THE ABERNETHY FAMILY.

The following notes contain some information about the family of Abernethy, which in later days attained the Peerage under the title of Lord Abernethy of Saltoun. The descent as given in Douglas' Peerage and in those writers who draw their information from that source, is hopelessly at variance with facts.

Starting with Laurence Abernethy, who flourished during the first half of the thirteenth century, we find him described as the son of Orm in a charter that he grants to the Abbey of Balmerinoch in Fife. This Orm is said to have been a son of Hugh. Whether this Orm gave his name to the parish of Ormiston, in East Lothian, a neighbouring parish to that of Saltoun, with which his descendants became identified in after days, or not, we have as yet no information. The lands of Ormiston appear to have been carried by marriage to a branch of the Lindsays, and an heiress of that house, *c.* 1368, carried the lands to the Cockburns, which family owned the property till the middle of the eighteenth century.

From the *Liber Vitæ* of Durham, we find that the wife of Laurence was called Derweorguile, but of what family she was we do not know. In the charter referred to above, by Laurence to Balmerinoch, his wife is mentioned, but not by name; the date must be about 1231-32, as William Bishop of Glasgow witnesses the deed as Chancellor of Scotland. Laurence Abernethy's son was a hostage in 1213 for the King of Scots to King John of England, and Laurence himself was a pledge for King Alexander to King Henry III of England in 1244. Laurence appears to have died sometime before 1257, as Hugh Abernethy, presumably his son, entered into a treaty with Lewelin, Prince of Wales, and other Welsh Lords, in March 1258-9. It is quite possible that the various references to Laurence Abernethy may be to two men of that name, probably father and son, who flourished in succession.

Hugh Abernethy appears as Sheriff of Roxburgh in 1264, and had married before 1280 Maria, as in that year Pope Martin IV granted a Dispensation. This narrates how they [Hugh and Maria] being "ignorant of their relationship had married and had had many children born to them," the Dispensation granted that, notwithstanding, the marriage should stand and the children be legitimate. This Maria, according to Mr. Bain,[1] was Maria, Queen of Man, and widow of Malise (II), Earl of Stratherne. Hugh Abernethy died before 1290, when his widow Maria remarried Sir William Fitzwarin, who died in 1299; Maria herself died in 1303.

Alexander Abernethy, eldest son of Hugh, and almost certainly of Maria, had two daughters, Mary, who married David Lindesay about 1325, and Margaret, who married John Stewart of Bonkill, from the Papal Dispensation in 1328. The name of the wife of Alexander Abernethy is not known. His two daughters carried the representation of the Abernethys to their husband's families.

[1] Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland.

One of these, the Lindesays, for many generations bore the *Lion rampant debruised with a ribbon* of Abernethy, quartered with the proper Lindesay bearing of a *Fess chequée.*

The male representation now went to William Abernethy, next brother of Alexander, who granted Ulkiliston to Dryburgh Abbey in 1273. He died before 1296, when Margaret, his widow, pays homage to Edward I of England [Ragman Roll]. William left two sons, William, his heir, and Laurence, Lord of Maxpoffle, who in 1334 defeated Edward, according to the "Chronicon of Lauercost," but on his joining Balliol was forfeited by Bruce. William Abernethy, the heir, left two sons, William, who seems to have died young, as a charter of Laurence Abernethy, of Maxpoffle, to Melrose, is witnessed by "Willelmo fratre meo, Willelmo filio ei et herede, nepote meo," and George, who carried on the line. George was taken prisoner at the disastrous battle of Neville's Cross, 17th October 1346, when so many Scottish lords fell, and where King David was captured by John Coupeland. George Abernethy had two sons, George, the heir, who appears as a witness to deeds in 1384, and in 1392 resigned the lands of Minto to Stewart of Jedburgh. John, the second son, gets letters of safe conduct in 1371 and 1381 from the English King on his going to Prussia [Rotuli Scotiæ].

This George Abernethy appears to have had only one son, William, who married Maria, daughter of the Duke of Albany. William granted joint-sasine of his Banffshire lands to Maria in 1404, the marriage having taken place some years before. William Abernethy fell at the battle of Harlaw in 1411, when the Highlanders under Donald, Lord of the Isles, were defeated by the Barons of Mar, Buchan and Angus. This battle may be looked upon as the last attempt of the Celts to wrest the supremacy of Scotland from the Teutons.

William Abernethy and Maria Stewart had William, who carried on the succession, Patrick, who appears as "our dear nephew" in a charter by Robert, Duke of Albany, in 1413, and Oswald, who appears as owner of Tenside and Harewood in 1446, and whose son John Abernethy is called as one of the substitute heirs in a deed of entail 1482, Oswald then being dead.

William witnesses a deed in 1413 [General Register House] and married Margaret, daughter of William Borthwick of Borthwick, sometime before December 1413, as in that year she gets a confirmation of Buteland in Edinburgh. Laurence, the son of William Abernethy and Margaret Borthwick, witnesses a deed as Lord of Saltoun in 1434, in 1440 was Bailie of Lauderdale, and in 1445 was created a Peer as Lord Abernethy of Saltoun.

Lord Abernethy's marriage seems to be unknown, and he died before 1460, when William, his eldest son, succeeded as the second lord, his other children were James [third lord], George, and Archibald, who died before 1482 leaving a son Thomas.

William, second Lord Abernethy, married Isobell Borthwick, and died in 1488, when James, his next brother, succeeded; his widow survived till the end of 1493. William, the second lord, is said

to have died childless, but from a law process it is proved that he left two daughters, Christian, who married Sir John Wemyss of Strathordill, and another daughter, who married Ogiston of Ogiston, and whose only daughter Elizabeth, married Sir Adam Hepburn of Craigs, brother of Patrick, Earl of Bothwell. James, third lord, was retoured in 1488, and had Alexander, fourth lord, Mathew, Robert and William. James resigned in March 1491 the lands of Saltoun, Glencorse, Ugston and Lialston in Lothian, Redy in Forfar, Rothiemay in Banff, etc., in favour of Alexander, his son and heir apparent, reserving his own life-interest and a sufficient terce for his widow.

Alexander, fourth lord, was succeeded by his eldest son William, fifth lord, in 1528, who married about 1536 Elizabeth, daughter of John, Lord Hay of Yester. They had Alexander, sixth lord, and William Abernethy of Byrness, in Buchan; a daughter Elizabeth, married John Innes of that Ilk. Lord Abernethy had in 1579 an action against John Innes to compel him to receive Elizabeth, his daughter, and wife of the said John. The recreant husband's reply was that he would receive her when the tocher promised was paid.[1]

Alexander, sixth lord, got sasine in 1551, and married Lady Alison Keith, daughter of Lord Marischal. Of this marriage there were George, seventh lord, Alexander of Lessendrum, and Elizabeth, who married John, Lord Glamis.

George, seventh lord, married Margaret Stewart, second daughter of John, Earl of Athol. She renounced her terce in certain lands in 1614.

John, eighth lord, was retoured to his father in the Banff lands in 1601.

Alexander, ninth lord, was son of John (eighth), by his second wife, he was born in 1611, and died childless in 1669.

The estates had been wasted and sold by the last three lords, and Alexander was practically bankrupt. The title was continued to Sir Alexander Fraser, who was descended from Margaret, a daughter of George (seventh lord).[2] This was a new creation, as there were various male descendants of several of the earlier peers who could have claimed the title. Abernethy of Moyen, seems actually to have taken some steps to have his claims put forward, but dropped it owing to some arrangement come to with the Frasers. He, however, left the mark of cadency out of his arms, and assumed the Abernethy arms pure and simple, thus claiming to be chief of that name.

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[1] Original Protocol Book at Haddington.
[2] The present Lord Saltoun is descended from Sir Alexander Fraser.