

SIR WILLIAM STEWART OF JEDWORTH, KNIGHT,
ANCESTOR OF THE EARL OF GALLOWAY.

SOME NEW FACTS BEARING ON HIS PROBABLE ORIGIN.

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Though the claim to the male representation of the High Stewards of Scotland was keenly debated at the close of the last century (on the extinction of the Royal male line by the death of Henry Cardinal of York), between Andrew Stuart of Torrance¹ and the then Earl of Galloway, both were in error on an important initial point, as has been long well known in Scotland. Each claimed 'Guillaume Stuart escuyer,' younger brother of Sir John Stuart of Darnley—who were both killed at Orleans in 1429—as his ancestor; Andrew Stuart identifying him with Sir William Stuart of Castelmilk, knight, Warden of the West March of Scotland in 1398, quite a different person; Lord Galloway, on the other hand, maintaining that he was the same as his ancestor Sir William Stewart of Jedworth or Teviotdale—also an error, as this Sir William was executed soon after his capture at Homildon hill in 1402, (unjustly as the Scottish historians say) on account of alleged treason to England, while that country was in possession of Roxburghshire, where his estate lay. As the precise descent of this knight from the main stem seems not conclusively established, and he is the undoubted male ancestor of Lord Galloway, the question is an interesting one, for if Sir William's male descent from one of the younger sons of Bonkill can be proved, Lord Galloway must be the representative of the High Stewards of Scotland before their alliance with the Crown.

Though a Sir John the Steward² appears three several times on the Ragman Roll in 1296, first as 'brother of James the Steward of Scotland,' a second time as 'of Lanarkshire,' and a third time as 'of Jeddeworthe,' it is believed that under these several styles, only one Sir John is indicated. While the difference in style is singular in the case of a magnate of his rank (though there are examples of others, of lower status no doubt, who held lands in different counties, being repeated on the Roll) there is no further occurrence of any Sir John Steward, after his death at Falkirk in 1298, for more than a generation.³ His sons were all young at their father's

¹ A notable man. He was one of the guardians of the Duke of Hamilton in the 'Douglas Cause,' and wrote the well-known letters to Lord Mansfield.

² Usually called 'of Bonkill,' as his wife was the heiress, though he never possessed it, for his father-in-law, Sir Alexander Bonkill of Bonkill, survived him.

³ There was, it must be admitted, a "Johannes Senescall' de Jedd" *ballivus* of the Abbot of Kelso in 1323, who has puzzled inquirers not a little, as he stands quite alone on record. (*Liber de Culchou*, p. 350.)

death, and were still minors in 1304,¹ the eldest, Alexander, being the only one I have noticed on record during the reign of Robert Bruce (1306-1329), certainly not earlier in the reign than 1311 or 1312. Sir John had five sons, and one daughter Isabel, wife of the celebrated Thomas Randolph earl of Moray. With one exception the succession of these sons is well-known. (1) Sir Alexander Stewart of Bonkill, ancestor of the Earls of Angus, whose line ended in female succession. (2) Sir Alan Stewart of Dreg-horn, ancestor of the Earls and Dukes of Lennox, whose male line has failed. (3) Sir Walter Stewart of Dalswinton, whose male line has long failed, but who is represented in the female line by the Earl of Galloway. (4) Sir James Stewart of Preston and Warwick hill, ancestor of the Dukes of Athol, Earls of Buchan and Traquair. His male line is also extinct. We now come to the 5th and last brother Sir John. Lord Galloway's lineage, in Sir B. Burke's *Peerage* (ed. 1873) calls him 4th son, and styles him 'of Jedburgh.' It is immaterial whether he was 4th or 5th, as the male line of the others has failed. But the addition 'of Jedburgh' is not given him in Wood's Douglas's *Peerage of Scotland* (art. "Angus"). He is there called 5th son, and said to have been killed at Halidon hill in 1333. It is added that David Symson² says of him—"of whose issue I have discovered nothing from charters." I may say, however, that on looking the other day in Playfair's *British Family Antiquity* (1809) vol. iii, p. 574 (art. "Galloway")—he styles this Sir John, 'of Jedworth,' and '4th son of Sir John of Bonkill.' Playfair is an author of little authority, and moreover, contradicts himself in this instance on the same page. He first makes the grandson of this Sir John Stewart of 'Jedburgh' marry the heiress of Dalswinton (which would prove Lord Galloway's case out of hand); while a few lines below, the heiress of Dalswinton is married to the same person, now called 'her cousin,' and 'son of Sir Alexander Stuart of Darnley, the grandson of Sir Alexander of Darnley and Dreg-horn, second son of Sir John of Bonkill.' And this after saying in the outset of the article, that Lord Galloway does not claim the representation of the Royal Stewarts, or of the Lennox family—the latter being the same as Darnley. It should be observed here that Crawford, in 'Remarks on the Ragman Roll' (Nisbet's *Heraldry*), says that a John Stewart of Jedburgh was bailie of the Abbot of Kelso in 1323, whom he takes to be the youngest son of Sir John of Bonkill killed at Falkirk in 1298, and ancestor of Lord Galloway.³

Though I have consulted the Scottish Exchequer Rolls of the

¹ "Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland," vol. ii, Pref. p. lviii.

² Historiographer Royal for Scotland, who wrote a *History of the Stewarts*, in the beginning of last century; a curious little book.

³ In his MS. *History of the Galloway family* (quoted in Andrew Stuart's *History*), he says so with more detail, adding that he got Jedworth from his father.

period, I do not find anything in addition to the above. But I have some ground for thinking that there is evidence in existence tending to fill up the *hiatus* between Sir John Stewart 4th (or 5th) son of Bonkill—born before 1298, and living say till about 1350, the period of a generation—and Sir William of Jedworth. This Sir John, styled 'of Jedworth' by Crawford and Playfair (on the authority no doubt of the Kelso Register) is said by Douglas, as has been observed, to have been killed at Halidon in 1333. Lord Hailes¹ confirms the fact that a John Stewart fell there, adding in a note that he was styled of 'Daldon,' a place not known to me. The death of a John Stewart at this time is also confirmed by an original roll of 1336, where the 20*l.* lands of Thornton within the Barony of Innerwick in Haddingtonshire, lately John Stewart's, are said to be in the king's (*i.e.* Edward III.) hand, with the ward of his heir, a minor. Now, who was this John Stewart and what became of the heir? The fact of his holding land in the barony of Innerwick argues some not distant connection with the Stewards of Darnley or Crookston, to whom the barony belonged at that time, though it afterwards was carried by an heiress to a branch of the Hamiltons of Cadzow.

There are also several original documents in existence, which I have seen, shewing that, between 1349 and 1361, a John Stewart flourished in the county of Roxburgh, then belonging to England in whole or part; and in one of these he is said to have possessed lands called 'Easter Softlawe' in that county, evidently under the King of England.

This suggests some new considerations. In the 'true account' drawn out by Andrew Stuart ("History of the Stewarts," *Supplement*) of Lord Galloway's ancestry, he sets down John Stewart of Jedworth, bailie of the Abbot of Kelso, as son of Sir John of Bonkill, and gives as the link between him and Sir William Stewart of Jedworth, a 'John de Foresta,' a Scottish esquire who had a safe conduct to England in 1368 (*Fœdera*), who was the only likely person then known—'Foresta,' it was thought, being another expression for 'Jedworth.' But I venture to think that 'John Stewart of Easter Softlawe' may take the place of 'John de Foresta,' to good purpose, for several reasons. If John Stewart of Jedworth, bailie of the Abbot of Kelso, was a son of Bonkill, John of Softlawe might well be *his* son. These lands are close to Kelso, on the opposite side of the Tweed, and also within a few miles of Jedworth, and their owner held the office of Sergeant of the Easter Ward of Teviotdale. Further than this, a charter in the *Register of the Great Seal* (p. 103, No. 42, ed. 1814), connects this John of Softlawe directly with a William Stewart of Softlawe, his son, or at least successor. This is a grant by Robert II. to Sir John Maxwell, Knight, of the lands of Softlawe in the barony of Maxwell (opposite Kelso), which had

¹ Annals of Scotland, ed. 1797 (vol. iii, app. xii.)

been forfeited by William Stewart for dwelling at the allegiance of Edward III. This charter is dated Arc, 11 Nov., 1373. It is no improbable conjecture that this William Stewart, thus expatriated from the Scottish part of Roxburghshire, became owner of part of Jedworth Forest under the Percies, then its lords. That later on in that reign he returned to his native allegiance, and, as 'Sir William Stewart of Jedworth,' became an eminent public official and border warrior, doing much damage to the English under the banner of his relative, the second Archibald Earl of Douglas. With him he was at last made prisoner at Homildon in 1402, and while the Earl joined his conqueror Percy in rebellion against Henry IV., the Knight was arraigned as a traitor, and suffered death, through the personal hostility of Percy, with another borderer, Thomas Ker, as the poet Wyntoun relates.¹

The facts thus brought together tally with what is known of Sir William Stewart—that in his youth he had been an English subject, naturally enough, too, if his father was one; and that he does not appear *prominently* till late in Robert II.'s reign. Whether this is due to his immediate ancestors being comparatively obscure, contrasted with the other branches of Bonkill, or to the scarcity of Roxburghshire title deeds, that county having been so often ravaged in the Border wars, it is not easy to say. But he comes forth somewhat suddenly as a man of considerable distinction, about 1385, and having had a son married about 1396, it may be concluded he himself was born about 1350.

It is to be hoped that farther research in Border charter chests may enable an expert to place the Galloway representation of the High Stewards on an unassailable foundation, a result which would afford much pleasure to the writer of these lines, among others.

The House of Galloway has contributed many brave men to the service of their country, as its annals shew. Of these none will fill a more honourable place in the family history than the lamented Sir Herbert Stewart, whose early death the British army, and, indeed, the nation, are now mourning. He was the great-grandson of John, the 7th Earl, and thus, second cousin to Alan, the present Earl. His name will occupy no undistinguished place on the Roll of Fame with that of the heroic Gordon, in the attempt to rescue whom he closed his own too brief career.

¹ Schir William Stewart of Tivydaill
That day was taen in that battaill,
And ane uthir gale Squyeir,
That he name was callit Thomas Ker.
This Schir Henry de Percy
Thai twa deinan[d]lyt unlaucherally,
As in jugement sittand he
Gart thir twa accusit be,
That thir twa before then

Had been the King of Inglonde's men,
And armyt agane him; forthi
Thai wer accusit of tratory.

And by this accusaciounne,
Of dede thai tholit the passiounne.
And of thair quarteris he gart be set,
Sum intill York, upon the yett.

Cronykil of Scotland.