

## POPULAR REPROACHES.

THERE is a nationality in districts as well as in countries; nay, the people living on different sides of a streamlet, or of the same hill, sometimes entertain prejudices against each other not less virulent than those of the inhabitants

of the different sides of the British Channel or the Pyrenees. This has given rise in Scotland to an infinite number of phrases expressive of vituperation, obloquy, or contempt, which are applied to the inhabitants of various places by those whose lot it is to reside in the immediate vicinity. Some of these are versified, and have the appearance of remnants of old songs; others are merely couplets or single lines, generally referring to some circumstance in the history of the place mentioned. Almost all the counties of England have such standing jokes against each other. For instance, the men of Wiltshire are called *Moon-rakers*, in commemoration, it is said, of a party of them having once seen the moon reflected in a pool, and attempted to draw it to the shore by means of rakes, under the idea that it was a tangible and valuable object. Hungry Hardwicke is applied to a parish of very poor land in Cambridgeshire.

Buckinghamshire, bread and beef;  
If you beat a bush, you'll start a thief—

is an equally old reproach for that county, bearing reference to the multitude of robbers harboured in the woods there, till they were cut down by Leofstone, abbot of St Albans. The inhabitants of a village in Wales, where the last prince was betrayed into the hands of Longshanks, are still called *Traitors* by way of reproach. It is well known that to call the people of Kent *Kentish Men*, is considered a disparagement, while the phrase *Men of Kent* has a contrary sense.

Amongst the rural people of France there are many proverbial expressions characterising the inhabitants of particular districts, sometimes in a satirical manner, sometimes otherwise: for example, this as to the haute noblesse de Provence—

Riche de Chalon,  
Noble de Vienne,  
Fier de Neuchâtel,  
Preux de Vergy,  
Bons Barons de Beaufremont.

One popular in the thirteenth century was as follows:—

Li Cuveors d'Auxerre,  
Li Musarts (faniéants) de Verdun,  
Li Usuriers de Metz,

Le Mangeurs de Poitiers,  
 Li Meillers archers d'Anjou,  
 Li Chevaliers de Champagne,  
 Li Ecuyers de Bourgoigne,  
 Li Sergens (fantassins) de Hainault.

To the Local Reproaches here commemorated, I have added a few which are applicable to professions.

BERWICKSHIRE AND LOTHIAN.

The people of these provinces have been characterised by some hobnail wit as—

Loudon louts, Merse brutes, Lammermuir whaups.\*

LAUDER—(*Berwickshire*).

Lousie Lauder!

Lauder is a small and rather poor-looking town, but it must have been indebted chiefly to 'apt alliteration's artful aid' for this odious epithet.

EARLSTOUN.

No to lippen to, like the dead fouk o' Earlstoun.

This is a proverb founded on a popular story, kept up as a joke against the worthy people of Earlstoun. It is said that an inhabitant of this village, going home one night with too much liquor, stumbled into the churchyard, where he soon fell asleep. Wakening to a glimmering consciousness after a few hours, he felt his way across the graves; but taking every hollow interval for an open receptacle of the dead, he was heard by some neighbour saying to himself, 'Up and away! Eh, this ane up and away too! Was there ever the like o' that? I trow the dead fouk o' Earlstoun's no to lippen to.'

JEDBURGH—(*Roxburghshire*).

Jethart justice—first hang a man, and syne judge him.

According to Crawford, in his *Memoirs*, the phrase *Jedburgh justice* took its rise in 1574, on the occasion of the Regent Morton there and then trying and condemning, with cruel precipitation, a vast number of people who had offended against the laws, or against the supreme cause of his lordship's faction. A different origin is assigned by the

\* Curlews.

people. Upon the occasion, say they, of nearly twenty criminals being tried for one offence, the jury were equally divided in opinion as to a verdict, when one, who had been asleep during the whole trial, suddenly awoke, and being interrogated for his vote, vociferated, 'Hang them a'!'

The English phrase *Lidford Law*, commemorated by Grose, bears the same signification.

BOWDEN—(*Roxburghshire*).

Tillieloot, Tillieloot, Tillieloot o' Bowden!\*

Our cat's kittled in Archie's wig;

Tillieloot, Tillieloot, Tillieloot o' Bowden,

Three o' them naked, and three o' them clad!

Bowden is a small village on the south-east slope of the Eildon Hills. To the worthy natives, this quatrain, sung to the tune of the Hen's March, has a meaning hidden from all the rest of the world; they never fail to accept it as the sounding of a note of defiance and insult.

In the south of Scotland there is a proverbial expression used when one observes a trick taking effect, or intended—'There's day enough to Bowden.' Its origin is said to have been this: A stranger one day applied to a stabler in Kelso for a horse to convey him to Bowden. It was afternoon, and the hostler, in bringing out the steed, remarked that there would scarcely be time to reach the village before nightfall. 'Oh, there's day eneuch to Bowden,' quoth the stranger—meaning there was daylight sufficient for his journey. He never returned with the horse, and his last words became proverbial in the above sense accordingly.

ELLIOTS AND ARMSTRONGS.

Elliot and Armstrongs, ride, thieves a'!

The Elliots and Armstrongs were the predominant clans in Liddisdale, and generally engaged in thieving during the days of Scottish independence. Their neighbours still keep up this allusion to former habits; and though their Border spears have long been converted into shepherds' crooks, they have not yet become quite insensible to the taunt.

Previous to the middle of the last century, as the Lords of Justiciary yearly passed on horseback between Jedburgh

\* Tillieloot—an old Scottish term for coward or *chicken-heart*.

and Dumfries, through the vale of the Ewes, then impassable by any kind of vehicle, Armstrong of Sorbie used to bring out a large brandy-bottle, from which he treated his friend the Lord Justice-Clerk (Sir Gilbert Elliot), and the other members of the cavalcade, to a dram. Upon one occasion, when Henry Home (afterwards Lord Kames) for the first time went upon the circuit as advocate-depute, Armstrong, in a whisper, asked Lord Minto 'what lang, black, dour-looking chiel *that* was they had got wi' them?' 'That,' replied his lordship, 'is a man come to hang a' the Armstrongs.' 'Then,' retorted Sorbie dryly, and turning away, 'it's time the Elliots were *ridin'*!'

#### FAMILY OF GORDON.

The gule, the Gordon, and the hoodie-craw,  
Are the three warst things that Moray ever saw.

The gool is a sort of darnel weed that infests corn. How far the rhyme has a general application to the family of Gordon, would admit of question. Pennant, who prints the stanza, says that it refers to the plundering expeditions of Lord Lewis Gordon, a son of the Marquis of Huntly, and associate of Montrose in his wars. The character of Lord Lewis, says the learned traveller, is contrasted with that of his commander in another popular verse—

If ye wi' Montrose gae, ye'll get sick and wae eneugh;  
If ye wi' Lord Lewis gae, ye'll get rob and reive eneugh.

The depredations of the hoodie-craw speak for themselves.

#### SELKIRK.

Sutors ane, sutors twa,  
Sutors in the Back Raw!

The trade of the shoemaker formerly abounded so much in Selkirk, that the burgesses in general pass to this day amongst their neighbours by the appellation of the *Sutors of Selkirk*. When a new burgess is admitted to the freedom of the corporation, a small parcel of bristles is introduced, and handed round the company, each of whom dips it in his wine, and then passes it between his lips. This is called *Licking the birse*. When Leopold of Saxe Coburg was made a member in 1819, the worthy folk of Selkirk were

much at a loss how to arrange this affair with a man of so much consequence; at last, it was agreed that the provost should only flourish the emblem three times before his mouth, and then present it to be similarly treated by the prince; all of which was done accordingly, and passed off well. For some inexplicable reason, the above couplet is opprobrious to the people of Selkirk; and if any of my readers will parade the main street of the old burgh, crying it at a moderate pitch of voice, he may depend upon receiving as comfortable a lapidation as his heart could desire.

## LANARK.

It is said that the burgh of Lanark was, till very recent times, so poor, that the single butcher of the town, who also exercised the calling of a weaver, in order to fill up his spare time, would never venture upon so great a speculation as that of killing a sheep till every part of the animal was bespoken. When he felt disposed to engage in such an enterprise, he usually prevailed upon the minister, the provost, and the town-council to take shares; but when no person came forward to order the fourth quarter, the sheep received a respite till better times. The bellman, or *skellyman*, as he is there called, used to go through the streets of Lanark with advertisements, such as are embodied in the following popular rhyme:—

Bell-ell-ell!  
 There's a fat sheep to kill!—  
 A leg for the provost,  
     Another for the priest,  
 The bailies and deacons  
     They'll tak the neist;  
 And if the fourth leg we cannot sell,  
 The sheep it maun live, and gae back to the hill!

This rhyme, which is well known over all Clydesdale, may excite the ridicule of people who live in large cities, and have the command of plentiful markets; and the respectable little town of Lanark may thereby suffer in the estimation of its more fortunate neighbours. Yet it is not, or was not, alone in this occasion of reproach. In many small towns beef is unheard of, except once a-week; and in such cases the ceremony of advertisement is still gone

through on the day of slaughter. In a magazine for 1799, there is announced the death of a *cadie*, or market-porter, who was old enough to remember the time when the circumstance of beef being for sale in the Edinburgh market was publicly announced in the streets! I need not, however, remind the reader that it was then the practice of almost every family to lay in a stock of salted beef (called their *mart*) in November, sufficient to serve all the year round; and that, consequently, few thought of having recourse to the public market for a supply. To such an extent was this carried, that at least in one if not more farm-houses to my knowledge, the goodwife was in the habit of *salting the tripe* of the mart, by way of provision for the Highland reapers whom she would require to entertain about ten months after.

PLACES IN THE UPPER WARD OF LANARKSHIRE.

Cauld kail in Covington,  
 And crowdie in Quothquan;  
 Singit sweens in Symington,  
 And brose in Pettinain;  
 The assy peats o' Focharton,  
 And puddings o' Poneil;  
 Black folk o' Douglas  
 Drink wi' the deil.

The four first lines condemn the same number of places as remarkable for some unattractive or ill-prepared dish. Focharton, an extensive barony in Lesmahago parish, is then reproached for its peats, as of a bad, ashy kind. Poneil is a large farm on Douglas Water. The black folk of Douglas are colliers, too generally a dissolute set of people.

The following characteristics refer to a spot in Lanarkshire:—

The worthy Watsons,  
 The gentle Neilsons,  
 The jingling Jardines,  
 The muckle-backit Hendersons,  
 The fause Dicksons;  
 Ae Brown is enow in a toun;  
 Ae Paterson in a parochine, a parochine—  
 They brak a'.

THE NETHERBOW—(*Edinburgh*).

This ancient place was in former times chiefly occupied by weavers, who were thought to be a dishonest set of craftsmen; accordingly, the children used to salute them in the following strain:—

As I gaed up the Canongate,  
 And through the Netherbow,  
 Four-and-twenty weavers  
 Were swinging in a tow :  
 The tow gae a crack,  
 The weavers gae a girn,  
 Fie, let me down again,  
 I'll never steal a pirn ;  
 I'll ne'er steal a pirn,  
 I'll ne'er steal a pow ;  
 Oh fie, let me down again,  
 I'll steal nae mair frae you.

## LEITH.

Kiss your lucky—she lives in Leith !

That this phrase is at least a century old, is proved by its being used in the poems of Allan Ramsay, who, in a letter, or rather a return of compliments, to his flatterer, Hamilton of Gilbertfield, thus elegantly expresses himself:—

'Gin ony sour-mou'd girning bucky  
 Ca' me conceity keckling chucky,  
 That we, like nags whase necks are yeuky,  
 Hae used our teeth,  
 I'll answer fine—Gae kiss your lucky,  
 She dwalls i' Leith.'

The poet, in a note, thus attempts an explanation:—'It is a cant phrase, from what rise I know not; but it is made use of when one thinks it not worth while to give a direct answer, or thinks himself foolishly accused.'

'Your lucky's mutch!' is, in Scotland, an ordinary exclamation expressive of petulant contempt, or, as the case happens, of impatience under expostulation, advice, or reproof. The word *lucky* signifies an elderly woman—is sometimes used as a phrase of style, like *mistress* or *goody*—and has another and different sense when added to the words *daddy* or *minny*, in which case it signifies grandfather or grandmother. But it is in the more unusual sense of *wife*

that we must suppose it to be used in the above instances. In Peeblesshire, if not also in other places, it is customary to throw the phrase into a sort of rhyme, thus—

Your luckie's mutch, and lingles at it !  
Down the back, and buckles at it !

ABERLADY—(*East Lothian*).

Stick us a' in Aberlady !

The following origin is assigned to this phrase of reproach:—An honest man who dwelt in Aberlady coming home one day, was suddenly convinced of what he had never before suspected—that his wife was not faithful to the nuptial vow. In a transport of rage he drew his knife and attempted to stab her, but she escaped his vengeance by running out to the open street, and taking refuge among the neighbours. The villagers all flocked about the incensed husband, and, as usual in cases of conjugal brawls, seemed disposed to take part with the wife. The man told his tale, with many protestations, expecting their sympathy to be all on his own side; but what was his disappointment, when the women with one consent exclaimed, 'If that be what you have to complain of, you might *stick us a' in Aberlady!*'

The inhabitants of Aberlady to this day feel aggrieved when this unlucky expression is *cast up* to them. Not many years ago, an English gentleman, residing with the late Earl of Haddington at Tynninghame, was incited by some wags at his lordship's table, after dinner, to go forth and cry 'Stick us a' in Aberlady,' at the top of his voice, through the principal street of the village. He did so, and was treated for his pains with so severe a stoning, that he was carried to bed insensible, and it is said that he never altogether recovered from the effects of the frolic.

DUNBAR.

There was a haggis in Dunbar,  
Andrew-Linkum feedel ;  
Mony better, few waur,  
Andrew-Linkum feedel.

FALKIRK.

Like the bairns o' Fa'kirk ; they'll end ere they mend.

This is a proverbial saying of ill-doing persons, as expressive of there being no hope of them. How the children of Falkirk came to be so characterised, it would be difficult now to ascertain. The adage has had the effect of causing the men of Falkirk jocularly to style themselves 'the bairns;' and when one of them speaks of another as 'a bairn,' he only means that that other person is a native of Falkirk.

## ECCLESMAGIRDLE.\*

This is a small village situated under the northern slope of the Ochill Hills, and for some considerable part of the year untouched by the solar rays. Hence the following rhyme—

The lasses o' Exmagirdle  
 May very weel be dun ;  
 For frae Michaelmas till Whitsunday,  
 They never see the sun.

## PATHHEAD.

Pickle till him in Pathhead ;  
 Ilka bailie burns another !

Pathhead is a long, rambling village, connected with Kirkcaldy. The meaning of the reproach seems to be beyond reach ; but, till a late period, its effect in irritating the good people of Pathhead was indubitable. It is said that a stranger, being made acquainted with the story, and told that it was dangerous to limb and life to whisper these mysterious expressions in the village, took a bet that he would proclaim them at the top of his voice, and yet come off uninjured. He set out, while his friends followed to witness the sport. But this was a more cunning loon than he of Tynninghame, for he gave the formula with a slight addition—'*They're coming behind me, crying,* Pickle till him in Pathhead ;' whereupon the infuriated villagers fell upon his tail, who paid the piper in more ways than one.

KIRRIEMUIR—(*Forfarshire*).

Faare are ye gae'n ?—To Killiemuir !  
 Faare never ane weel fure,  
 But for his ain penny-fee.

\* The name of Ecclesmagirdle was derived from a place of worship, and seems to signify 'Church of St Grizel.' *Ma* is Gaelic for *Sanctus*. Camerarius has omitted St Grizelda in his Catalogue of the Saints of Scotland ; but many saints had places dedicated to them here who were not canonised as saints of other countries.

Where are you going? To Kirriemuir! where never  
one well fared, but for his own penny-fee.

## BUCKLYVIE.

Baron of Bucklyvie,  
May the foul fiend drive ye,  
And a' to pieces rive ye,  
For building sic a town,  
Where there's neither horse meat nor man's meat,  
Nor a chair to sit down.

This has been rendered familiar from its appearing at the head of the chapter in *Rob Roy* which describes the misadventures of Frank Osbaldiston and Bailie Jarvie at Aberfoyle. Scott had heard it several years before from the Rev. Mr Macfarlane, minister of Drymen (afterwards Principal of Glasgow university), in the course of a forenoon ride through that part of Stirlingshire in which Bucklyvie is situated. The baron of Bucklyvie was a gentleman named Buchanan, a cadet of the family of Kippen—a representative of which made himself famous by calling himself *King of Kippen* on a special occasion, as related in Buchanan of Auchmar's work on Scottish Surnames.

## CARSE OF GOWRIE.

## The Carles o' the Carse.

William Lithgow the traveller, in his singular book referring to a journey through Scotland in 1628, calls the Carse of Gowrie an earthly paradise; but adds the following ungracious information:—'The inhabitants being only defective in affableness and communicating courtesies of natural things, whence sprung this proverb—the *Carles* (that is, Churls) *of the Carse*' (p. 394). *Carle* was, it seems, a familiar term of reproach at this time. In 1575, Thomas Brown obtained a conviction before the kirk-session of Perth against Thomas Malcolm for calling him *loon* and *carle*, and a fine of 6s. 8d. was the consequence.

Pennant records an ill-natured proverb, applicable to the people of the Carse of Gowrie—that 'they want water in the summer, fire in the winter, and the grace of God all the year round.' A gentleman of the Carse used to complain very much of the awkwardness and stupidity of all the men whom he employed, declaring that if he were only

furnished with good clay, he believed he could make better men himself. This remark was circulated among the peasantry, and excited no small indignation. One of their class soon after found an opportunity of revenging himself and his neighbours upon the author, by a cut with his own weapon. It so happened that the laird one day fell into a quagmire, the material of which was of such a nature as to hold him fast, and put extrication entirely out of his own power. In his dilemma, observing a peasant approaching, he called out to him, and desired his assistance, in order that he might get himself relieved from his unpleasant confinement. The rustic, recognising him immediately, paid no attention to his intreaties, but passed carelessly by; only giving him one knowing look, and saying, 'I see you're *making your men*, laird; I'll no disturb you!'

## PLACES IN THE STEWARTRY OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT.

Dusty pokes o' Crossmichael,  
Red shanks o' Parton,  
Bodies o' Balmaghie,  
Carles o' Kelton.

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