

Literature, &c.

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From Hogg's Instructor.

A GOSSIP ABOUT LUCK IN FAMILIES.

It is a singular thing that scarcely any of our leading families in the peerage represent, in the direct male line, the houses from which they derive their names and dignities. For example, as regards designation, the duke of Hamilton may be called a Hamilton, but he is properly a Douglas, by that general rule which draws the denomination of the child from the male parentage. The eldest son of a past marquis of Douglas, by a second marriage, was wedded to the heiress of the great house of Hamilton. The marquise of Douglas was changed to a dukedom, in favour of the last male descendant in the line of the first marriage. At his death without heirs of his body, the famous Douglas came before the courts of Scotland, the duke of Hamilton claiming not only the title of marquis of Douglas, as direct and first male descendant of the ancient holders of that dignity, but also asserting a right to more or less of the estates of the Douglas house, on the plea that the sister of the last duke (Lady Jane Stewart) was bringing forward a supposititious child of hers to acquire the said property. This great cause long agitated the Scottish courts, and was at length finally settled by appeal to the House of Lords, when the duke of Hamilton lost the estates, though his right to the marquise of the house of Douglas, now borne as a secondary title by the eldest son, was fully acknowledged. So that the true male heir of the long illustrious house of Hamilton is the marquis of Abercorn, sprung from a younger son of the family about Queen Mary's time. But the dukes of Hamilton have indeed memorable blood in their veins; they have that of royal Stuarts as well as of the Hamiltons and Douglasses, the head of the house in Mary's time having been declared next heir to the throne, failing her issue. So that, when the present marquis of Douglas, inheritor of the conjunct Scottish, English and French dukedoms of Hamilton, Brandon, and Chateaufort, gave his hand to a poor German princess, it may be questioned on which side the honor lay, and by whom conferred in the case. As the undoubted lineal heir of one thus described by Shakespeare—

Of the renowned Douglas, whose high deeds,

Whose hot incursions, and great name in arms,

Held of all soldiers chief majority,

And military title capital,

Through all the kingdoms that acknowledge Christ.

The eldest son of the house of Hamilton, though he owned no other lineage, might well claim to stand on an equality with a princess of one of the small German regalities.

We cannot do better in our heraldic gossiping, than turn to the next oldest ducal house of Scotland—that of Buccleuch. 'Luck in families' has done much for this one—the succession to the additional dukedom of Queensberry, and the vast attendant estates, being a stroke of fortune which a marriage in 1720 could scarcely have been expected to cause in 1810. However, it really did so, the union of the Lady Jane Douglas with the heir of Buccleuch leaving the fruits thereof ultimate heirs to the principal titles and estates of the house of Queensberry. But though Sir Walter Scott loved to call the dukes of Buccleuch the chiefs of his clan, they really are not Scots but Stuarts—the noted duke of Monmouth, natural son of Charles II. by Lucy Waters, having been married to the heiress of the house. From him springs directly the present line. It is odd enough, that the old border Scots, a race so valiant and powerful, are understood to be represented in the direct male line by Napiers, a family far famed at this hour for war-like daring. Sir William Scott of Thirlstone wedded the Baroness of Napier in her own right, and from him, who took her designation, descended our fighting heroes of the latter name, the Sir Charles of the sea, and the Sir Charles of Scinde, as well as the famous historian of the Peninsular war, General W. F. P. Napier. Thus the border Scots do keep up their old repute for valiancy, and that in no common degree. Our reasons for believing the Scots of Thirlstone [now Napiers] to be the true male heirs of the house are so far confirmed by the testimony of Lockhart, in his life of his great father-in-law. All the older branches have been broken by female succession, it is believed. But be this as it may, the eminent Napiers of this day are, at all events, indubitably Scots, and share the family blood of him who, of late days, made the name more eminent than it ever was or will be rendered, even by such deeds of heroism as he loved to honour and perpetuate in song.

The Buccleuch house obtained another splendid windfall, by a marriage with the family of Montagu, which, on the failure of its male line, brought a new barony and large estates to a second son to the house of Buccleuch, the late Lord Montagu. This made well up for a loss of a part of the Queensberry estates. Curious enough was the way in which these last was split up. The Buc-

cleuchs got the lion's share in the magnificent Drumlanrig property and palace, but could not prevent the heir male from obtaining the marquise of Queensberry, with a pendicle of the estates into the bargain; another portion, and a fine one, comprising a large division of Peeblesshire, went to the Earl of Wemyss, with the title of earl of March. All this disavowment arose from the legal distinction between heirs of line, heirs male, and heirs entail. The duke of Queensberry, first of that title, and the most eminent of his race, had little thought when he left one of his sons heir to a ducal dignity, and procured earldoms to two if not three others that almost all of his vast wealth would go to the heirs of other names. It was by a union with the sister of the first earl of March, some century ago, that the Lord Wemyss of the day transmitted so handsome a provision to his descendants as one fourth of the lands of Tweeddale. Sufficently odd it is, again, that that family greatly needed such a boon from sources of an accidental kind. The share taken by Lord Elcho, the heir of the Wemyss honours, in the rebellion of 1745, led to the alienation of the true and ancient family estates in Fife in favour of a younger branch; and the elder scion would have been almost landless, but for his inheritance of the property of his grandsire, the too famous or rather notorious colonel Charteris. This provision was large, yet the earldom would not have been a wealthy one, but for the singular good fortune which sent in the way of its heirs a liberal portion of the divided Queensberry domains.

Let us pursue our notice of the Scottish dukedoms. Here, again, we find something striking in the way of our heraldic title-tattle. The third Scottish dukedom is that of Lennox, conjoined with the English title of Richmond; and is held by the descendants of a natural son of Charles II., to which monarch the title reverted on the failure of issue from the sixth duke of Lennox and the fourth of Richmond—the titles being princely ones belonging to the Stuarts of Darnley. The 'merry' monarch was liberal, it is well known, in giving honours and estates to the offspring of his merriest and the Lennox family, as they finally called themselves, shared largely in the distribution of both gifts. To please Charles, and add to the obligation conferred by an annuity of French gold, Louis XIV. made the mistress of the English king duchess of Aubigny in the Gallic realm; and thus the present heads of the house hold the tripple titles of Lennox, Richmond, and Aubigny, in Scotland, England, and France. But still the conjoined dukedoms had become rather poor, until a certain Colonel Lennox married an elder daughter of the Gordons, and so, by a singular turn of fortune, the Lennoxes ultimately have obtained nearly the whole of the vast estates of the famous 'Cocks of the North,' the dukes of Gordon. Here was, indeed, a life in the world! It is some consolation to those who love the old names of Scottish story, that the marquise of Huntly fell to the heir male, the Earl of Abeyne; but, alas! he too, is not a Gordon strictly, a female succession in the fifteenth century having turned the Gordon chiefs into Seatons.

The house of Argyle, fifth on the ducal roll in Scotland, is one apparently of unbroken descent in the male line, from sire to son, for a great number of centuries. We are fond enough of our old historic name, to wish that such may long be the case; and there is a prophecy among the Western Highlanders, which, though we do not put very much faith in such things, may, we hope, be fulfilled. The family was to decline, it was said till a new duke with red hair succeeded in the line of the great duke John. The present Lord Lorne presents this characteristic very strikingly, beyond all doubt; and, to speak more seriously, he has also already evidenced the possession of somewhat superior talents. Let us leave to the future, however, the discovery whether the second sighted men of the west are right or wrong in their prognostications.

Two other ducal families of Scotland are unblemished as regards direct male descent, namely, the Athol and Montrose houses. But what to call the dukes of Roxburg we puzzle all kings-at-arms. They were first Norman Cars, then Scottish Kers, then Drummonds, then Bellendens, and latterly they bore the name of Innis; at least, an Innis now holds the title and estate of Roxburg; and a capital throw of luck it was for a poor northern baronet to pick up a dukedom and its rather valuable appendages in the year 1812, in consequence of the marriage of his great grandfather with a younger daughter of the house of Roxburg in the year 1666.

About our marquises of Scotland we have not much to say, having touched on the Queensberry case already; excepting that we may note it as singular that a younger scion of that house, born before 1690, should leave a high succession to be enjoyed by his descendants of so late a day as our own time. There lies a moral in all these things, it gives a lesson on their condition to poor men; but we shall leave the lesson to be devolved by and by, and shall only observe, in the meantime, that these laws of entail, which at once defraud the younger branches of a family of their due share of patrimonial property, and set just creditors at defiance, will and must get a check some day soon. The general result of them is as heretofore stated, though particular instances may be cited to the contrary, and though we ourselves have shown cases where it was fortunate to be a younger son; but even there the good fortune came by entails, possibly to many very injurious.

Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

NATURAL SANITARY AGENCIES.

At this period, when the sanitary question is by slow degrees assuming the station of importance to which it has a just title, and from which nothing but the most obstinate unbelief has kept it back, the above subject claims for itself no small degree of interest. The truth, impressed by man's great preceptress in her hand work, is, that all organized material, after accomplishing the object of its existence, and perishing, must be immediately removed, or so disposed of as to render the inevitable consequences of its putridity innocuous to the surviving races of animated beings. Such is the simple truth, to which only man, in his indolent indifference, has offered so long and so stout a resistance; a truth which nature has in vain endeavoured, from the beginning of creation to the present hour, by a series of the most interesting illustrations, to impress upon him. It is the design of the present paper to trace the methods by which she has endeavoured to enforce the lesson.

There are two classes of agencies engaged upon the work of removing effete material. The first is a corps of natural scavengers; and a very efficient body it constitutes; and, in the second, the chemical affinities of bodies are called into operation, more particularly those of the atmosphere. We shall deal with the zoological scavengers in the first instance. It is a subject of familiar remark, that rarely, if ever—the shrew mouse is, we believe, the only exception—do we meet with the dead carcass of a wild animal. Animals are endowed with a peculiar instinct upon the approach of dissolution, which, thus regarded, has an especial interest. Into the dens and caves of the earth, or into the deep recesses of the forest, or into some artificial retreat, far shut out from the busy world, the dying brute retires, and there breathes its last in solitude. Here the tissues that compose its body can rot, and purely, and become gaseous, and liquid, with injury to none, until, by the combined influences of time and weather, nothing remains but a mass of inodorous bones, which are soon themselves to crumble, and to form a portion of the soil upon which they rest. The large heaps of animal remains often found in caverns, have no doubt in a great measure, their origin in the impulse of concealment antecedent to death. Where this law fails to act, it gives place to another, and a more rapidly effective one; or there may often be a combination of the two, the destruction of the elements being united to the labours of the true natural scavengers. These are the carrion feeders.

The *Vulturide*, among birds, have long enjoyed a high celebrity for the vigorous manner in which they apply themselves to this important task. Unless pressed by hunger, the vulture is stated by some naturalists to refuse to partake of untainted food; but when the putrefactive process has once commenced, it flies upon it with the utmost avidity, and gorges itself almost to suffocation. The assistance of these birds in the removal of noxious matter, very naturally increases in importance with the nature of the climate in which they abound. The vulture, and its kin would be in imminent risk of entire starvation in the gelid north, almost daily dainties lie ready for them in the southern regions. Mr Swainson writes of them that they are 'the great scavengers of nature in hot latitudes, where putrefaction is rapid, and most injurious to health; and the disposition of numbers is regulated by an All-wise Creator according to their needfulness. They are sparingly found in Europe; in Egypt they are more numerous; but in tropical America, although the species are fewer, the individuals are much more plentiful.' Travellers have on many occasions commemorated the activity of the operations of these birds in Egypt, more particularly in the large cities of that country, where they remove decomposing material of every sort, the carcasses of animals, and the debris of all kinds which the inhabitants, with a stupid confidence in their filth-consuming allies, cast forth into their streets. They have even come under the protection of the legislature, and laws are in force at the present hour, which impose penalties upon any who shall be guilty of molesting or destroying the regular filth-contractors of the East. These birds, in order to adapt them more effectually to the task which nature has appointed for them, possess an astonishing faculty of receiving and conveying to one another, the tidings of a far off feast. Mr Darwin believes that their rapid congregation around their prey is to be accounted for by their possession of the senses both of sight and of smell in an extraordinary degree. All naturalists are not agreed upon the question, but none deny that it is little less than miraculous to observe the apparently instantaneous communication of the intelligence to the scattered members of this carrion family. Condors and vultures before altogether invisible, seem to pounce down almost by magic, upon their banquet. Mr Darwin conjectures, and the solution appears simple and natural, that it is to be attributed to their high-soaring habits; that thus out of the filed of vision ordinarily swept by the eye of the spectator when walking or on horseback, aloft in the air the vulture may be floating, looking down with keen interest upon the earth beneath, and instantly dropping upon its quarry when it is perceived. This rapid stoop, he adds, is the signal to the rest, which then hasten to the field from the remotest points of the horizon. When engaged actually upon the work, the vulture executes it in a very workmanlike style, not leaving the carcass for some days together, until it is completely stripped of its integuments, and nothing left but the skeleton with its connecting

ligaments. On the plains of Africa, where the huge carcasses of the giant herbivora would lie to poison the surrounding atmosphere to a enormous extent, the scavenger is an immense bird of the vulture family, known as the *sociable vulture*, whose ferocity, activity, and appetite, are commensurate with the arduousness of the labour which devolves upon it. Le Vaillant, the celebrated French traveller and naturalist, writes that he found upwards of six pounds of the flesh of a hippopotamus in the stomach of one, which, after a long and obstinate contest, he succeeded in killing.

That which the winged scavengers leave unconsumed, falls commonly to the share of the four-footed ones—the jackal and the wild dog. From time immemorial, these loathsome creatures have been regarded by the eastern nations, who neglected the lesson their example inculcated, as the benefactors of their communities. Mr Bell, in the History of British Quadrupeds, 'is inclined to believe that the wild or half-wild dogs were the common scavengers of the camp of the Israelites—an office which their successors still hold among the cities of the East. 'Him that dieth in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat,' but 'him that dieth in the city shall the dogs eat,' was the awful curse which hung over some of the royal houses of the Israelites; and it seems to afford an indication of the respective functions of these two classes of labourers. Not less efficient is the shrieking jackal. It follows in the rear of the weary caravan, being certain of success when thirst, weariness, and disease have begun their work among the travellers.

The waters of the ocean, just as the wide extent of the air and earth, must likewise be preserved from contamination. A striking provision exists in a considerable number of instances for this end: it is the luminosity of dead fish. It is a mistake to believe this to be the result of putrefaction; on the contrary, a dead fish is only luminous until the putrefactive process commences, when the light disappears. It would seem probable that, very shortly after death, the gas known as phosphuretted hydrogen was produced on the surface of the body of the fish; but when, as a further step in decomposition, ammonia is evolved, the latter substance combines with the luminous gas, and the phosphorescence ceases. This appears to us the simplest solution of a phenomenon which has perplexed many philosophers. The light is the guide to the prey so long as it is most proper for consumption; after that it disappears. The scavengers of the great deep are its multitudinous inhabitants, which, from the voracious shark and his relatives downwards, to the smallest thing which traverse the waves, are all banded together in this common cause.

Nature has, however, an agent at hand, before which these sink into a comparative unimportance, it is the race of insects. Every one is familiar with the startling observation of Linnaeus, that three flies (*musca vomitaria*) would devour a dead horse as quickly as would a lion! It is not beyond the truth. The whole tribe of flesh flies, from which our feelings turn with disgust, are nevertheless, among the most eminent benefactors of mankind, more serviceable far than the gaudy flutterers or tintured butterflies in whose behalf our admiration is more generally and naturally enlisted. Whileke, a Swedish naturalist, states, that so great is the productive capacity of a single species, that each insect can commit more ravages than could an elephant. A single female of the fly called the *Sarcophaga Carnaria* will give birth to about twenty thousand young; and others are not wanting, the green flesh fly particularly, to add their thousands in countless numbers to the mass of labours. To these busy myriads is the work committed. In a few days the larvae of the flesh fly attain their full growth, and before this time it has been proved, by weighing them, that they will devour so much food, and grow so rapidly in twenty four hours, as to increase their weight nearly two hundredfold. Thus an approximate estimate can be conceived of their value as sanitary agents. The carrion beetle rank next in consequence and take the place of the flies in the consumption of the remainder. The great rove beetle does an incredible amount of work in this way, and will commit ravages upon ment left within its reach, which are not likely to pass from the memory of the housekeeper. Kirby and Spence informs us there is a small cockroach which gets into the hut of the unfortunate Laplander, and 'will in one day annihilate all his stock of dried fish. It is a remarkable fact, that many kinds of perishable animal matter have a peculiar insect appropriated to them. Each to its own—a law which has a broader range in nature than that under which it is here contemplated—seems to be the commission by which these winged powers go forth to their labour. Next to these comes the termites, the ant tribe; and their importance swells with the fervid nature of the climate. In tropical countries they almost supersede other creatures in the work of destruction; they are consequently of a large size, are produced in vast multitudes, and possess a prodigious voracity. They will attack, in whole armies, the dead body of an animal, and in a surprisingly short space of time will denude it of every particle of muscular and adipose material, leaving behind only the ligaments and bones. There is in these labours an amusing succession of workmen, which is exceedingly curious. First come the skin removers, then the sarcophagus insects, then the carrion beetles and ants, and these are followed finally by the smaller carrion insects the *coronotes* and *mitidula*: when they have left off work, nothing remains to pollute the at-