

MELODIES
AND
MEMORIES

WITH A HISTORY
OF THE
BLACKS OF BREICH WATER DISTRICT.

BY JOHN BLACK



GLASGOW
A. M'LAREN & SON, ARGYLE STREET

1909



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

JOHAN BLACK, author of many poems and prose sketches, came upon the stage of life just as the year of grace 1849 was drawing to a close. He is the eighth of a family of four sons and eight daughters, who were brought up at the farm of East Handaxwood, in West Calder Parish, and near Fauldhouse, Linlithgowshire, the district which, as *Bentybrae*, he has sung and depicted with tenderness and fidelity.

Mr Black comes of a rhyming family, one of his brothers and two of his sisters being capable of expressing their thoughts in verse. Early last century his maternal great-grandfather, James Smith, published a volume of verses, and was well known in Lanarkshire as "the quaint Wishaw poet." It is, however, to Robert Tennant, the postman poet, that Mr Black attributes the influence which moved him in the direction of the muse, and, being fond of reading, many of our standard poets won his esteem, and doubtless influenced his thoughts.

When about twenty-three years of age, Mr Black commenced to contribute to the poet's corner of various newspapers and magazines. A large number of his pieces have appeared in *The Hamilton Advertiser*. In enumerating books which have especially helped him, our friend humorously includes the Pronouncing Dictionary, which he carried in his pocket.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

After residing twelve years at Addiewell, Mr Black, with his wife and family, moved westward, exchanging a home on the banks of the Breich for one on the banks of the Kelvin.

While taking a more or less active interest in his immediate and busy surroundings, his thoughts often fly to the rural solitudes where, in former years, he admired and communed with nature in her varied phases of light and shade. Many of his themes were suggested by common every-day sights throughout the changing seasons, and sometimes by outstanding experiences of thought and feeling.

One of the traits of our poet which strikes us very much is the constancy with which he sings. Others may take to the muse by fits and starts, but, like the brook, he goes on for ever, and he seems to be as heedless as the brook as to what the critics may say. His effusions are warmly appreciated by many lovers of homely, natural verse. Amongst the pieces which have taken hold of our memory as showing Mr Black's muse at its best, we may mention, "The Temple of Silence," "The Hame-Gaun 'Oor," "United Hearts," and "A Hame o' yer Ain," while his sketches of "The Old Dominie" and "Bob Magee" strike us as having a quiet power and a freedom from exaggeration, that make them a unique contribution to Scotland's "Kailyard" literature. All Mr Black's writings are pervaded by that true Christian philosophy which never fails to gladden the hearts and purify the lives of all who come under its spell.

Stalwart in physique, and upright in character, with a warm underglow of genial sentiment, Mr Black is indeed a typical Scot, and worthy the esteem in which he is held by a wide circle of acquaintances and friends.—From "Lanarkshire Poets" in *Wishaw Herald*.

THE BLACKS OF BREICH WATER.

BREICH WATER.

(The following admirable and somewhat pathetic verses appeared in a Scottish newspaper a goodly number of years ago.)

THE brown muirs and the hills,
Levenseat and Fala Tap,
The moss-hags o' Muldron,
And windy Climpy Gap ;
The green fields o' Bidallan,
The holms o' Tarrydews,
The broomy braes o' Crofthead
Whaur Fauldhouse wan the broos ;
And anither man was prouder
For the winning of a bride—
Oh ! the auld days, the blythe days,
On bare Breich Water side.

There's nae place whaur the auld folk
Can say a kindlier word,
There's nae place whaur the young chiels
Are manlier or mair buird ;
There's nae place whaur the lassies
Are bonnier to see,
There's nae place whaur the bairnies
Craw crouser on the knee ;

There's nae place whaur a freen' sticks
 Sae close through thick and thin,
 There's nae place whaur the weary
 A warmer welcome fin' ;
 I ken a hunner water sides
 Show braver in their pride,
 But they ha'ena got the glamour
 O' bare Breich Water side.

O, wae for him who errant
 Has wandered far awa,
 And fule-like tint the love-links
 He lo'es the best o' a' ;
 Wha, pent in some great city,
 Pines desolate—alane,
 Wi' nocht but shame to cleid him,
 And nocht for food but pain ;
 Wha at ilka step gangs stumbling,
 Like the blind without a guide,
 As he gropes his way to Death's door,
 Far frae Breich Water side.

COLIN SHIELDS.

21 Stamford Street, Blackfriars,
 London, E.C.

THE BLACKS OF BREICH WATER.

NOT in the water, but in humble homes along either side of it, lived the families of Blacks, of whom some information is here to be given. Taking the latter part of this subject first, it may be told that Breich Water is an upland burn, with three or four sources in the moors around Muldron Farm, at the extreme west of the county of Mid-lothian.

From Darmeid Linn, long ago a resort of Covenanters in times of persecution, to where Breich, grown almost to a modest river, flows into the Almond from Shotts hills, the distance is about twelve miles. At a point not far from Wallhill, westward from Fauldhouse, the parishes of Cambusnethan, West Calder, and Whitburn, and the counties of Lanark, Mid-lothian, and Linlithgow meet in the centre of the stream.

Stretching eastward, north of Breich Water, is the village of Fauldhouse, with Falla Hill high in the background. To the south is Levenseat, with West and East Handaxwood farms. Again, on the north side, we find Croftfoot, Falla Mill, Craighead, Liltie-co-kee, and Bents. Near Craighead and East Handaxwood, a road between Whitburn, Longridge, and Wilsontown crosses the Vale of Breich by a long narrow bridge, dated 1781.

Along both sides in this locality are, or were, numerous little homesteads, where the earlier Blacks lived and toiled in bygone years. While they did much to improve the rather wild ground, gaining a living thereby, it seems regrettable that now some of the homes they occupied, and part of the land they cultivated, are being neglected. At a good many places, where cheerful, diligent families, with a stock of horses and dairy cattle, were located, there are now homesteads in ruins, a good deal of desolation, and—some black-faced sheep.

Falla Mill is the only one of the four meal mills once on the track of Breich Water. New Mill, near Addiewell, has for many years been silent, while Breich Mill, about a mile down stream, was ignobly buried under a huge bank of spent shale from the oil works over twenty years ago. Grange Mill, near the meeting of Breich and Almond Waters, is now only faintly traceable.

Northward from West Calder a short distance, Breich Water curves round by City Farm and Gunsgreen, joining

the Almond a little way down the woody vale. Time was, some sixty or seventy years ago, when Breich was pure as a moorland stream usually is, but the underground workings around Fauldhouse caused a defilement.

This outline history is chiefly for the purpose of tracing genealogical lines from over two centuries past until the present time. While there is not much of a strange or heroic nature to tell, it is an evident fact that the Blacks have borne a creditable part in upholding the name and fame of the law-abiding, God-fearing Scottish peasantry, whose fame can never perish.

Descended, as has been stated on the authority of Sir T. Weymss Reid, biographer of William Black, the famous author, from the Clan Lamont, some of the family became located at Calla, near Carnwath. One of the number, named James, had several sons. Of these, William, who perhaps found the home nest too small, or who was ambitious to carve out a way for himself, migrated some dozen miles northward to Liltie-co-kee, in Whitburn Parish, Linlithgowshire. About fifty years ago that rather curious name, Liltie-co-kee, gave place to one which, if less picturesque, is more easily understood. Two railway bridges, on the Bathgate and Morningside railway, were built in front of the little stading, and since then the name has been Bridgend. Southward the view takes in Holehouseburn, Rashiehill, Woodmuir, and the Hendrey's Course moorland ridge which divides Mid-lothian county from that of Lanark. Tormie Wheel and Levenseat moorland heights are also visible.

To William, the first of Breich Water, and his wife, Mary Tod, were born six sons and two daughters. From this pioneer family, settled among the moors well over two hundred years ago, there have been many descendants, male and female. Throughout Scotland, England, and Ireland they have migrated, while Canada, America,

Australia, New Zealand, and other places, have had many worthy emigrants from among the brave Blacks of Breich Water.

In the lowly thatch-roofed home, with the quaint name, were born the six sons, in the following order—James, John, William, David, Robert, Alexander. That readers may not be over-wearied by a too lengthy record, reference, as brief as possible, to their several descendants will be made in the order of seniority.

James succeeded his father in the croft or farm of Liltie-co-kee, his wife being Agnes Mochrie. There were two sons and five daughters. William, eldest son, was married to Catherine, daughter of Mr Waddell, of Croft-head, and their family consisted of two daughters. The William just mentioned became laird of East Whitburn. Even a modest lairdship is a desirable thing. Maybe he married "a lass wi' a tocher." James, second son of James, became a Dissenting Minister in Dundee, and died there, it is stated, but, unfortunately, there is here a total blank in the historical record. Some one may yet supply some of the missing links. It may be stated, that in Whitburn Churchyard is an old gravestone, in good preservation, recording the deaths of William Black and Mary Tod, the former in 1742, the latter in 1767 (age not given); also the death of their eldest son, James, in 1800, aged 78 years, and Agnes Mochrie, his wife, in 1802, aged 73 years. Further, William, son of James, died in 1829, aged 68 years, and his wife, Catherine Waddell, in 1834, aged 80 years. Owing to complete lack of information regarding the Black who became a minister, and the fact that his elder brother had no male issue, it is necessary to reckon line of descent through John, second Liltie-co-kee son, who represents the second generation of Breich Water Blacks. His wife was Helen Steel, of Turnhigh, her

grandfather having been a proscribed Covenanter in the reign of Charles II.

Regarding Mr Steel, it is told that on one occasion, having come from a hiding place in the adjoining moors to visit his household for a short time, he was rudely interrupted, while reading from his Bible, by the approach of armed soldiers in search of him.

With his Bible in hand, he went hastily by the usual inside passage to the byre. Seeing some newly-cut grass placed in readiness for feeding the cows, he lay down beside it, and was promptly covered over by one of his family.

When the persecuting soldiers had searched the dwelling, they gave attention to the out-houses, and, coming to the heap of grass, one of the number actually pierced it with his sword. The on-looking relatives silently trembled lest the husband and father should be wounded, or mayhap killed outright, but no sound came from under the grass.

The troopers departed, and, when well away, the grass was removed, and Mr Steel was found unscathed. On lying down with Bible in hand, he had placed it over his heart, and the sword-point was stayed by the Sacred Book.

To John and Helen were born five sons and five daughters. This John was a crofter and lime master, his home being Bushdyke, near Leavenseat, where the limekilns were situated. In these days, when artificial manures were unknown, lime as a fertilizing agent, especially for stiff heathland newly broken up with the plough, was very important. For lack of wheeled vehicles and roads, lime, like some other commodities, was carried in bags or creels on horseback.

Before taking leave of John, it may be told that when a youth of 18 years he stood on some favourable height

and saw the battle of Falkirk in 1745. He died aged 98 years. Doubtless simple living, with pure air and little worry, contributed to longevity in the less feverish days long past.

Levenseat Hill, over 1,200 feet above sea level, and so-named because in Covenant times a Presbytery of eleven sat there, is slightly south-west of Bushdyke. From the summit, in clear weather, a varied and extensive all-round view can be obtained.

On the rough moorland, traces of the old-time home are still plainly observable, though in the interval a second Bushdyke has been built, and is now crumbling into ruins.

William, eldest Bushdyke son, farmed first at Westburn, and next at Blackburn, whither he moved about 1800. His wife, Jane Cleland, became the mother of three sons and five daughters, viz., John, William, and James, Margaret, Helen, Janet, Agnes, and Elizabeth, who went to Canada, and died there a few years ago. Mrs James Forbes, a daughter of Helen, is now living in Carluke.

William having died, through being thrown from one of his carts, his son John, a quaint, typical Scot, succeeded him at Blackburn, and was married to his cousin, Agnes Black, Starryshaw. To this couple were born, at Blackburn, four daughters—Janet, Agnes, Margaret, and Elizabeth, the two latter still living; while at Craighead, where they removed to, two sons—William and Richard, were born.

John, one winter evening, had been enjoying a warm drink, that delighted and greatly benefitted him. After he was done stirring, sipping, and slowly swallowing, he signified his high approval by saying, "That's gude, uncommon gude, it's amazin' some folk's sae keen o' whisky."

William, married to Janet Robb, Haywood Mains, was afterwards farmer at Fauldhouse, and now at Leadloch.

They have three sons—John, James, and William, also seven daughters—Mary, Agnes, Margaret, Janet, Elizabeth, Annie, and Dinah, the latter being the only one in the family unmarried.

This so-called history being mainly to trace the male line of descent and branches, the female line will be indicated very briefly.

John, eldest Leadloch son, is farmer of Roberton Mains, Dolphinton, and his eldest son, William, now twenty years of age, is senior member of the seventh generation of the Blacks of Breich Water.

James, second Leadloch son, with wife and family occupy the farm of Fauldhouse, formerly tenanted by his father.

William, third son, has been several years at Boksburg, South Africa.

Richard, second son of John of Craighead, lives with wife and family at East Whitburn. John, the eldest son, is about twenty years of age, the other sons being Walter Annan, and Richard. There are two daughters—one married and one unmarried.

William, second son of William of Westburn, was born there in 1797. About 1830 he became tenant of East Handaxwood, which he retained with credit for full fifty years. He was married in 1833 to Elizabeth, daughter of Alexander Smith, and died in 1884.

William used to rehearse now and again that in ancient lawless times bands of wandering reivers went hither and thither over the countryside, living by the way on the sometimes scanty food supplies of industrious crofters or small farmers. Coming to a lonely dwelling one day, not far from Drumley Water, the usual demand for something to eat and drink was made. The gudewife set out a goodly pile of oaten furls, the heel of a kebbuck, and plenty of clear spring water, telling her unwelcome visitors that she

could do no more for them. "Ye hae some kye," said the leader, "Whaur's the milk, is't in the kirn here?" and forthwith the appetising lapped milk, nearly ready for churning, was soon disappearing, much to the regret of the thrifty gudewife. The gudeman, being at home, joined in the feast with the marauders, though the glum looks of his wife were often turned his way. When oatcakes, cheese, and milk were exhausted, husband and wife were left alone. "Sic a vexation," said the woman, "an' what made it waur was your takin' pairt wi' them, an' helpin' to tim my kirn." "Wheesht, wheesht, my wifie, I'll no be hungry the day again, I thocht it best to hae a share, for I saw it was gaun gear onywey."

At Handaxwood, four sons, William, Alexander, John, and James were born, also eight daughters.

William was farmer at Falla Hill, and next at Couch, until his death in 1894. To him and his wife, Isabella Fleming, were born four sons, William, John, Alexander, and James, also four daughters, of whom only the eldest, Mrs J. S. Waddell, is now alive, having one son and two daughters.

William, eldest son, having died in youth, John, second son, became his father's successor, and, with his wife, daughter, and son, live on the banks of Almond Water, near Polkemmet.

James, his wife, and daughters, live in Denver, U.S.A.

Alexander, second East Handaxwood son, at thirty-three years of age, and unmarried, met his death in 1873 on the C.R. railway at Holytown (old station) while acting as Relief Inspector.

John, third son of William, of East Handaxwood, with one daughter and one surviving son, reside in Glasgow. By means of his verses in local newspapers, he has directed not a little attention to his native district, to which he is ardently attached.

James, fourth East Handaxwood son, with his wife and two daughters, live at Woodfords, near Portland, Maine, U.S.A., and he too still cherishes a warm regard for the friends and scenes of life's earlier years.

The East Handaxwood daughters were Agnes, Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Margaret, Janet Helen, Catherine Jemima Ronaldson, and Christina. With the exception of Mary, all were married, and their descendants count up to a goodly total, there being, besides several grandchildren, at least one great-grandchild.

Only the youngest of those daughters continues to live near Breich Water side. Truly, time works changes!

James, third Westburn, or Blackburn, son, married Margaret Prentice. After being some time at Blackburn and at Addiewell, he spent the remainder of his years at Turniemoon, near West Calder.

The author remembers hearing of James, his uncle, having been talking of the new cemetery at West Calder as his probable burying place, although he considered he had a claim to a lair in the older burying ground beside the old Church. Waxing warm regarding his rights, he declared emphatically that he "could force himself into the auld Kirkyard in spite o' a' wha would seek to hinder." This way of putting the statement caused some merriment in those who were listening, though, of course, they dare not laugh outright.

William and John were the sons of the family, the six daughters being Janet, Jane, Margaret, Agnes, Elizabeth, Helen, all of whom were married. Two of the number are still wonderfully hale, the others being now deceased.

William died some years ago, survived by four sons—James, William, David, John. John, second son of James, of Turniemoon, lives in Broxburn; also his three sons, James, John, and David.

John, the lime-master's second son, became farmer at

Crooklands, Auchengray, near to the Calla crofts previously referred to. Catherine Leckie, his wife, bore him four sons and four daughters.

John succeeded his father, having as wife his cousin, Elizabeth Black, from Blackfaulds. They had a numerous family of both sexes. After leaving the farm, and staying some time in Longridge, the whole family emigrated to New Zealand about 1859.

Thomas, second Crooklands son, married Agnes Inglis, and farmed, first at Knowton, and next at Wester Breich, in company with his son, James, who had been in America.

John, his eldest son, went with his wife and children from Knowton to New Zealand, but reports from that far country are often scanty, so here, as elsewhere, the thread is broken.

James afterwards went from Wester Breich to Kirkcudbrightshire.

Catherine, one of the Knowton daughters, was married to Alexander Storrie, Dykehead. One son, Alexander, with wife and family lives at Balmore, Stirlingshire, another at Ibrox, one daughter at Ferniegair, and one at Dykehead.

David, third Crooklands son, married to Agnes Mann, farmed Westburn, and after farming some time in Carluke district, occupied New-year-field farm till his death. It was said to be this David who, on being taxed with selling thin butter milk, and told that he had no conscience, quietly responded, "Hoots aye, I've a conscience; it's maybe like the milk, a wee thin, but I hae a conscience." His sons were John, James, David, Thomas, the latter continuing at New-year-field until going to England some years ago. John and James were farmers in Carluke vicinity, while David was located as farmer near Stirling. In this family, too, were a number of daughters with husbands and families, but various details are lacking.

Helen, a Crooklands daughter, became Mrs John Thomson, Holestock, near Longford, her sons being Robert Thomson, merchant, Longridge, and John, farmer, Kepscaith and Rashierig, whose son, John, is now an East Lothian farmer at Wheatrig, near Longniddry, having three sons and one daughter.

Mary, another Crooklands daughter, became Mrs Daniel Gardner, of Watsonfoot farm. Margaret, another daughter, was also married. Mrs Alexander, Nethermuir, Bathgate, is a descendant in the Gardner line.

James, third Bushdyke son, had as his wife, Margaret Nesbit, and was tenant of Burnside, near Turnhigh, Whitburn. There were three sons and five daughters.

John, married to Mary Grey, entered Back o' Moss in 1840. There were three sons, James, George, and John, and four daughters, Margaret, Agnes, Isabella, and Mary.

James and his wife, both deceased, left two sons, John and James, and two daughters, Mary and Janet.

George, second Back o' Moss son, is farmer at Penston, East Lothian, his wife being Elizabeth Shanks, formerly of Turnhigh. They have four sons and one daughter.

John, the eldest son, is a clergyman in Kaffraria, while the other three are devoted to agricultural pursuits in East Lothian.

John, third Back o' Moss son, is still farmer there, he and his wife, Marion Mungall, having a family of sons and daughters.

It may be noted, in passing, that Mr James Walker, merchant, Bathgate, is a grandson of John Black, formerly of Back o' Moss, his mother being Agnes, wife of James Walker, Grahamston.

Thomas, second Burnside son, was married to Ann, daughter of John Russell, farmer, Foulshiels. Soon after the birth of their one daughter, the mother died, and a few years later the father was killed by the upsetting of

his cart. The orphan girl was brought to Burnside, where she assisted her grandfather, and in course of years became Mrs John Sommerville. She is now in her widowhood, living with a son in Greenock. Another son is in Edinburgh, and there are also two daughters. It ought, in strict justice, to be told that much of the information in this history was gleaned by her during a lengthy lifetime, she being now over eighty years of age.

Alexander, third son of James, of Burnside, is highly entitled to very honourable mention, because, at the cost of his own, he saved the life of another man from drowning in the Forth near Stirling. His wife's name was Mary Galbraith. They had four sons and one daughter.

James, eldest, a baker in Glasgow, went with his family to Melbourne. He and his wife died in Dunedin several years ago. Alexander, second son, was formerly a tannery manager in London, afterwards going to Belgium. Peter, the third son, was a baker, and became a successful colonist. John, the youngest son, who had hard times in his youth, being orphaned when only four years of age, knew life as a herd-boy at Liltie-co-kee and at Craighead. He became a cooper, a musician, and, in manners and morals, a man worth knowing. With his family of sons and daughters he now lives in Glasgow. Janet, the hero's only daughter, with husband and family, went abroad, and worked themselves into comfortable circumstances.

Of the Burnside daughters, Agnes became Mrs Wm. Mungall, Helen became Mrs Peter Thornton, Rashiehill, and, in both cases, these families emigrated to America many years ago.

Margaret Thornton, Rashiehill, was married to Robert Thomson, Stonemains, near Knowton, and had several children. One son, Peter, lives in Whitburn, and another, James, lives in Bathgate. There are also several female descendants at various other places. Isabella Thornton

was married to William Stark, Cambusnethan. Mary, of Burnside, was married to Robert Stewart, West Forth. A grand-daughter, Mrs Thomas Smith, resides in Rowantree Cottage, Cambuslang. Janet became Mrs Wm. Macgregor, and Jane Mrs David Roberts, Burnbrae.

Again we return with relief to breezy Bushdyke, that another whiff of upland air may be enjoyed.

Alexander, fourth son of that family, was for long after his father's demise grieve at the lime-kilns, and lived with a sister or two, unmarried, in the old home. A droll, pawky old man, it seems, was Sandy. His kindly regard for James Steel, of Falla Mill, a sister's son, was subject of common remark for years afterwards. It was equally evident that the kindness of the uncle was not lost on the nephew, for, from being a modest carrier, he became a successful miller and victual dealer.

An anecdote of Bushdyke Sandy may be told. Being one of the company at a haystack supper, in the course of the homely talk reference was made by some of the speakers to some of their neighbours who were thought to be "gey weel-tae-dae," or the opposite. The subject was immediately changed, when, in a somewhat oracular manner, and as an outcome of his experience in collecting accounts for lime, Sandy said, "Ye may crack as ye like about wha's rich or wha's puir, but as for me I ken a' your circumstances."

Robert, fifth Bushdyke son, was born in 1775, died 1843. It would appear that Blackburn was his first holding, but it is certain that afterwards he lived at Wallhill, his first wife being Jean Walker, and his second Catherine Thomson. There were seven sons—John, unmarried; William, whose son Robert is, or was, a land steward about Inverness; Robert, who also was survived by a family; Alexander, survived by family; James, who died young; Thomas, no record; James, seventh Wallhill son,

still living in Queensland, aged eighty-three years, being the only known representative of his own generation, and probably the oldest survivor among the Blacks of Breich Water. He still writes regularly to some of his friends in Scotland. It may be noted that at present there are five or six female Blacks over eighty years of age. Wallhill daughters were Jean, Helen, and Agnes. There is a simple memorial of this family in Whitburn Churchyard.

William, third Liltie-co-kee son, was in Calderhead Farm, his wife's name being Janet Wallace. Sons—William, Robert, Richard, David. There seems to be good evidence that David, youngest son, was born at Rashierig Farm in 1774, therefore William and his wife must have gone from Calderhead to the former place. William and his wife, Janet Brown, were in Dyke Farm, Cambusnethan, having three sons and three daughters. William was married to Jane Wilson, Mains Farm, Harthill. Robert, second son, married Miss Russell, Uddingston, while Richard, the younger son, was married to Margaret Forsyth, Baton. Of Calderhead second son nothing can be told. Richard, third son, with his wife, Jane Samuel, were in Starrryshaw Farm. Their only son, William, went to America. Their daughter, Agnes, as previously stated, became Mrs John Black, while the other daughter, Jane, was Mrs David Black.

David, fourth Calderhead son, had as his wife, Margaret Thomson, Muirhead, and became proprietor of New Mill, near Allanton. Happy man to be a laird! There were four sons and one daughter, the sons being—William, bachelor; James, whose son, James, and grandson, James, have their home at Allanton still; Richard, and David (bachelor).

The above Richard had two sons, David and William. The former became a sheep farmer at Northlands, Eskdale, New Zealand, with four sons—Richard, Alexander, David,

James, and at least one grandson. David, like many other Scots abroad, loves well the old kindred and homeland. William, Richard's second son, is a merchant, residing with his wife in Hamilton. Mrs Sommerville and Mrs Thomson, Richard's daughters, live, the former in Glasgow, and the latter at Bankhead Farm, Bellshill.

Liltie-co-kee again. David, fourth son, wooed and won the tender heart of Janet Flint, and was a joiner at Crossroads, quite near his old home. Four sons came to cheer the new abode. William, eldest son, a mason, had as his wife, Jane Wood. Of their two sons, David and William, the former was a mason in Longridge, his wife being Jane Black, Starryshaw. Their only son, William, occupies the farm of Easterhouse, Auchengray, having two sons, David and Alexander, and two daughters. David and his wife had two daughters, Jane and Agnes, the latter now Mrs James Tweedie.

William, second son of William Black and Jane Wood, was a tailor in Longridge, married to Elizabeth Hamilton. Their family consisted of four sons and three daughters, Elizabeth, Jane, and Janet. William, eldest son, died unmarried. John Drummond died in Addiewell in 1893, leaving a widow, one daughter, and at least five sons—John, William, Robert, George, and Gavin. David, third son, has, for many years, been time-keeper in the service of Young's Oil Company at Addiewell, having two sons and two daughters. Gavin, with wife and family, lived in Whitburn, until his death several years ago.

Jane, daughter of William, mason, Longridge, was wife of James Crawford, flesher, Longridge, and lived until about ninety years of age, having had two sons and three daughters. Her eldest son, James, became a doctor, and has been in practice in England for many years. John and Isabella are still in Longridge.

James, second Crossroads son, married Catherine

Wilson. There were two sons, James and David. There were three daughters, Janet, Margaret, and Catherine, the latter remaining unmarried. Two daughters of Janet's, and Jane Millar, are still living, while Mrs Lawson, a grand-daughter, lives in Whitburn. Mrs Muir, a daughter of Margaret, with two sons, live in Broxburn, she being now well advanced in years.

John, third Crossroads son, became farmer near Shotts, having as his wife, Isabella Russell, Rosehall. Their grandson, John, was a merchant in Shotts, while James, their son, had as his wife a Miss Gray, from Harthill. A daughter of John and Isabella became wife of Adam Smith, Shotts, and some descendants are still living there. In Whitburn Churchyard is a stone erected by Isabella Russell, mentioned above.

David, fourth son of William, of Crossroads (no mention of home or wife), evidently lived near, perhaps in a vanished home called Crossgates. One of his three daughters became a Mrs Simpson, and one of her sons is Mr John Simpson, presently joiner in Blackridge.

Robert, fifth Liltie-co-kee son, with his wife, Jane Sommerville, lived at Croftfoot. The sons were William, John, James, and one daughter named Martha. William's wife was Margaret Lithgow. They had four sons and three daughters. Robert, the eldest, farmed East Longridge, afterwards going to Milwaukee as a farmer. James became a Canadian farmer, having sons and daughters. One of the sons, James Lawson Black, became a pressman in Trenton, Nebraska. Thomas Porteous, second son of William, had as his wife, Helen, daughter of A. Bryce, Hen-nest. With a family of eight sons and three daughters, they lived at East Whitburn. Four sons became C.R. servants, passing from the lower to the higher grades, with much credit to themselves. William, the eldest, had nine sons and five daughters, several of the

former being railwaymen. Alexander had two sons in railway service. Robert went long ago to Arkansas, served in the civil war, and has filled many public offices. He had many sons and daughters. Thomas went many years ago, as schoolmaster, to Forfarshire, having one son and two daughters. George has long served the C.R. Coy., being now District Superintendent at Aberdeen, having three sons and six daughters living. John, from a humble capacity, became Station Auditor in the C. R. service.

John, second Croftfoot son, married to Janet Strathearn, was tailor in Harthill. There were eight children:—Robert, architect, Glasgow; John, of Bell & Black, match manufacturers, London—John Rankine Black, B.A., Barrister of Inner Temple, being son of last named John Black. William, a joiner, was third Harthill son; Elizabeth came next, then James, followed by Agnes, afterwards by Mary Strathearn, married to Hugh Reid, their descendants being now in Glasgow. The above lady died in 1904, aged eighty-three years. There was a son of John's named Thomas, regarding whom there are no particulars. Robert, a son of James mentioned above, with his family, lives in Glasgow, and possesses many facts, figures, and relics pertaining to his kindred, who, at home and abroad, have earned a goodly share of credit. Various other descendants of John, of Harthill, also have their abode in Glasgow.

James, second Croftfoot son, became tailor and clothier in Trongate, Glasgow. The most notable of his family of sons and daughters was William, who, after beginning his literary career on the staff of the *Glasgow Evening Citizen*, migrated to London, and, as journalist and author of many novels, gained an immortal name as an exponent of Scottish life and scenery. In our own country and in many other countries his books have a deservedly enthusiastic popularity, and are, because of their truth and purity, likely to be always regarded with favour.

“A Daughter of Heth,” “Madcap Violet,” “A Princess of Thule,” “Far Lochaber,” and “Macleod of Dare,” are worthy examples of his literary talent. William Black was a prolific writer, and altogether wrote more than thirty volumes. He died in December, 1898, aged fifty-seven years.

As evidence of how highly he was esteemed in the reading world, a spontaneous effort in Great Britain and the United States led to the erection of a massive stone and lime beacon light on Duart Point, in the Sound of Mull. Sir Wemyss Reid, his biographer, says, “The new beacon casts its rays over the waters where, in Black’s most powerful story, the yacht of Macleod of Dare went down, and all around it are scenes which have not only been described again and again in his glowing pages, but amidst which many of the happiest hours of his own life were spent. It would be difficult to imagine a more appropriate memorial to one whose pen was the first to bring to light the glories of the Hebrides, nor could a more fitting spot have been found on which to place it.” It may be told that some members of the Clan Black are living within view of the William Black Memorial Beacon.

While the tracing of this family tree, or forest of trees, is in some respects interesting, it is with a feeling of relief that we have got to the sixth of those precious sons of William and Mary, of Liltie-co-kee. A little more patience and an anecdote will carry us through.

On one occasion, a woman expressed considerable surprise regarding the swarthy visage of a certain young man. The person she was speaking to listened, and pondered, then said, with an air of importance, “If you promise not to tell, I will give you an explanation—the young man’s mother was a Black.” “What,” said the woman, “a darkie, preserve us a’!” The joke she was the victim of was made known to her when she broke her promise, and

spoke of "the black-a-vised youth whase mither was a darkie."

Alexander, married to Grace Russell, was owner and occupier of Blackfaulds. Even in those primitive days some were rich and some not so rich. Their sons were William, of Bents, and Alexander, of Woodmuir. Janet Cunningham was wife of the former, and Jane Russell was Alexander's wife. At Bents Farm there were three sons and five daughters. Alexander died young. William married Miss Gray, Whiteside, and, presumably, was farmer at Hartwood, West Calder.

John, third Bents son, who married Margaret Murray, Blackbraes, West Calder, was for many years in the G.P.O., Edinburgh, and on retiring had a cottage to live in built at Blackfaulds. One daughter (Mrs A. Martin) and her husband live near that place at present. John's eldest son became a Baillie in Lauder, and was succeeded as tailor and clothier there by a son. Another son is in Dalkeith, and another in San Francisco.

The Bents daughters were Christina, Mrs William Rankin. Her two sons became road surveyors. Of her four daughters, one still lives in Fauldhouse. Mary of Bents became Mrs John Bishop, Midseat, with sons and daughters. Grace was married to Mr Robert Froom, and has descendants surviving. Margaret was wife of Mr James Smith, Blackburn, who died in the summer of 1908, survived by a number of sons and daughters in Blackburn and elsewhere. The Blackfaulds daughters were Mary—Mrs James Turner; Grace—Mrs William Waddell Reeves; and Elizabeth, who became wife of her cousin, John of Crooklands.

Finally—and this item carries us back to the beginning—it should be stated that Mary, daughter of James of Liltie-co-kee, became wife of a Steel of Summerside, near

Morningside, and her descendants are still owners and occupiers of that farm.

While in the foregoing pages some parts may be scanty, it may be stated that, to prevent undue length, some minor details were withheld. A good deal of time and attention has been given to writing and re-writing, and careful use has been made of many particulars supplied a few years ago through the columns of *The Hamilton Advertiser*. Cordial thanks are offered to all who have in any way contributed towards the result now placed before readers of this history.

The Blacks and their near kindred of other names have been, as a rule, industrious and exemplary, and as they mostly have been fair of fame, so mostly fair of face, with eyes of azure blue.

SPEED YE WEEL.

To the Blacks o' Breich Water, and their many descendants.

SPEED ye weel, whaure'er ye bide,
Near haun or far awa',
A' ye wha by Breich Water side
The licht o' day first saw.

Speed ye weel, ye bairnies wee,
Some day ye'll proudly ken
That forbears here on muir an' lea
Strove weel to mak' a fen'.

Speed ye weel, baith young an' auld,
Whate'er may be your name,
Baith lassies fair an' laddies bauld
Whase folk had here their hame.

Speed ye weel, freends ane an' a',
An' think ye whiles wi' pride
On leal auld freends noo lang awa'
Frae dear Breich Water side.

Speed ye weel, an' heed ye weel,
A gude name to uphaud.
Aye "speak the truth an' shame the deil,"
Braw lass an' stalwart lad.

Speed ye weel, a' loyal Scots
Wha lo'e oor peasant race,
That aft in lanely rural cots
Hae shone wi' hamely grace.

Speed ye weel, ye Blacks and Whites,
Reids, Browns, an' Greens, an' Greys,
An' ilka ane wha blithe unites
To sing auld Scotland's praise.