

Literature, &c.

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From Chambers's Miscellany.

BORDER MOSS-TROOPERS.

Besides the chiefs who carried on a predatory warfare for the sake of spoil or the wantonness of aggression, there were many marauders who knew no measure of law, had no mighty chief to whom they owed allegiance, or who would be bound for their good behaviour. These men, with their pretty trains of dependants, were viewed as broken clans, and were only countenanced by the great barons when they stood in need of assistance. Living in small towns about the Border valley, they were in the habit of sallying out at night to pillage the flocks and herds of some unsuspecting neighbour; for they were by no means particular whether their prey belonged to the Scots or English.

The principal marauders of this class within the Scottish Border were the Elliots, Armstrongs, Turnbulls, Rutherfords, and Scots. When hard pressed in pursuit by the enraged wardens of the marshes, or others, they would flee for temporary refuge to mosses, inaccessible by those not acquainted with the paths, and there hold the law at defiance. One of their most noted places of refuge was the *Taras Moss* in Liddisdale, a desolate and horrible morass, accessible by paths known only to themselves. Through this marsh a small river runs furiously among huge rocks. Upon its banks are found some dry spots, which were occupied by these outlaws and their families in cases of emergency. The morasses is so deep, that, according to an old historian, two spears tied together would not reach the bottom. In this inaccessible retreat the Armstrongs fled when pursued in 1588 by Archibald, ninth Earl of Angus, lieutenant on the Border. The earl used to declare that he had as much delight in hunting a thief, as others in chasing a hare. But on this occasion he was completely foiled by the impracticability of the morass, and the cunning of the outlaws who harboured in it. From their frequenting morasses, these marauders came to be known by the name of moss-troopers. They were generally well mounted on horseback, with light armour or buff coats, and provided with a sword and short musket; some carried spears, which were exceedingly formidable to an enemy.

Freebooters as these men unquestionably were, we should form an incorrect estimate of their character, were we to associate them in idea with the mean felons of modern days. Rapine at the time seems to have been a legalised principle; law and justice were at the lowest ebb; and many of the broken clans were men who had been ruined by national wars, and denied all forms of reparation. Of the more respectable heads of these freebooting bands, Walter Scott of Harden, commonly called 'Auld Watt of Harden,' may be taken as a specimen. Tradition has preserved a great variety of anecdotes respecting this doubtful chief. His castle was situated on the very brink of a dark and precipitous dell on the Borthwick, about three miles from Harwick. The spoil which he carried off from his neighbours was concealed in the recess of this deep and impervious glen. From thence the cattle were brought out one by one, as they were wanted, to supply the rude and plentiful table of the laird. When the last bullock was killed and devoured, it was the lady's custom to place on the table a dish, which, on being uncovered, was found to contain a pair of clean spurs—a hint to the riders that they must shift for their next meal. A kindred saying is recorded of a mother to her son, which has now become proverbial, 'Ride, Rowly (Roughland), hough's i' the pot; that is, the last bit of beef was in the pot, and therefore it was high time for him to go and fetch more. Upon one occasion, when the village herd was driving out the cattle to pasture, the old laird heard him call loudly to drive out Harden's cow. 'Harden's cow!' echoed the affronted chief; 'it is come to that pass? By my faith they shall soon say Harden's kye.' Accordingly he sounded his bugle, mounted his horse, set out with his followers, and returned the next day with a bow of kye and a bassen'd (brindled) bull. On returning with his prey, he passed a very large hay-stack. It occurred to the provident laird that this would be extremely convenient to fodder his new stock of cattle; but as no means of transporting it occurred, he was fain to take leave of it with this apostrophe, now proverbial. 'Had ye but four feet, ye should not stand long there.' In short, nothing came amiss to him that was not too heavy or too hot. This renowned freebooter was married to Mary Scott, celebrated in song by the title of the Flower of Yarrow. By their marriage-contract, the father-in-law, Philip Scott of Dryhope, was to find Harden in horse-meat and man's-meat at his tower of Dryhope for a year and a day; but five barons pledged themselves that, at the expiry of that period, the son-in-law should remove without attempting to continue in possession by force—a caution illustrative of the times, and of the character of the contracting parties. By the Flower of Yarrow the laird of Harden had six sons, five of whom survived him. The sixth son was slain at a fray in a hunting-match by the Scots of Gilmanseugh. His brothers flew to arms; but the old laird secured them in the dungeon of his tower, hurried to Edinburgh stated the crime, and obtained from the Crown a gift of the lands of the offenders. He return-

ed to Harden with equal speed, released his sons, and showed them the charter. 'To horse, lads!' cried the savage warrior, 'and let us take possession! The lands of Gilmanseugh are well worth a dead son.'

The armorial bearings adopted by many of the Border tribes were remarkably appropriate to their character, and show how little they were ashamed of their trade of rapine. It was their vocation; and, with Falstaff, they reckoned it no sin for a man to labour in his vocation. Like this same worthy, they were 'Diana's foresters—gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon'—under whose countenance they committed their depredations. Hence the emblematic moons and stars so often charged in the arms of Border families. Their mottoes also bear allusion to their profession: 'Reparabit cornu Phœbe'—(We'll have moonlight again)—is that of the family of Harden, now represented by Lord Palworth. 'Best riding by moonlight,' was the ancient motto of the Buccleuch family. The crest of the Cranshaws is a crane holding a stone in his foot, with the emphatic motto; 'Thou shalt want ere I want.'

Various statutes and regulations were made for the purpose of repressing the depredations of these Border freebooters, but they remained for the most part a dead letter. It happened not unfrequently that, when the disorders caused by their marauding incursions reached a certain height, the Scottish kings or governors marched to the Borders, seized and imprisoned the chiefs, and executed without mercy the inferior captains and leaders. The most noted of these expeditions was the famous one undertaken by James V. in the year 1529. Before setting out on his journey he very sagaciously took the precaution of securing in safe custody the principal border chieftains—the Earl of Bothwell, Lords Home and Maxwell, and the lairds of Buccleuch, Ferniehurst, Polwarth, and Johnstone, who were the chief protectors of the marauders. The king having thus secured the principal offenders, placed himself at the head of an army of eight thousand men, and marched rapidly forward through the disturbed districts. After visiting the upper part of Peebleshire, Ettrick Forest, and Teviotdale, doing justice on various parties as he proceeded, the king arrived in Eskdale, which adjoins the south-western Border. Here his army drew up in front of the tower of Gilnockie, the strong hold of Johnnie Armstrong, one of the most noted freebooters in this part of the country. Johnnie, whose exploits are celebrated in tradition and song, appears to have carried on his depredations upon a singularly magnificent scale. The whole neighbouring district of England, for many miles round, paid him *black mail*; and the terror of his name is said to have spread almost as far as Newcastle. His tower is still extant. It is situated in Eskdale, a few miles from Langholm, where its ruins yet serve to adorn a scene of exquisite loveliness. The evil genius of Johnnie Armstrong, or the private advice of some courtiers, or, as others allege, a determination to brave it out before the king induced him to present himself before James with 'a gallant company' of thirty-six followers, arrayed in all the pomp of Border chivalry. The spot at which the meeting took place was at Carlinrigg chapel, ten miles south of Harwick. It turned out that Johnnie had entirely miscalculated the effect likely to be produced by the imposing appearance of his train. The king incensed to see a freebooter so gallantly equipped, commanded him instantly to be led to execution, saying, 'What wants this knave save a crown to be as magnificent as a king?' But Johnnie Armstrong, says Pitscottie, make great offers to the king for his life; offering to maintain himself, with forty men, ready to serve the king at a moment's notice at his own expense; engaging never to hurt or injure any Scottish subject—as indeed had never been his practice; and undertaking that there was not a man in England, or whatever degree—duke, earl, lord, or baron—but he would engage, within a certain time, to present to the king dead or alive. All was unavailing. James would listen to no offer, however great. At length seeing no hope of favour, Johnnie said very proudly, 'It is folly to seek grace at a graceless face; but had I guessed you would have used me thus, I would have kept the Border side in despite of the king of England and ye both; for I know king Henry would downweigh my best horse with gold to know that I am condemned to die this day.' Johnnie and all his retinue were immediately hanged upon some growing trees near Carlinrigg chapel. They were buried in his deserted churchyard, where their graves are yet shown. The country people, who hold the memory of the unfortunate marauders in very high respect, believe that, to manifest the injustice of their execution, the trees immediately withered away.

'Where rising Teviot joins the Frosylee,
Stands the huge trunk of many a leafless tree;
No verdant woobire-wreaths their aged adorn,
Bare are the boughs, the garled roots up-torn
Here shone no sunbeam, fell no summer dew.
Nor ever grass beneath the branches grew.
Since that bold chief, who Henry's power defied,
True to his country, as a traitor died.'

The extent to which James carried his severity was, without doubt, cruel and excessive. But such was the terror which he thus struck in the Border marauders, that for a season he made 'the rush-bush keep the cow,' and, according to an old history, 'thereafter there was great peace and rest a long time, where-through the king had great profit; for he had

ten thousand sheep going in the Ettrick Forest, in keeping by Andrew Bell, who made the king as good count of them as they had gone in the bounds of Fife.'

Various expeditions of a similar kind were undertaken on subsequent occasions, especially by the Regent Murry, who suppressed with a firm hand the outrages of the moss-troopers, whom he caused to be hanged or drowned by dozens. But these examples of sanguinary justice had no permanent effect in tranquillising the Border districts. Hence it was found necessary to instruct the wardens of the marches with the most extensive powers for the maintenance of peace and order. These officers seem to have imitated closely the royal example, in the summary execution of these marauders who fell in their hands. The next tree, or the deepest pool of the nearest stream, was indifferently used on such occasions. Great numbers of the moss-troopers are said to have been drowned in a deep eddy of the Jed, near Jedburgh. The ordinary proverb of 'Jedburgh justice,' where men were said to be hanged first and tried afterwards, appears to have taken its rise from these summary proceedings.

One of the most important regulations both for preventing and punishing the disorders committed by the lawless banditti on the Borders, was the holding days of truce by the wardens on either side, in which the offences complained of by the subjects of both kingdoms were, with great solemnity, inquired into and remedied. The wardens on these occasions took the field in great state, attended by the chief men within their districts, all their best arms, and well mounted. After an assurance had been mutually given for keeping the peace from sunrise till sunset, the two wardens met in great form, embraced each other, and then proceeded to examine the 'bills' or complaints tendered on either side. In doubtful cases, the matter was tried by a jury of twelve chosen equally from the two nations, or was referred to an umpire mutually chosen, or in some cases to the oath of the party accused.

The wardens were bound to have the offenders against whom complaints were made in custody, in order they might be in readiness to answer the charges brought against them. But as this would have been often difficult, and sometimes impossible, the warden usually took security from the chief or kinsmen of the accused party, that they should be forthcoming when called for. If the persons charged were found guilty, they were delivered up to the opposite warden, by whom they were imprisoned until they had paid treble the value of the goods stolen. A kind of account current was made up of the extent of mutual damage sustained by both kingdoms, and the complaints found proved on each side having been enumerated, the balance was struck against that country whose depredators had committed the greatest number of offences.

While the wardens were engaged in these judicial investigations, their retainers intermixed fearlessly and peaceably with each other in mutual sports and familiar intercourse—'inmerchandise and merriment'—

'They met and sate then mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land.
The hands the spear that lately grasped,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasped,
Were interchanged in greeting dear;
Visors were raised, and faces shown,
And many a friend to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about;
With dice and draughts some chaced the day;
And some with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the football play.'

Lay of the Last Minstrel.

These peaceful meetings, however, were often converted into scenes of battle and bloodshed. Among the fiery spirits by whom each warden was respectively attended, there must often have been many betwixt whom deadly feud existed, and not a few whose interest it was to instigate any quarrel which might interrupt the course of justice, and prevent their depredations from being inquired into. Among such combustible materials, the slightest spark served to kindle a flame. Hence, as the poet remarks—

'Twixt truce and war a sudden change
Was not infrequent, nor hold strange,
In the old Border-day.'

Repeated instances occur of such casual affrays happening, in which the Border chiefs, and sometimes even the wardens themselves, were wounded or slain. One of these skirmishes vividly portrayed in the old ballad of the 'Raid of the Reidswire.' On the 7th of July 1575, Sir John Carmichael, warden of the Scottish middle marches, and Sir John Foster, the English officer on the opposite frontier, held a meeting for the regulation of Border affairs each being as usual attended by his retinue, and by the armed clans inhabiting his district. According to the old minstrel, the Borderers of Tynedale and the Reidsdale, who attended the English warden, all well armed 'with jack and spear, and bended bows,' were much more numerous than the Scottish plans. The meeting began in mirth and good neighbourhood. The wardens proceeded to the usual business of the day, and their attendants engaged in sports and gaming. The pedlars erected their temporary booths, and displayed their wares; and the whole had the appearance of a peaceful holiday or rural fair.

During this mutual friendly intercourse, a dispute arose respecting one Farnsteen, a notorious English freebooter, against whom a bill at the instance of a Scottish complainer, had

been 'foaled,' that is found a true bill. Foster alleged that he had fled from justice; Carmichael, considering this as a pretext to avoid making compensation for the felony, bade him 'play fair,' to which the haughty English warden retorted, by contemptuously desiring Carmichael to match himself with his equals. The English Borderers, glad of any pretext for a quarrel, immediately raised their war-cry of, 'To it, Tynedale!' and discharged a flight of arrows among the Scots. A warm conflict ensued, in which Carmichael was at first beaten down and taken prisoner, and the Scots, few in number, and surprised, were with difficulty able to keep their ground. But the Tynedale men beginning greedily to rifle the 'merchant packs,' fell into disorder; and a band of the citizens of Jedburgh, armed with firearms, opportunely arriving at that instant, the skirmish terminated in a complete victory on the part of the Scots. Sir John Heron of Chipchase was slain on the spot, to the great regret of both parties; and Sir John Foster, with many other Englishmen of rank, were made prisoners. The Scots lost but one gentleman of name.

This affray was remarkable as being the last skirmish of any consequence fought on the Borders. The field of battle was called the Reidswire, a spot on the Ridge of the Carterfells which divide England from Scotland. The prisoners were sent to the Earl of Morton, then regent, who detained them at Dalkeith, and then dismissed them with presents of choice falcons, and great expressions of regard. On this a saying arose amongst the Borderers, that for this once the regent had lost by his bargain. He had given five hawks for dead Herons—alluding to the death of Sir John Heron.

From Hegg's Instructor.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE.

AMONG the many circumstances which contributed to make the reign of Elizabeth one of the most illustrious in English history, not the least prominent in the impetus then given to maritime adventure. At first, England had seen with comparative indifference those great results of Portuguese enterprise which for a time made the Tagus the emporium of the East: and though her statesmen may have viewed with envy the conquests of Spain, when they poured into her lap the treasures of the New World, the desire of rivalling her in these acquisitions was very slowly developed. But during the reign of the Virgin Queen, the English people summoned their energies to encounter the hazard of that element destined to become peculiarly their own, and thereon achieved victories as glorious in their character and as momentous in their results as that event which scattered the 'Invincible Armada.' When nautical science was yet in its infancy, a host of gallant leaders, inspired by the love of adventure or the ambition of discovery and conquest, sprung forward to this new career, and carried into it much of that chivalrous spirit that still survived from the middle ages. At the same time it must be confessed that those lofty and romantic feelings were often alloyed with an unscrupulousness very little in accordance with the moral standard of the present times, and that the characters of these early nautical adventurers too often exhibited a curious mixture of the knight-errant and the pirate. The desire of humbling and despoiling the Spaniard, then the most formidable national foe, was at least as prominent a motive with most of them as that of extending the glory of their sovereign and native land, and seems to have been considered an ample sanction for many dark and cruel deeds. Such, in some degree, was the ease with the great naval hero, whose history we propose briefly to trace in the present paper. He belonged in many respects to the same school as his illustrious cotemporary Sir Walter Raleigh; and it cannot be denied of either that their most glorious actions were tarnished by others, which the spirit of the age may palliate but can never altogether excuse.

Francis Drake was born in the year 1544, in a cottage about a mile from Tavistock, on the banks of the Tavy, in Devonshire. His father an intelligent but obscure yeoman, had twelve sons, of whom Francis was the eldest. In the days of persecution under Queen Mary, having attracted attention as a zealous Protestant and a man of some acquirements, this worthy person removed from Devonshire into Kent, where young Drake was brought up—'God dividing the honour,' says Fuller, 'between two counties that one might have his birth and the other his education.' Under Elizabeth, the father, having taken orders, obtained the appointment of chaplain to the fleet stationed in the Medway, and was some time after ordained vicar of Upnor church, situated a little below Chatham. The youth, thus reared from infancy in the vicinity of the royal fleet, seems to have early imbibed a passion for a sailor's life; and his father, poor and encumbered with a numerous family, was not disposed to thwart his inclination. 'He put him,' says Camden, 'to the master of a bark, his neighbour, who carried on a coasting trade, and sometimes made voyages to Zealand and France.'

In the service of this master, who kept him hard to his business in the vessel, the young sailor rapidly acquired a thorough knowledge of his profession; and the old seaman became so fond of him that on his death he bequeathed to him the bark and all its equipments. At the early age of eighteen we find him employed as purser of a ship which traded with the ports of Biscay. About this time the slave trade, the subsequent source of so many crimes and horrors, was commenced by some London adventurers, with the view of