

VESTIARUM SCOTICUM, OR THE BOOK OF TARTANS.*

THIS splendid book belongs to a class of works which must, from their cost, be of rare appearance anywhere, and which are rare indeed in Scotland. It is a book for the rich and the aristocratical; or for what are called "historical families." It belongs as much to the decorative arts as to literature; though national costume certainly falls within the province of the literary antiquary. The author or editor of this unique publication must be well known in Scotland and the North of England, especially to the Roman Catholic and the old Jacobite families, or those who once were Jacobites. The phrase, publication, is, however, hardly applicable to a work of which there were only forty copies for sale; and of which it may soon be difficult to obtain even a sight. We therefore seize the first opportunity to describe to our clanish readers the *Book of Clans and Tartans*.

In the possession of Mr. John Sobieski Stuart, there is an old MS. black-letter quarto, of the sixteenth century, containing thirty-four pages of vellum, illuminated with small plain capitals, such as the ordinary initials of inferior missals. In this volume, the tartans of each of the great feudal families of Scotland are minutely described. It was at one time in the possession of John Lesley Bishop of Ross; but of the author, save that he would appear to have been a Sir Richard Urquhart,—and even that is indistinctly intimated,—nothing whatever is known. The MS. volume was deposited, no one can tell when, in the library of the Scots College at Douay, along with many other papers belonging to the Bishop. When Prince Charles Edward visited that seminary, some time between 1749 and 1754, he, according to Mr. Stuart, obtained from the Fathers this singular relic among many other papers. How or when it came into his own possession, or of its history since 1754, we do not learn. The MS. has been collated by Mr. Stuart, with the transcript of another copy stated to be in the library of the Monastery of St. Augustine in Cadiz, which bears internal evidence of having once belonged to "ane honerabil man, Maister James Dunbare, wⁱⁿ y^e burg of Inverness," and which, it is imagined, may, through the hands of some refugee or Irish priest, have passed into Spain. Between these copies there exist merely the slight differences and omissions which arise from inaccuracy in copying, or clerical errors; but there is a third copy very much vitiated and mutilated, that is also in the possession of Mr. Stuart, of which the history is even more romantic than that of the other copies; the fathers and monks of the religious houses of the Continent being much more likely to prove faithful custodiers of rare MSS. than old illiterate Highlanders, transferred from the mountains to city lanes. This last "was obtained from an old Highlander named John Ross,

one of the last of the sword-players, who may yet be remembered by those who recollect the porters of Edinburgh twenty years ago." It is written negligently and inaccurately, and differs in several particulars from the MS. of the Bishop of Ross.

It is as difficult to fix the date as the authorship of the *Vestiarium Scoticum*, though it is presumed by Mr. Stuart to be not later than the reign of James III. of Scotland, and, consequently, long prior to the time when it could have fallen into the hands of the learned and loyal John Lesley, the adherent and historian of Queen Mary, who was somewhat contemptuous of "Hieland vanities," and of "compillane buik upon the stripis and colouris of a common garment," though he has fortunately preserved this curious volume. It contains a roll of the clans, of date 1571, which is consequently very long subsequent to what Mr. Stuart imagines the date of the original document. Having given this roll which must be of interest to all feudal families, and to all who boast clan blood, Mr. Stuart proceeds with his Introduction, which, together with the numerous foot-notes, fills 66 quarto pages with antiquarian dissertation upon "the tartan;" which is shown to be of very ancient date, and which in all probability is nearly as old as the art of weaving cloth of different colours, the chequer or cross-stripe being quite as easily invented as the simple stripe. Indeed no sort of cloth for garments has been more generally diffused over the civilized globe than chequered cloth or *tartan*, (the *breacan* of the Highlander,) and that from periods of the highest antiquity down to our own age. "From the Highlanders of Scotland to the mountaineers of Burmah, from the Calmucs of the north to the Biscayans of the south," may be found variegated or parti-coloured garments, together with other relics and usages of a common family, now very widely dispersed. The antiquity and universality of tartan, or of chequered or parti-coloured garments, among different nations, is abundantly demonstrated; but until the eighth century no mention is, we are told, made of it in oral Gaelic poetry, or by manuscripts in the Gaelic language, though the omission is no proof of its non-existence. *Tartan* or *Breacan* is now, however, chiefly of interest from the exclusive appropriation of different and fixed patterns or *setts* by the leading clan families of the Highlands, and as it now appears from the *Vestiarium Scoticum*, by those of the Lowlands also, who were of any note previous to the 18th century. Indeed the leading object of the work is to prove, that to each of these families a particular *sett* or pattern was exclusively appropriated, by which every man of the tribe could be recognised from his plaid, as readily as from his surname or the badge or ensign of his clan. Its splendid illustrations are emblematizations of these tartans in every brilliant rainbow dye. The *tartans* so enamelled are in as great variety as the number of the great families, of whom each, according to the *Vestiarium Scoticum*, had a pattern of their own. There are between seventy

* "Vestiarium Scoticum: from the Manuscript formerly in the Library of the Scots College at Douay. With an Introduction and Notes, by John Sobieski Stuart. Imperial quarto, splendidly illustrated. Edinburgh: Tait.

and eighty specimens; forty-two Highland, and thirty-one Lowland and Border families being enumerated as each having its own tartan. These, taken alphabetically, are of Highlanders:—

Buchanan, Cameron, Campbell, Chisholm, Clanranald, Farquharson, Fraser, Grant, Gun, Lamont, MacArthur, MacDonald of the Isles, MacDougall, MacDuff, MacFarlane, MacGrigor, MacIntosh, MacIntyre, MacKay, MacKenzie, MacKinnon, MacLauchlan, MacLean, MacLeod, MacNab, MacNeill, MacPherson, MacQueen, Menzies, Monro, Robertson, Ross, Prince of Rothesay, The Royal Stuart, Sutherland.

The Lowland and Border Clans who had tartans were, the

Armstrong, Barelay, Brodie, Bruce, Colquhoun, Comyn, Cunningham, Cranston, Crawford, Douglas, Drummond, Dunbar, Dundas, Erskine, Forbes, Gordon, Graham, Hamilton, Hay, Home, Johnston, Kerr, Lauder, Leslie, Lindsay, Maxwell, Montgomery, Murray, Ogilvie, Oliphant, Ramsay, Rose, Ruthven, Scott, Seton, Sinclair, Urquhart, Wallace, Wemyss.

The peculiar tartan of each of those families is accurately described in the *Vestiarium*, otherwise “ycleped the garderope of Scotlande,” and for the following weighty reasons:—

For sameikle as in thir prest tymes bene sene dyners nrethe chavnges in the avid scottysche fassouns, and men do nowe effect foreigne and stravng fantasies, rader nor sic holsum vse and ordyr as cvmeth of y^e ain native gyise, and hes ben visit be ovr forberis yn the aulde tyme, for nowe all do tak pryd to buske y^m yn heich crovnt hattis, frensche claukis, Engliche hudes, lang pykit schune, and vlder syk lyk vncovthe braueries, the quhilk wes vknawen till ovr antecessories of gude famen quha wes conteint to gang w^a ane bonnette of Kelsheu-blewe, and ain mantil or playde lyk as afore tym wes visit be ther faderis begone, w^a ane payr of rouch rowlyns, or hemands of harteshyd, as wes moche visit be ovr vmqhile lorde and sournine King James of nobil memorye; for he had euer, besyd thai of hys awin coulouris, twa or thre pladis of diuers kyndes in hys guarderobe, quhilk he visit yn his iornayes quhen that he wald not be knawen openlye; and for that sic fassovns be not of vse in vther cvntries nor foraine realmes, for thir cawsis I haue taken on hande to compil, accordand to myr vbritylyte, a trewe ensamble off alle, or the maist parte, the pryncypul tartanis of Scotlonde, sic as I maye discernen y^m, baith for the trewe witting and pleaseance of alle cvrious straungeris, and to y^e ende y^e gif paravaunture, quhilk God forbyd, that herefter ovr covntrye fassoune sall alle to fayl and haillie cvm to nocht, as heth bene sene w^a monie vtharis of mair and greater renome and puissaunce; as to wyt, y^e nobyll realmis of Babyoun, Troie, and Jewerie, Egyptia, Cartegen, and of lyk wyse gloriovs and ymperiall Rom, quhilk wes svmtym qwene and ladye of alle the wordle; seit, neuerthelesse, hathe her anticke and hethen fassovn all to perrischit owt of vse and mynd throu y^e mycht of ovr Lorde and halye crosse, quhilk heth put doune theyr idollis lyk as wes y^e dewil Dagoune and the fenlie dragoune of Kinge Cyrus, w^a y^e fowle ymage bel, w^a sindrie sick pagovne herresweye; quharfor, if so be befal on lyk sort that ovr gudlye oys sall be decayit and cvm to nocht, y^e then alle men may knawe the aulde gyise of theyr forberis; for yn sae moche as we that be in thir daies be cvriovse and desoyrus to seke efter and dyscover the famous gestis of ovr antecessoris in theyr avid tym of renowme, swa yn lyk mannere I doubt not that thai quhilk sall cvm eftir vs, sall be careful to knawe ovr maner of gyise and vlder manneris, to the end y^e thai maye vnderstonde yn quhat we be lyk vnto y^mseluis, and alsua quharin we be dythers from, and do vnlyk vntil y^m.

The manner of forming “the *settis* or *stryppis*” is next described, and also the different chequers proper for hose and trews, which admitted of great

variety; every man being allowed, in those inferior articles, to follow his own convenience or fancy; though the plaid, the war-garbs, the garments of honour, were not to be tampered with. The women were, however, allowed unlimited license in the patterns of their plaids and dresses. Some of the *setts*, as they are blazoned in this work, and upon the authority of the *Vestiarium*, differ materially from the tartans usually recognised under the respective clan names. The tartans given here as those of the Mackays, the Mackenzies, the Grants, and the Macgregors, for example, are not those usually recognised as the tartans of those clans. We, however, only speak to the best of our recollection, as we have not lately visited a Clan Tartan Warehouse to refresh memory with a sight of those brilliant fabrics.

The *Vestiarium Scoticum* must henceforth be the book of authority, the final arbiter, in this important question with manufacturers as well as clansmen; and we suspect that its fiat will reduce many pretty patterns, with clan names, to the anomalous list of *fancy* or *mongrel tartans*. Many of the tartans in Mr. Stuart's work must be quite new, even to those who have, from commercial reasons, of late paid considerable attention to this fashionable and favourite manufacture; such are those of the Cranstouns, the Lauders, the Brodies, the Ramsays, and so forth. The description of one pattern from the *Vestiarium* will give a perfect idea of the whole; though, of course, the description is short or lengthened according to the simplicity or intricacy of the *sett*. Thus, the tartan of “*the Mackfarlan* of ye Arroquhar,” is described in half a dozen words. It “hath thre stryppis quhite, vpon ane blak fyeld;” while the tartan of “*MakDonnald* of ye Yllis,” and of the Clan Ranald, require this long explanation:—

MAKDONNALD OF Y^e YLLIS, quhilk is the chiefest and maist nobil of alle clanned names, howbeit the clann Grigor and y^e Clan chathane of aulde sall be coaswyt of lyk avncient stocke; yet, in respect of pouste and dignitie, we call none lyk vnto hym: he heth ane blue sett, and ane greine sett, quharoff y^e blew sett hathe twa greit panes of blak, ane vpon y^e ilk bordure y^eoff and y^eby twa gross sprangis of y^e samen, and in y^e mydward of y^e ilk gren sett ane stryp quhite, the maist pairt of half ane fynger breid, and yn y^e mydward of y^e blew ane gross spraing reidd.

THE CLAN RAYNALD, y^e second hoise of y^e Clandonald, howbeit y^ebe y^e say he svld be y^e fyrst off rycht, bot y^e Donald mak Ian mak Angus gat y^e herytage, contrar to y^e mindis of ye men of y^e Yllis: he hath ane sett of blewe and ane sett of grene, quharoff y^e blewe sett hath vpon y^e ilk syd ane blak stryp, and y^eby vpon y^e ynward syd y^eoff ane spraing scarlatt, and yn y^e myddest of y^e blewe be ither tua sprangis of ye samen a littel asonder, as of fovrty threidris betuix y^m or thairby, and the greine sette hath ane quhite spraing, and be y^e ilk syd y^eoff twa of redd, ain greiter and ane less, quharof y^e greiter sall be vtterward, and hathe avghte threidris, and y^e ynweward hath fovr threidris, and betuix y^e reidd and the quhite sallbe y^e space of aughten threidris or thairbye, and vtheris y^e be of y^e famlyes of ye clann-donald, lyk as the clan-huistein in Sky, makconel of y^e glennis, makiane of arduamurackane, and vtheris y^e have y^e samen w^a diuers smal diversities, of y^e quhilk I speke not yn respect I knawe yhaim not parfactly.

Many of these tartans are truly beautiful; though no doubt they may owe part of their splen-

dour to the artist or illuminator. But the style in which they are executed, and their dazzling effect, must be seen to be comprehended. We do not pretend to describe by words either the process of painting them, or to give any idea of the brilliant results. One may easily conceive the idea of a massy imperial quarto volume, very beautifully printed upon drawing paper, and magnificently bound, gilt, and emblazoned with the royal arms; but the illustrations, the *illuminations*, the *tartans*, are the novel feature of the work; and without the actual vivid representations of these beautiful and delicate fabrics be seen, glowing in all the colours of the rainbow, no adequate idea of the work can be formed. We would therefore advise all who have the power of inspection not to rest content with description, but to procure at least a sight of the original work.

The *Vestiarius* describes the badges of the different Highland clans, which also differ, in some instances, from those which have hitherto been received; and it gives the ensigns of several Lowland and Border families, which, we presume, will be quite as new to many of the descendants of these families as are their tartans. The badge of Bruce is rosemary; of Lyndsay, rue; of Hamilton, bay; Dundas, bilberry; and so forth. On these botanical badges Mr. Stuart has a long and curious note,

from which, from its local interest, we copy the following anecdote:—

During the occupation of Edinburgh by the Prince, Charles Edward, in 1745, he paid a visit to the daughters of Sir Alexander Seaton, at the Grange House, then the property of their brother-in-law, William Dick of Grange, and now of their successor, Sir Thomas Dick Lauder of Fountainhall. Upon the steps of the entrance he was received by the ladies with a glass containing a bottle of Madeira. The Prince having drank to his fair entertainers, saluted them on the cheek in the fashion of that period, and taking the *white rose* from his bonnet presented it to Miss Seaton. Both the flower and the glass were preserved with that zeal by which the female adherents of all ages have sympathized in the ill fortunes of their cause, and which, if equally shared by men, would no longer have claimed sympathy, for it would no longer have been unfortunate.

After the death of the last Miss Seaton, the rose and the glass passed through several hands, and are now in the possession of William Blair, Esq. of Avenon. The badge is an artificial flower such as are usually made by florists.

The work contains much curious and erudite information on ancient Highland costume and usages, and a few lithographed illustrations. But all must give place to the rich, glowing, and resplendent specimens of the several tartans; which if they give the book its high price, also give it its singular value as a rare and splendid work, and an heirloom for Scottish families, and those connected with Scotland.

LITERARY REGISTER.

Essays on English Surnames. By Mark Antony Lower. 12mo, cloth. Pp. 240. London: John Russell Smith.

This is a curious book of its kind, written by a man of some antiquarian reading, and possessed of a certain vein of dry humour. He apologizes to the utilitarians for the frivolity of his subject; but the history of the origin of surnames is a branch of the history of the formation of language, and of the natural operations of the mind in making known, or supplying its wants. The first essay is introductory, and treats the subject in a general way, adverting to the uses and origin of surnames, and the different principles which have regulated their adoption in different countries, ancient and modern. Thus the Scotch Highlanders employed the *sire-name* with the addition of *Mac*; the Irish, the name of the sire, with *Mac*, a son, or *O*, a grandson; the Normans, *Fitz*; the Russians, *Wits*; the Poles, *Sky*. Surnames are not older than the fourteenth century in Sweden; and until a much later period the Welsh had nothing beyond their *Ap*. Among them,—

It was not unusual, a century or two back, to hear of such combinations as Evan-ap-Griffith-ap-David-ap-Jenkin, and so on to the seventh or eighth generation, so that an individual often carried his pedigree in his name. The church of Llangollen in Wales is said to be dedicated to St. Collen-ap-Gwynnawg-ap-Clyndawg-ap-Cowrda-ap-Caradoc-Freichfras-ap-Llyu-Merin-ap-Einion-Yrth-ap-Cunedda-Wledig, a name that casts that of the Dutchman, *Inkevoankodsdorspanchinkadradckders*, into the shade. To burlesque this ridiculous species of nomenclature, some wag described *cheese* as being

Adam's own cousin-german by its birth,
Ap-Curds-ap-Milk-ap-Cow-ap-Grass-ap-Earth!

The second essay gives a history of English surnames: and one is somewhat surprised to learn that they were not permanently settled before the era of the Reformation. Parish registers tended much to fix surnames, as it was not likely that a man could be baptized by one name, and married or buried under another.

The Rev. Mark Noble affirms that "it was late in the seventeenth century that many families in Yorkshire, even of the more opulent sort, took stationary names. Still later, about Halifax, surnames became in their dialect genealogical, as *William, a Bills, a Toms, a Luke*."

On the remark of Tyrwhitt, in his edition of Chaucer, that it is "probable that the use of surnames was not in Chaucer's time fully established among the lower class of people," a more recent editor of the same poet says, "Why, the truth is, that they are not now, even in the nineteenth century, fully established in some parts of England. There are very few, for instance, of the miners of Staffordshire, who bear the names of their fathers. The editor knows a pig-dealer, whose father's name was *Johnson*, but the people call him *Pigman*, and *Pigmas* he calls himself. This name may be now seen over the door of a public-house which this man keeps in Staffordshire."

But this is nothing to the practice of bearing a double set of names, which, we are assured, prevails among these colliers. Thus a man may at the same time bear the names of John Smith and Thomas Jones, without any intention of concealment; but it must not be imagined that such regular names are in common use. These are a kind of *best names*, which, like their Sunday clothes, they only use on high-days and holydays, as at christenings and marriages. For everyday purposes they use no appellative, except a nick-name, as *Noscy*, *Soiden-mouth*, *Soaker*, or some such elegant designation; and this is employed, not by their neighbours alone, but by their wives and children, and even by themselves! A correspondent of Knight's Quarterly Magazine, who is wj