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# The Gallowidian.

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[SIXPENCE.]

## Sons of the South.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM (1784-1842).

By F. D. FERGUSON, FALKIRK.



O every lover of Scottish song and story, and to all students of our national literature, the life and writings of Allan Cunningham, poet, biographer, and critic, present an attractive field. Therein is

found so much of interest, that it is impossible, within the limits of a short sketch, to attempt more than to outline some events in the Poet's career, and refer briefly to a few of the products of his genius.

Descended from an Ayrshire family, one of his ancestors, we are told, took part in Montrose's rising and was present at the battle of Philiphaugh. Fearing the consequences, the Cunninghams sold the estate to which they gave their name, to escape forfeiture. Thence, after they became tenant farmers, and the Poet's father, John Cunningham, turned his agricultural experience to account also, in the capacity of land-steward on certain estates in the South of Scotland.

Allan Cunningham was born in Keir parish, Dumfriesshire, on the 7th of December, 1784. No "auld clay biggin'" is preserved as his birth-place, but a stately yew tree marks the site of

his father's cottage, on the right bank of the Nith, near Blackwood House.

About two years after Allan's birth, his parents removed a short distance southward, John Cunningham having been appointed land-steward to Patrick Miller of Dalwinton. Here the family took up their abode at Sandbed Farm.

The late Rev. David Hogg, minister of Kirkcaldow, has left us an interesting biography of the Poet. (Dumfries: John Anderson & Son, 1875.) We may, however, note one or two events which do not seem to have been mentioned therein. The advent of Burns to Nithsdale took place in 1788, when he became tenant of Ellisland, of which Miller of Dalwinton was landlord. The latter gave the Bard the choice of certain other farms superior from an agricultural point of view. It was at this time Burns made the acquaintance of Allan's father, who remarked with reference to Burns' selection of a farm, that he had "made a poet's but not a farmer's choice."

In the autumn of the same year followed an event of which Burns himself appears to have taken no notice in any of his writings. This was the launch of the first steamboat, on the

# The M'Ghies of Balmaghie.

By NORMAN J. M'KIE, M.D. (Edin.).



AN outline of the history of a family who held lands in the Stewartry for something like a thousand years cannot fail to be of interest to Gallovidians. From the ninth century, when parishes got their names, and Balemakethe, now Balmaghie, was named after its principal landowner, until the nineteenth, when the daughters of John M'Ghie of Castlehill, who was descended from Balmaghie through Airie and Airds, parted with the estate, there have been landowners of the name and clan in Galloway. The name M'Ghie is a modification of what was once a favourite Celtic appellation, Aodh or Aed, sometimes written Eth or Heth and latinized into Ethus. It was pronounced Y., I., or E., according to the dialect of the particular district in which the family might happen to reside. The modern spellings most generally in use in Scotland are M'Ghie, M'Kie, Mackie, and Mackay; but all the modifications, both ancient and modern, Scotch and Irish, are too numerous to index.

The reading of a paper on "The origin of the Clan Mackay," by Mr William Mackay, Craigmorie, Inverness, before the Clan Mackay Society five years ago, induced Mr Alexander Macbain, M.A., LL.D., to write the following note on the name Mackay, which Mr William Mackay has appended to the privately printed copy of his paper:—"The Gaelic form is Mac Aoidh, son of Aodh. The name Aodh is common in the ancient history of the Gael, both in Scotland and Ireland. The diphthong *ao* of modern Gaelic appears in ancient Gaelic always as either *ae* or *ai*; thus *craobh* (tree) appears as *craeb*. So for

Aodh we meet with Aed. In the *Book of Deir* we have Aed, and the genitive Eda, with *e* long; in Irish it is Aed, genitive Aeda, pointing to the stem in *u*, that is, to Aedu—as the full stem form. Now, the great Gaulish people called the Aedui, who before Cæsar's advent held the hegemony of Gaul against the Arverni, have exactly the same stem (Aedu) in their name. Aeduos, or Aeduus, is an adjective from the stem Aedu, and therefore Aeduus or Aeduan means quite the same as Mackay, the former meaning 'belonging to Aedu,' the latter 'son of Aedu.' The further meaning of *aedu-s* is also known; the word means 'fire,' 'hearth.' It appears as such in Irish and Welsh, and is allied to the Latin *aedes* (house) *Aedilis*, the Roman Dean of Guild, and the Greek *aitho* (I kindle)."

All this may, of course, be equally said of M'Ghie and M'Kie. The Celtic Aodh is the Norse Odo and the Norman-French Hugh. Any M'Ghie or M'Kie who wishes to change his name, without altering the meaning, can call himself Fitz-Hugh, and he can then say his ancestors came over with "The Conqueror," if he be ashamed of his descent from a native Celtic stock.

In old Galloway documents M'Ghie and M'Kie are used indiscriminately.

The families of Balmaghie, Airie and Airds, and Castlehill are described in succession, and, as will be seen, their relative positions—first, second, and third—equally indicate their relative importance.

## I.—THE M'GHIES OF BALMAGHIE.

The tradition is that the lands and church derived their name from an Irish chieftain who

settled there in early days.<sup>1</sup> The earliest historical notice of the name is in the beginning of the 12th century, when "the church of Kirkandrew, Balemakethe," is mentioned amongst various benefices granted by Fergus, Lord of Galloway, to the Abbey of Holyrood.<sup>2</sup> The M'Eths, who gave their name to the lands and the church, must, therefore, have been settled there in the eleventh century at the latest, but, as parishes were formed as early as the ninth century, we may pretty safely conclude that the M'Ghies were there then. Gilmyhel MacEth signed the Ragman Roll in 1296; Michael Macge submitted to Edward III. in 1339<sup>3</sup>; Gilbert Macge is called "lord of Balmage" in 1426<sup>4</sup>; in 1460 Gilbert M'Gy is of Balmagy.<sup>5</sup>

This Gilbert was succeeded by William M'Gee, who gets sasine of Slogarre (Slogarie) in 1471.

William M'Gye of Balmacgye and Slewgarre married Blanche de Levenax, widow of Fergus MacDowell of Spottis, and obtained a charter by James III. Aug. 16th, 1482,<sup>6</sup> William Makgye of Pluntoun being a witness.

William M'Ghie of Pluntoun, in the parish of

Borgue, got a charter of his lands from James III. Aug. 14th, 1484,<sup>7</sup> which lands afterwards passed into the hands of de Levenax or Lennox.

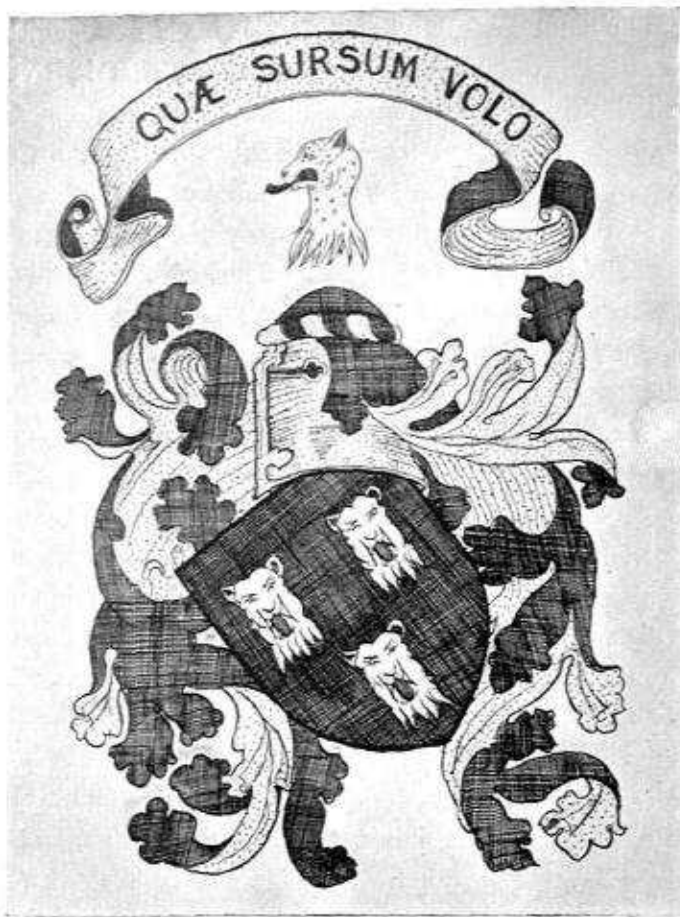
William M'Ghie, by Blanche de Levenax, had a son Nicholas, who succeeded. Nicholas married Elizabeth Maxwell, and by her had two sons—Gilbert, who predeceased his father, and who had two daughters<sup>8</sup>—Marion, married John Redick of Balharro; Janet, married Robert Charteris of Kelwood. William, who succeeded.

William Makgee, of Balmgee and Torris, got a charter from James V., March 18th, 1527.<sup>9</sup> He had two sons—Alexander, who succeeded, and James,<sup>10</sup> who married Jonet, daughter of William M'Ghie, burgess of Kirkcudbright.

Alexander had a son Robert, who succeeded.<sup>11</sup> Robert married Grissel,<sup>12</sup> daughter of John Charteris of Amisfield, and by her had a son and a daughter—John (afterwards Sir

John) and Marie,<sup>13</sup> who married William Gordon of Airds

John was left a minor and his grand-uncle James acted for at least eight years (1629-1637) as his tutor. The estate, consolidated by the



ARMS OF M'GHIE OF BALMAGHIE.

From a pencil sketch by Mr Robert Wells, Telegraph Linesman, Newton-Stewart.

1. Chalmer's Caledonia, Old and New Statistical Acts, M'Kerlie's Lands and their Owners in Galloway]

2. Lib. Cart. Sanct. Crucis, p. 11.

3. Rotul. Scot., i. 571.

4. Reg. Mag. Sig., ii. 81.

5. Escheq. Rolls.

6. Reg. Mag. Sig., x. 30.

7. Reg. Mag. Sig., xi., 73.

8. Acts and Decrees, vol. 149, fol. 315.

9. Reg. Mag. Sig., xxi. 82.

10. Privy Council Register, 1597, March 10th and April 7th.

11. Acts and Decrees, vol. 439, fol. 210, 31st March, 1631.

12. Acts and Decrees, vol. 498, fol. 113.

13. Acts and Decrees, vol. 492, fol. 155.

tutor, was extended by Sir John, first known by that title in 1655.<sup>14</sup>

Sir John married Barbara,<sup>15</sup> daughter of Robert Anderson, burgess in Dumfries, and widow of Robert Kennanes in Illsteps. By her he had one son, Alexander, who succeeded. Alexander married (first) Margaret, daughter of Archibald M'Kie of Myretoun—M'Kie (Merton Hall<sup>16</sup>)—and (second) Elizabeth Stewart, by whom he had one son and two daughters—William; Elizabeth, who married John, eldest son of Robert Ferguson of Craigdarroch<sup>17</sup>; and Florence, who married, first, Roger, third son of John Gordon of Airds; second, James, son and heir of Robert Charteris of Kelwood; and third, Thomas MacLellan of Balmangan.

William succeeded about 1690.<sup>18</sup> He married Anna Ballantyne, by whom he had two sons (at his death she married, secondly, Robert M'Clellan of Barclay)—John, who succeeded, and Alexander,<sup>19</sup> surgeon, bailie of the Burgh of New-Galloway, who had three daughters<sup>20</sup>—Elizabeth, who married John M'Courtney of Furnistoun; Mary, who married Robert M'Millan in Barlow; and Margaret.

John M'Ghie succeeded in 1704.<sup>21</sup> He mar-

ried Isobel Gordon,<sup>22</sup> youngest daughter of Alexander, Viscount Kenmure, by his third wife, Lady Grizel Stewart, daughter of James, Earl of Galloway. They had two sons—Alexander and William.

Alexander<sup>23</sup> succeeded in 1732. He had a son John, who succeeded in 1739.

John had a son Alexander, who married Grizell, only daughter of James, son of Alexander, Viscount Kenmure, by whom he had an only daughter, Grizell, who married James Anderson, captain of Marines, and left no issue. Alexander predeceased his father.

William M'Ghie, merchant in Edinburgh, with his wife Eleanora M'Dowall, had sasine of the lands of Balmaghie, May 6th, 1761.<sup>24</sup> In 1786 the estate was sold to Thomas Gordon.

The last of the direct line of the M'Ghies of Balmaghie are said to have been two old bodies, who are thus re-



"LOWE'S BEAT."

From a photograph by Mr Galloway, Stationmaster, New Galloway.

ferred to in Harper's *Rambles in Galloway*:—  
"Burnside Cottage is about a mile from Lochenbreck Hotel, on the right of the road to Laurieston. Its interior was a very good specimen of the general character of the Galloway cottage of old times. Up to the time

14. Reg. of Sasines, Dumfries, May 21st, 1655.

15. Reg. of Sasines, Dumfries, 1647.

16. M'Kerlie, vol. 3, p. 109.

17. Dumfries Sasines, 1682.

18. Dumfries Sasines, 1696, July 10th.

19. Dumfries Sasines, 1721, March 20.

20. M'Kerlie, vol. 3, p. 111.

21. Dumfries Sasines, May 10th, 1704.

22. Dumfries Sasines, May 17th, 1732.

23. M'Kerlie, vol. III, p. 111.

24. M'Kerlie, vol. III, p. 112.

of their deaths it was the abode of Tibbie and Maggie M'Ghie, who were well-known characters in the district. They were supposed to be the last representatives of the once powerful race of the M'Ghies of Balmaghie, though neither of the worthy couple were ever heard to boast of their high lineage; still, even in the humble surroundings of their lowly cottage—all that remained to them of the broad acres, and affluence and power of the family that gave the name to the parish—they in appearance were high-bred and 'leddy-like.' Mr John Faed, R.S.A., Mr John I. M'Clymont, and Mr Malcolm M'L. Harper have all sketched and painted the picturesque old interior.

Sir George MacKenzie gives the coat-of-arms of M'Ghie of Balmaghie, as "Sable, three leopards' heads erased, argent." Nisbet, in his *Heraldry*, says—"The name of M'Ghie, three leopards' heads, argent. The principal family of the name is designed of Balmaghie, who makes the heads, or. I am indebted to Mr Robert Wells, telegraph linesman, Newton-Stewart, for the excellent pencil sketch of the arms, crest, and motto of the M'Ghies.

## II.—THE M'GHIES OF AIRIE AND AIRDS.

The M'Ghies of Airie and Airds are a branch of the M'Ghies of Balmaghie, but it is difficult to point out when the offshoot took place.

In December, 1642, James M'Ghie had sasine of the lands of Airies and Culquahassan.<sup>25</sup> He married, first, Janet Gordon,<sup>26</sup> and, second, Anna Kennethie.<sup>27</sup> By the latter he had a son, Alexander, who succeeded.

Alexander married, first, Anna Fullarton,<sup>28</sup> and, second, Florence Maxwell.<sup>29</sup> By his second wife he had a son Alexander.

Alexander married Elizabeth,<sup>30</sup> daughter of Robert Gordon of Airds, and widow of Hugh Cairns of Lochhill. He bought<sup>31</sup> the estate of

Airds on 24th May, 1744, and was afterwards known as "of Airds." They had a son Alexander, who succeeded.

Alexander, second of Airds, married 1st Elizabeth, daughter of Mr Todd, banker, London. By her he had one son and two daughters—John, afterwards of Castlehill, who succeeded, and who sold the estate about 1799; Mary,<sup>31</sup> married Mr M'Lellan; she died at Manchester, 30th Nov., 1817, aged 70; Jessie,<sup>32</sup> married David Blair, Esq., of Borgue; 2nd Agnes, daughter of Rev. William M'Kie, minister of Balmaghie, by whom he had a son, Nathaniel.

Mary is the heroine of that beautiful poem by John Lowe called "Mary's Dream." Lowe was tutor to the family, and Agnes, the second Mrs M'Ghie, was his aunt. Mary was engaged to be married to Alexander Miller, a young surgeon. Lowe was in love with Jessie. Miller was drowned at sea, and his sad death was the subject of the poem. Lowe emigrated to Virginia, where he forgot his Galloway lass and married. Both ladies eventually consoled themselves with husbands, as we have seen. A rustic arbour, beautifully situate on the banks of the Ken, where the poet sought inspiration amid the beauties of nature, is still known as "Lowe's Seat." Burns visited the place in company with the venerable William Gillespie, minister of Kells, himself a poet, and Syme, who also was one of the party, says that Burns "lingered on the spot, as if expecting the passing spirit to appear as in 'Mary's Dream.'" I have to thank Mr Galloway, stationmaster, New Galloway, for securing me the photograph of "Lowe's Seat."

## III.—M'GHIES OF CASTLEHILL.

John M'Ghie of Castlehill, in the Parish of Troqueer, married Jean, daughter of the Rev. William Donaldson, minister of Parton, by

25. M'Kerlie, vol. iii., p. 168.

26. Dumfries Sasines, June 11th, 1678.

27. Dumfries Sasines, 1703, Dec. 29th.

28. Dumfries Sasines, 1706, Nov. 15th.

29. Dumfries Sasines, 1724, Sept. 29th.

30. M'Kerlie, Vol. III., p. 426.

31. Murray's *Literary History of Galloway*, p. 272.

32. *Literary History of Galloway*, p. 273.

whom he had six daughters—Mary, Isabella, Elizabeth, Jane, Wilhelmina, and Anne. Mary, the eldest daughter, married the Rev. James Anderson, minister of Stoneykirk, Wigtownshire, by whom she had six sons and one daughter. The sons are now all dead. The daughter, Jeannie, is the wife of Capt. James Webster, Heathfield, Helensburgh. Mrs Webster has in her possession three beautiful seals, which she received from her maternal aunt, Miss Isabella

cessor to the Rev. John MacMillan, founder of the sect bearing his name. The ordination took place on October 12th, 1710, but it was not until 1729, nineteen years after, that he obtained possession of the manse. The story of this famous struggle is best told in *A Cameronian Apostle*, by the Rev. H. M. B. Reid, but is too long to go into here. Suffice it to say that, ordained in opposition to the wishes of the majority in the parish, it says much for his win-



IMPRESSIONS OF THE M'GHIE SEALS, NOW IN POSSESSION OF MRS WEBSTER.

From photograph by Wm. Hunter & Son, Newton-Stewart.

M'Ghie, who died in Dumfries in 1887, aged 88 years. The accompanying picture is from a photograph of their impressions by Messrs Wm. Hunter & Son, Newton Stewart. The leopard's head is seen in the central impression. Two ministers of the name were ordained in Balmaghie Kirk.<sup>33</sup>

The Rev. Hew M'Ghie was minister of the parish 1615-1638.

The Rev. William M'Kie was ordained suc-

cessor to the Rev. John MacMillan, founder of the sect bearing his name. The ordination took place on October 12th, 1710, but it was not until 1729, nineteen years after, that he obtained possession of the manse. The story of this famous struggle is best told in *A Cameronian Apostle*, by the Rev. H. M. B. Reid, but is too long to go into here. Suffice it to say that, ordained in opposition to the wishes of the majority in the parish, it says much for his win-

ning gentleness that when he died in 1763, full of years and honours, he was mourned by all his parishioners. A handsome monument, with a flattering inscription, has been erected to his memory. He had a large family, one of whom, the eccentric and witty Nathaniel, was minister of the neighbouring parish of Crossmichael, and is said to be the author of a quaint and humorous old Scottish song, "Nae Dominies for me, Laddie."

33. *The Kirk above Dee Water*, by Rev. H. M. B. Reid, now Professor Reid of Glasgow University.