven. Against this it may be argued—first, that, though many places in Scotland are named after Celtic Saints, there are hardly any, if any, without some prefix; either Saint, as St. Madoes; or St. Enoch's; or Kil, as Kilmahog, or Kilmaveonaig; or Ath,* as Acharacle or Amulree: secondly, that S. Marnock and not S. Methven is the patron saint of Methven.

It would appear, therefore, that the name should be spelt Methven and pronounced Meffen, and that what it means—

"The Gods themselves,"

"Wotting no more than I, are ignorant."

So much for the name.

There is a tradition that the original Castle of Methven stood somewhere near the hamlet of Culdeesland at the South-East of the village of Methven. It is possible that the Culdees were the original owners. A castle on the present site belonged to the great family of Mowbray, and afterwards to the Stewarts of Atholl. After the forfeiture of Walter Stewart of Atholl, who was executed for being art and part in the murder of King James I., the Castle became the property of the Crown.

King James IV. was often at Methven and in 1496 he built a new hall to the Castle.

* Ath, pronounced Ah, is Gaelic for ford, as in Atholl.

Perkin Warbeck was at Methven in 1495.

The following extracts from the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer illustrate some of King James' doings when at Methven.

1492. item: Payment for "Estland burchis for wyndokes and durris at Meffane."

1496. item: To the King, to play at the tables, £4 13s.

item: Giffin to the portare in Methven, 16d.

item: To the cuke and panetare in Methven, 14s.

item: The third day of Jany. Giffin to the Provost of Methven to byg the hal of Methven with, £9.

item: In Mothven, the 24th day of August, giffin to a pure wif at the King's Command, 5s. 6d.

In deepening the floor of the present dining room at Methven in the year 1800, a stone coffin was discovered containing the four quarters of a man. It was conjectured that they were the remains of the Earl of Atholl who was executed at Perth for the murder of King James I. The remains were decently disposed of, and the four sides of the coffin were used by a utilitarian generation to make the stone steps leading down to the newly excavated floor. The marks where they fitted into each other may still be seen. So, if tradition be true, the owners of Methven go down to dinner daily on the coffin of a former Earl of Atholl.

The present house of Methven was practically rebuilt by the Smyths when they bought the property from the Duke of Lennox in 1664. It stands on the site of the former Castle of which, however, nothing but the dining room remains. It was built in days when houses were built for defence rather than for convenience. Old pictures show it as a square building with turrets at the four corners. A courtyard surrounded by offices, now altogether abolished, stood at the North front. Subsequently the Western wing was added. In the early days of the nineteenth century, when a mania for house-building seems to have swept over Perthshire, a large block of not very congruous building was added as an Eastern wing.

The central portion of the house was originally haarked, and the removal of the haarking has exposed the surface and resulted in a rather ominous skaling of the stone through exposure to the weather.

Marshall, in his "Historic Scenes of Perthshire," describes the Castle in somewhat fulsome language, as "fit for the residence of a baronet, or even of a lord!"

There were some interesting pictures in the old house which have now been removed to Moulinalmond. Among them was one of Patrick Smyth, the first Smyth of Methven, another of Lady Dundee, the wife of Claverhouse, several of the Cochrane family, and one of the Admirable Crichton. The Admirable Crichton—that brilliant but ill-fated young man—was half-brother to Marion Crichton, a young lady who was forcibly abducted by Graemes and others from the house of her kinsman, Stirling of Ardoch, and married—not against her will—to George Graeme, who became Bishop of Orkney. She became the mother of Katharine, who married Patrick Smyth of Braco.

The most historic part of Methven is Methven Wood. Its history is rather a blood-stained record. It was there that the Thane of Methven slew the King of Scotland who had seduced his daughter. It was there that Bruce was betrayed, and there that he hid after the battle of Methven. ^{fn 1306} There, too, it was that the camp followers of Montrose were brutally murdered by his enemies. There also, it is said, that an Oliphant of Gask slew a noted robber who had attacked him, and rode on quietly to dinner at Ardblair as if nothing very particular had happened. But the most historic moment in the story of Methven Wood occurs in the history of the Great Montrose. I quote from Buchan, who quotes the words of Patrick Gordon, who had the story from the lips of the Great Marquis himself.

“As he was one day in Methven Wood, staying for the night, because there was no safe travelling by day, he became transported with sadness, grief and pity to see his native country thus brought into miserable bondage and slavery and therefore, in deep grief and unwonted ravishment, he besought the Divine Majesty, with watery eyes and a sorrowful heart, that His justly kindled indignation might be appeased, His mercy extended and the curse removed, and that it might please Him to make him a humble instrument therein to His Holy and Divine Majesty's greater glory. While he was in this thought, & lifting up his eyes, he beheld a man coming the way to S. Johnstone, and, hastily stepping towards him, he enquired what the matter meant. The messenger told him that Coll MacGillespick was entered in Atholl with a great army of Irishes.”

It was the first intimation of the arrival of Macdonald Coikitto and the signal for the beginning of Montrose's great campaign.

Some of the timber on the Methven estate is of great interest. A traveller on the road to Crieff may see, if he knows where to look, the famous Pepperwell Oak, growing beside the little burn that runs from the garden to the Pow. He may also see the deodar Avenue, sometimes called the "Simla Avenue," which was grown from seed brought from India by Lord Elgin, the Viceroy. There is a particularly fine beech tree beside the Almond in a hollow called the "Deerie Haugh." There was also a magnificent spruce—blown down, I think, in the Tay Bridge Gale—which dominated all the neighbourhood and was sometimes called "the Monarch of the Wood." There was another tree in the wood called "Mary Milne's Oak." I never could find exactly what was Mary's title to fame, except that she was the mother of a certain old Annie MacLean, who lived beside the Loch at Methven and died there in her hundredth year.

Until comparatively recent years there stood in the Churchyard at Methven a very noted tree known as the "Auld Bell Tree." Its fame was celebrated in a poem by Thomas Bishop, who was overseer at Methven Castle and who was joint compiler with the then Minister of Methven of the article on Methven in the "Second Statistical Report." The poem was quoted at length in the *Perthshire Advertiser* not very long ago. I quote one verse here:—

"When Luther and Calvin were lads at the Schule,
And the aisle where the Methven lairds lie when they dee,
Was a Kirk o' the Pape's : O the bell it hung still
On the Auld Tree at Methven—the Auld Bell Tree."

The "aisle where the Methven lairds lie when they dee" is all that remains of the old Church of Methven. It was a Church to which much history was attached. In 1433 Walter Stewart, Earl of Atholl, founded a Provostry of Methven and five prebendaries. A Provostry is a capitular body of whom the Provost—Latin *prepositus*—is the head. That is how it comes about that in all Scottish boroughs, in some Oxford Colleges, and in the revised Cathedral Chapters of the Scottish Episcopal Church the head of the body is called the Provost.

The Provostry of Methven remained till the Revolution. There were some men of mark among the Provosts, notably Provost Murray, a very prominent Covenanter and a friend of the Marquis of Montrose. The last Provost was Mr. John Omey, who died in or about 1688.

From the Reformation to the Revolution the usual see-saw between Episcopalians and Presbyterians prevailed in Methven as in other places. When the Stuarts were in the Piskies were up, and when the Stuarts were out they were down.

The late Dean Farquhar in his "Ecclesiastical History of Perth"—a book of which Mr. Gladstone himself wrote in terms of high commendation—gives a graphic account of the last struggle between Episcopalians and Presbyterians in Methven.

In 1688 Mr. John Omev was the Episcopalian Clergyman. He died that year. The Presbytery of Perth, newly come into power, appointed Mr. John Anderson, a Presbyterian Minister, to succeed him. But the intrusion was stoutly opposed by Graeme, the laird of Balgowan, and by the laird of Methven, himself the grandson of a Scottish Bishop. Mr. Alexander Dunning was then appointed to "preach the Kirk vacant." He, however, could only report that "on Sabbath he went to the Parish Kirk of Methven; but found a great rabble of people, stopping his access, and that Mr. Young (an Episcopalian), late incumbent of Monzievaird, was in the Kirk at the same time." Mr. Dunning had to preach in the Kirkyard to those disposed to listen to him.

In 1694, six years after the Revolution, Mr. Robert Anderson of Perth went to Methven with the Presbytery. They were proceeding to the Kirk when they found "the laird of Balgowan, Busbie, and David Smyth, brother to the laird of Methven" and several parishioners standing as a guard before the Church door. They positively refused to admit the Presbytery to the Church. The latter had to retire to a neighbouring house, where they determined that Mr. Anderson should preach in the Churchyard and declare the Church vacant, which he did.

The Presbyterians were at length installed in Methven in that same year, 1694, in spite of the protests of the parishioners. The story is typical of many others that occurred at that time in the neighbourhood of Perth. It was not till well on in the eighteenth century that the last Episcopalian Ministers were expelled. I believe they held on in Scone and in Forteviot till about the year 1720. It shows how strong a hold the old Episcopalian Church had upon the affections of Perthshire people.

The "Second Statistical Report" states that from the Revolution till about the year 1840 there had been only four established Ministers in Methven. A fact which testifies both to the longevity of ministers and to the comparatively recent establishment of the Presbyterian Church.

The tradition of longevity has been well maintained in Methven. Dr. Wilson, whom I well remember, was the sixth minister. Padre Robertson, who was called to his rest this winter, full of years and honour, was but the seventh since the Revolution. It is curious to note that, while Padre Robertson was the seventh Minister of Methven since 1694, I, when I was appointed in 1911, was the seventh Provost of S. Ninian's since 1848. So the Presbyterians certainly beat the Piskies both in length of days and in tenure of office.

We come now to the owners of Methven Castle.

The first on record is Rohard, thane of Methven, who in 970 A.D. slew Colenus, King of Scotland, in Methven Wood.

It was probably in the twelfth century that Methven came into the hands of the Mowbrays, whose ancestor Roger de Mowbray came over to England with William the Conqueror. It appears that many of the Norman barons came north and settled in Scotland. From them are descended many noble Scottish families, as the Stewarts, the Bruces, the Menzies, and many others.

The Mowbrays were a powerful race and in their time Methven was an important centre. In 1208 a Charter was granted by Philip de Mowbray. Prior to 1249 Sir Matthew Moncreiffe held the lands of Moncreiffe from Roger de Mowbray. In 1230 the Mowbrays were presiding in their own Courts.

In the days of King Robert the Bruce the Mowbrays sided with the Balliol faction, and the lands of Methven were taken from them and bestowed by King Robert on his son-in-law, Walter, Hereditary High Steward of Scotland, ancestor of the line of Stuart Kings. Walter bestowed them on his second son, Walter, Earl of Atholl.

Upon the forfeiture of the Atholl family, Methven became the property of the Crown. It was usually appropriated, with other lands, as the dowry of the Queen Dowager of Scotland for the time being.

Eventually Methven became the property of Queen Margaret, sister of King Henry VIII. of England, and widow of King James IV. of Scotland.

Margaret appears to have been almost as uxorious as her brother across the Border. On King James' death she married a Douglas, and eventually bestowed herself on Henry Stewart, brother of Lord Evandale. For him she obtained, from her son, King James V., the title of Lord Methven. Queen Margaret died in 1540 at the age of 52, and was buried with great pomp in the Carthusian Monastery in Perth. Her only child by Lord Methven—a daughter—predeceased her.

After the Queen's death Lord Methven married again and had a son, the second Lord Methven. This Lord Methven married a daughter of Patrick, Lord Ruthven. He was killed by a cannon ball from the Castle of Edinburgh in 1572. He left a son, the third Lord Methven, who died without issue. The lands and title of Methven then lapsed to the Crown.

It is curious that four noble persons seem to have taken their titles from Methven.

First, there were the Stewarts of the Evandale line.

Second, it seems that the title was given by Charles II. to Charles Lennox, his illegitimate son. For one of the titles of the present Duke of Richmond and Gordon is Lord Methuen (or Methven) of Tarbolton. Now Tarbolton was certainly one of the titles of the Dukes of Lennox who owned Methven from 1584-1664, and it looks as if both titles—Methven and Tarbolton—had been bestowed by Charles II. on his son, with the Dukedom. They may somehow have been confounded by some subsequent editor of "The Peerage" into Methuen of Tarbolton.

Thirdly, the title of the present Lord Methuen is certainly derived from one Paul de Methuen, a prominent reformer, who fled from Scotland to the Court of Queen Elizabeth, and eventually founded a family in Wiltshire. It seems probable that the Methuen from which Paul took his name was Methven, for there is no other place in Scotland of the same name. Therefore, we may reasonably conclude that that great gentleman and gallant soldier, the present Lord Methuen, takes his title from Methven.

Fourthly, my grandfather, who was a Lord of Session, took the title of Lord Methven, a title which, of course, died with him.

In 1584 the lands of Methven were granted to the Dukes of Lennox, who held them till 1664, when they were bought by Patrick Smyth of Braco, in whose family they remained till recent years, and some part of them still remains.

The Smyths of Braco and Methven appear to have been a douce, respectable and law-abiding race.*

I have been reading lately the most interesting and instructive record of the Moncreiffes of Moncreiffe, which Mr. William Moncreiffe has lately compiled. The Smyths and the Moncreiffes have been closely related at many periods of their history. There is a striking contrast between the two families.

* Their motto "MEDIIS TRANQUILLUS IN UNDIS" is descriptive of their nature.

The Moncreiffes seem to have been a combative, not to say warlike, race. In the year 1578 a whole bevy of Moncreiffes, including John Moncreiffe, the Vicar of Dunbarny, were in trouble for being "airt and pairt in the slaughter of umquhile Arthoure Jordane," a partisan of the Oliphants with whom the Moncreiffes were at feud. And through their long history they appear to have had their full share of quarrels, disputes and lawsuits with the Government, with the city of Perth, with their neighbours generally and with each other.

The Smyths on the other hand were a peaceable and domestic people. They took their full share in the affairs of their day. They were loyal Jacobites and staunch Episcopalians. Henry, son of Patrick of Braco, and brother of the first laird of Methven, fell fighting for King Charles I. on the field of Marston Moor. Katherine, his sister, wife of Mr. Drummond, Minister of Moneydie, was the lady who, in Oliver Cromwell's days, carried the "Honours of Scotland" in safety from Dunottar Castle and hid them beneath the flooring of her husband's Church. David Smyth of Methven fought for King James at Sheriffmuir. Patrick*—sometimes called "Pate, the Atheist," because he married a Roman Catholic!—was Commissary General to Prince Charles Edward in 1745—and James Smyth, surgeon in Perth, was one of the chief of those who welcomed the Prince to the Fair City. But I find no word of a Smyth who killed his foe in private feud; nor of disputes, quarrels or lawsuits in which the family were engaged.

It is a testimony to the power of the principle of heredity that, while the present representative of the Moncreiffes is the gallant soldier who led the Sixth Black Watch "over the top" in Flanders, the eldest living male representative of the Smyths is the mild and inoffensive individual who has the honour of addressing you to-night.

There is, however, one attribute of the Smyths which is outstanding in their story. They had a faculty for marrying capable, charming and sometimes heroic wives. A faculty which they still retain.

But to return to history. Douglas, in his "Baronage," is responsible for the statement that "All the Smyths and all the Gows in Scotland are sprung from 'Hal o' the Wynd'." I have never seen this statement verified. Sir Walter Scott, too, in the conclusion of "The Fair Maid of Perth," says that "several of the most respected houses in Scotland, but especially in Perthshire, record with pride their descent from the 'Gow Chrom' and 'the Fair Maid of Perth'." I once asked my uncle,

* There is still preserved at Kinloch Moldart a signed letter from Prince Charles to Patrick, or Peter, Smyth, summoning him to join the Royal Standard in the Highlands, a summons which Patrick loyally obeyed. 9

the late Mr William Smythe of Methven, whether there was any reason to suppose that the Smyths of Methven were among the "respected houses" to which Sir Walter refers. He replied, "Not the slightest." "But," he added, "I was once walking in London when Lockhart, Sir Walter's son-in-law and biographer, crossed the street to ask me the same question, and I answered him as I have answered you."

If we take Douglas as our guide, we find that the first Smyth of our line known to history was Thomas "who, being bred to the business of Physic and eminent in his profession," was appointed Apothecary to King James III., who "settled on him a pension for life by Charter dated 1477."

Thomas was succeeded by Patrick Smyth of Braco.

From that time the Smyths held the lands of Braco, Waukland and Hoil of Scone. Hoil of Scone was somewhere near Lord Mansfield's kennels to the left of the Blairgowrie road. Wauklands was probably near Waukmill. The site of Braco is unknown, but a tree-clad mound to the North of the road leading to Waukmill Ferry looks as if it might once have been the site of the house of Braco. This is the less improbable in view of the fact that till early in the nineteenth century some part of what is now Scone Park was feued by the Murrays from the Smyths.

The Smyth family followed an uneventful course till the end of the sixteenth century. About that time two Smyth boys, Patrick and George, who had been left orphans, were taken under the governorship of George Graeme, the Episcopal clergyman of Scone.

George Graeme was shortly afterwards made Bishop of Orkney, and took his two wards with him to his Northern home in Kirkwall. At that time a good many young gentlemen of the Episcopalian persuasion—for whom the times were troublesome—seem to have found their way to Orkney, and those who went mostly made good; for Orcadian trade was prosperous in those days.

The young Smyths had their share in the prosperity.

In 1603 Patrick, the elder of the two, married Katharine, the daughter of his guardian, Bishop Graeme.

This Patrick was a marrying man. On Katharine's death he married Margaret Stewart, of the house of Ochiltree, widow of Sir Hugh Halcro, of that ilk, and on Margaret's death, he married Margaret Anderson, who survived him and afterwards became the wife of David Moncreiffe, the founder of the present line of Moncreiffes of Moncreiffe. By these marriages he had 23 children.

Before we follow the story of the elder line, we may trace the history of some of the younger ones, who were more or less connected with Perth.

A son of Patrick and the widow of Hugh Haloro, was William Smyth, born in 1646—"Who, being bred to the Church, was parson of Moneydie, and married one of the daughters and co-heirs of William, Bishop of Galloway."

This William was the last Episcopal Minister of Moneydie. After his expulsion from his Charge at the Revolution he continued to preach, baptise and bury in the neighbourhood of Perth. He was sorely persecuted by the Presbytery and was at last reduced to ministering to the scattered remnant of Episcopalians in the house of his son, Doctor James Smyth, in Perth. He was in the habit of praying for Her Majesty, Queen Anne, but, after her death, never complied by praying for King George. A monument to his memory, among others, is in S. Ninian's Cathedral.

Dr. James Smyth, son of Mr. William, called "of Aitherney," was a man of mark. Douglas describes him as "one of the most eminent surgeons of his time." He appears to have been a leader among the Perth Jacobites, and was very prominent among those who welcomed Prince Charlie to Perth in 1745. He may very likely have been one of those who were accused—"In that they did on Sept. 11 openly insult and throw off the hats of those who would not bow to 'the Pretender' (sic) as he was passing out of Perth."

Certain it is that "Mr. James Smyth, surgeon, Mr. George Stirling, surgeon, and Mr. James Oliphant, merchant, brother to Gask," did introduce ladies to Prince Charlie "both in his bedroom and in the Town House." It must be borne in mind, however, that Princes in those days were in the habit of holding public receptions in their bed-chambers.

One of Mr. James Smyth's daughters married Dr. Thomas Carmichael, physician in Perth, and became the ancestor of the family of Carmichael Smyth, one of whom, Col. Carmichael Smyth, was step-father to Thackeray, and was made immortal by the novelist in the character of "Colonel Newcome."

Another son of Mr. William Smyth was David Smyth of Barnhill. His daughter married Sir David Threipland of Fingask.* There is still a pendicle on Barnhill known as "Smithfield," which may have derived its name from Mr. David.

But to return to the elder branch of the family, who were the owners of Methven. Patrick Smyth, the last of Braco, and the father of 23 children, was drowned in the Pentland Firth. He was succeeded by his son, Patrick, "of Braco and Methven," who bought the Methven property in 1664. The family seem to have owned Braco for some years after they acquired Methven. The following entry occurs in the accounts of Sir Thomas

* She is said to have been the heroine of the song "The Lass of Gowrie."

Moncreiffe :—" 21 Sept., 1727.—A gown to my daughter Megg, £8 9s. str. (£97 4s. Od. Scots) for mourning for Megg when Lady Braco died."

"Lady Braco" must have been Janet Haldane, second wife of Patrick Smyth of Methven, and grandmother to Megg Moncreiffe, whose father, Sir Thomas, had married Margaret, daughter of Patrick Smyth of Methven. It is possible that Mrs. Smyth may have resided at Braco, as a dower house, after her husband's death, and so have been called "Lady Braco," as the custom of those days was.

Patrick Smyth "of Braco and Methven" married first Ann Keith, niece of the Earl Marischall. In doing so he followed the tradition of his race, for Ann Keith was not only capable and charming, but heroic. The story of her heroism can be read in Sir Walter Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather." During the absence of her husband in England, a band of a hundred armed Covenanters came to hold a Conventicle on the Methven estate. Ann Keith rode out to meet them at the head of sixty retainers, "A light horseman's carbine, ready cocked, over her arm, and a drawn sword in her right hand." The Covenanters said they were determined to preach. But the unshaken determination of the "Amazonian Lady" overcame their enthusiasm and they withdrew. She armed the Castle with two pieces of cannon to resist further intrusion, and wrote to her husband as follows:—"If the fanatics chance to kill me, comfort yourself; it shall not be for nought. I was once wounded for our Gracious King, and now, in the strength of Heaven, I will hazard my person with the men I can command before these rebels rest where you have power."

Shortly after this Ann Keith died, as a result of a fall from her horse. The Covenanters jubilantly declared that "The Devil had come to take his own." A letter, however, which Ann wrote to her husband from her death-bed, full of sincere piety and strong Christian confidence in face of death, shows that she was a woman of deep religious conviction. It is good to know that, fiercely as they abused each other and sternly as they fought, Cavaliers and Covenanters alike had among them those whose religious convictions were deep and strong.

I wish I could claim Ann Keith as an ancestor of my own, but I cannot. She had only one son—"a young man of extraordinary hopes and spirit." Before his mother's death he was accidentally shot by his Governor (his tutor) at the Loch of Methven, where they were "a shooting for their diversion"; to the unspeakable regret of all his friends.

In her last letter to her husband, Ann Keith besought him to marry again "ane Scottish woman." Accordingly in 1682 he married Janet Haldane of Gloneagles, thus uniting his family to a race that has produced many eminent Scotsmen; not least among whom may be reckoned the late statesman and philosopher, of whom, I think, that future generations will speak as "the great Lord Haldane."

Patrick Smyth, "of Methven and Braco," was succeeded by his son, David "of Methven." David followed the family tradition by marrying Katharine Cochrane, daughter of Lady Grizel Graeme and grand-daughter of James, Marquis of Montrose.

It is pardonable in Scotmen to boast of their ancestry; for most Scots people have ancestors to boast of. For example, a glance at "Leslie's Guide" will show that the two most common names in Perth are Robertson and Stewart,* which shows that a very considerable number of our fellow-townsmen could trace their ancestry either from the famous Clan Donachie, or from the Lords High Steward (afterwards the Kings) of Scotland. Therefore, I make no apology for boasting that the Great Marquis of Montrose was my many-times-over great grandfather.

David Smyth is described by Douglas as "a man of good parts, great sagacity and economy." It is perhaps a sign of his sagacity that the part he took in the battle of Sheriffmuir is described as follows by a contemporary bard:—

"Methven Smyth at Shirramuir
He made believe he fought, man.
But weel I ken and weel ye ken
That a' he did was nought, man."

It is only fair, however, to add that the two wings of the Jacobite forces quarrelled violently after the battle, and the ballad-mongers on either side vied with each other in abusing the leaders of their quondam comrades. So it may be that Mr. David did not fight so badly after all.

David, who fought at Sheriffmuir, was succeeded by his son, another David, who, to quote Douglas once more, was "A man of great honour and integrity." He, too, married a Graeme—Mary, sister of General Graeme of Gorthie.

This David was succeeded by a third David, my grandfather, who was born in the year of Culloden, 1746. He distinguished himself at the Scottish Bar and became a Lord of Session, taking the title of Lord Methven. He married, as his second wife, Euphemia Murray, of Lintrose.

There are few more picturesque place-names than Lintrose. It recalls waterfalls and clear pools and bog cotton and wild roses. The derivation, therefore, is all the more startlingly prosaic. Early in the eighteenth century a Murray of Ochtertyre went into business in Dundee. He prospered there and was able to buy a nice little property in Angus called Fodderance. Fodderance is not a very euphonious name, and therefore, as Mr. Murray had made his fortune on a rise in lint, he renamed his property "Lintrose."

* The "Communicant Roll" of St. Ninian's Cathedral contains the names of 80 Robertsons and 18 Stewarts, besides 117 "Macs," with Drummonds, Murrays, Graemes, and other good old Scottish names galore. Yet there are still folk to be found who unintentionally outrage our patriotism by nicknaming us "the English Church"!

The story of David Smyth's second marriage has an element of romance. A scandal arose in the family of Ochtertyre, the cousins of Euphemia Murray, with whom she was very intimate. The scandal involved a lawsuit, and Euphemia was called as a witness. Her beauty and modesty so impressed the Judge—Lord Methven—an elderly widower, that he asked her to be his wife, and she became Mrs. Smyth of Methven.

I may here insert a trivial, but rather amusing incident, which goes at least to show that my grandfather, like the rest of his race, was fortunate in marrying a charming lady. Lord Methven himself was a plain man, while Euphemia was a lady of more than ordinary beauty. One morning, as his lordship was shaving, his son—a very small boy—was watching him, and, viewing his shaving operations and his face bedecked with lather, he suddenly exclaimed, "I wonder how it was that my pretty Mamma ever came to marry such an ugly man as you, Papa."

The little boy grew up to be a rising Edinburgh advocate and a friend of Sir Walter Scott, but was unfortunately killed in a carriage accident between Delvine and Methven, when he saved the lives of my father and of my uncle, the future laird of Methven, but lost his own.

My father, Patrick Murray Smythe, whose life was saved, became a Clergyman in England and was Rector of Solihull in Warwickshire. On one occasion in after life he was staying at Methven and talking to an old man on the estate about the family. He thought the old man did not know who he was and asked, with an air of innocence, "What has become of Patrick?"—to which the old man, who knew him perfectly well, replied, "Och! I dinna ken muckle aboot Paitrick, they're telling me he's something in the Bishop line."

A sister of my father's, Catharine Campbell Smythe, married David Boyle, of the Glasgow family, who became Justice General. She had a son, George David, who was afterwards Dean of Salisbury. Another son, Robert, was the father of Miss Antonina Boyle, a lady of considerable courage and force of character, who won for herself much notoriety as a suffragette, and who once startled the world by addressing the members of the House of Commons, assembled on the Terrace, from a boat moored in the Thames below.

Euphemia Murray, wife of Lord Methven, was a lady of quite remarkable beauty. She was known as "the Flower of Strathmore." Burns met her at Ochtertyre and wrote in her honour the well-known poem:—

"Blyth, blyth and bonnie was she,
Blyth was she butt and ben.
Blyth on the banks of Earn
And blyth in Glenturrit's Glen.

By Oentertyre grows the aik
On Yarrow's banks the birken shaw,
But Phemie was a bonnier lass
Than banks of Yarrow ever saw."

It is strange how the whirligig of time alters our estimates of values. I am very proud, and, I think, justly proud, to believe that I am now probably the only man living who can boast that Burns wrote a poem to his grandmother.

Not so my grandmother a century-and-a-half ago. She was greatly affronted that a poem should be addressed to her by what, in her youthful arrogance, she called "a drunken young ploughman." It is said that she tore up the manuscript and would never allow the matter to be mentioned in her presence. In which, I think, that the lady was not only a little arrogant, but also rather improvident. For had she valued, as she should have done, the compliment paid to her by Scotland's most popular poet, and had she treasured, as she should have done, the manuscript of the poem, it might have been for all time a priceless heirloom in the family; or if, as sometimes happens to old Perthshire families, hard times had overtaken them, it would probably have made nearly as much money in the market as Methven Castle itself.

David, Lord Methven, was succeeded by Robert, his son by his first marriage. Robert in his youth was in the Guards, a gay young man-about-town, and home on "parole" from the Napoleonic wars. He considered apparently that it would increase his dignity to add an "e" to his name. This he did, and thereby caused exceeding annoyance to his successors who have to be continually explaining in shops and offices and other places—"My name is Smith, but please spell it with a 'y' and an 'e'."

Robert married a Mackenzie of Delvine, but died without issue.

Robert was succeeded by his half-brother William. He married first a Miss Walker, and had one daughter, Margaret, who married James, Viscount Strathallan, and had a family of three sons and two daughters. One of the sons is Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary General of the League of Nations. By his second marriage, to Miss Oswald of Dunnikier, Mr. William Smythe had four sons and one daughter. One of these sons was Charles, who emigrated in early life to South Africa, and rose to be Premier of Natal. He had a large family. Two of his sons, Patrick and Rowan, came over to serve in the Great War, as Officers in the Black Watch. Patrick was severely wounded and died in Egypt, just after the Armistice, of pneumonia contracted in Palestine.

Mr. William Smythe was Convener of the County of Perth.

In his time Methven was a great meeting place for distinguished people visiting Scotland in the Autumn. As a small boy I used to regard them with a kind of reverent awe. I can remember Bishop Eden, the Primus,

and Bishop Wordsworth, Dean Stanley, Principal Shairp, Mr. Frederick Locker; and there were many others.

The laird of Methven was my guardian and Methven was always a home to me in my summer holidays. Those were very happy times, and their memory is full of recollections of pleasant days and kindly folk and quaint Scots humour. May I give one instance of the latter? There was a keeper at Methven called Jamie Scott. His wife still survives at the age of 93, and his son is keeper on Methven still. He used to delight us with his stories. One was as follows:—There was a kind of a daft body about the village. One Spring he took to bird's nesting and sucking the eggs. Later on he found a nest of young birds. He could not at first understand it. But presently, "Ye may cheep," says he, "and ye may chawp," says he, "but doon ye maun gae," and Gar! he swallowed them, as ye may say wholesale.

There are many living still who remember the old laird of Methven. I never hear Lady Nairne's song

"The auld laird, the auld laird,
Sae canty, kind and cruse,"

without thinking of his kindly face and venerable figure, nor without a thought, too, of

"His luddy tae sae genty."

Mr. William Smythe of Methven was ~~succeeded by Colonel David~~ succeeded by Colonel David Smythe, his eldest son, who followed his footsteps in all his good works and ways. There is no need to speak of one who was so widely respected and so well-beloved. I may say, however, that he followed the traditions of his race in his selection of a wife.

David was the last Smythe of Methven to own Methven Castle. He was obliged to sell it, to his infinite sorrow, a few years ago.

We have had a taste to-night of the talent of the present representative of the Smythes of Methven.* Long may she live to add new laurels to an old name!

I cannot close this paper without a tribute of respect and gratitude to the present owners of Methven Castle. They have been very kind friends to me and mine, and I am sure they love and value the old place that now is theirs as it deserves to be loved and valued.

So ends the story of Methven Castle and its many owners. Coxes have succeeded Smythes, as Smythes succeeded Lennoxes; and Lennoxes Stewarts; and Stewarts Kings of Scotland; and Kings of Scotland Earls of Atholl; and Earls of Atholl Mowbrays; and Mowbrays—Heaven alone knows whom!

But still the old Castle looks out across the broad Strath towards the distant Ochils, a venerable monument of antiquity.

* Miss Smythe of Methven had just "brought down the house" by her singing of "Jock o' Hazeldean."