

## The Scottish Nation Nasmyth

NASMYTH, a surname, formerly and properly Naesmyth. The family tradition accounts for the origin and spelling of the name by the following romantic incident. In the reign of Alexander III., the ancestor of the family, being in attendance on the king, was, on the eve of a battle, required by him to repair his armour. Although a man of great stature and power, he was unsuccessful. After the battle, having performed prodigies of valour, he was knighted by the king, with the remark that "although he was nae Smith, he was a brave gentleman." The armorial bearings of the family have reference to this origin of the name, viz., a drawn sword between two war hammers or "martels" broken, with the motto, "Non arteseo marte, in old Scotch, "Not by knaverie but by braverie," (arte and knavery meaning skill, not cunning). Naesmyth of Posso is the head of this ancient family, being descended from the stalwart knight of the legend.

The Naesmyths of Posso, created baronets of Nova Scotia, have held lands in Tweeddale since the 13th century. Their ancestor, Sir Michael Naesmyth, fought in the wars with Bruce. Another Sir Michael Naesmyth was chamberlain to the archbishop of St. Andrews, and obtained, in 1544, in marriage with Elizabeth, daughter of John Baird of Posso, the estate of that name in Peebles-shire. He was a staunch adherent of Queen Mary, and the tower of Posso was frequently inhabited by her on hawking excursions. It was fitted up for her reception by her royal mother, Mary of Guise, from the palace at Leith. The tower was burnt down in the reign of Charles I., and is now a ruin. Sir Michael Naesmyth fought on Queen Mary's side at Langside in the year 1568. He was subsequently banished, and his property confiscated by the regent Moray. He died at an advanced age in 1609. His second son, John, was chief chirurgian to James VI., and to the king of France. "Johne Nesmith, chirurgian," was by chance riding beside King James, as he was hunting at Falkland on 5th August 1600, the morning of the Gowrie conspiracy catastrophe, when Alexander Ruthven came to his majesty, and was the person sent by the king to bring Ruthven back, after he had spoken with him, to say that he had determined to proceed to the earl of Gowrie's house at Perth, in search of some imaginary treasure, as soon as the chase was ended. He died at London in 1613, and in his last will he bequeathed his "hert to his young maister the prince's grace," meaning Henry, prince of Wales. His son, James Naesmyth of Posso, was falconer to James VI. The royal eirie of Posso Craig is on the family estate, and the lure worn by Queen Mary and James, presented to him by the latter, is preserved as an heirloom.

James Naesmyth, sheriff of Peebles-shire, son of the falconer, was a member of the Scottish parliament in 1627. Under his sheriffship the last "weaponshaw" was held for the county of Peebles on the Sheriff's muir. His eldest son, James Naesmyth, an eminent lawyer, was known as "the deil o' Dawick," that is, Dalwick, the family seat. He died in 1706. A younger son of James the Sheriff was a loyal gentleman; having raised a troop of horse, he served under Claverhouse in behalf of the royal cause. The deed signed by Charles II. at Windsor is in the family charter chest. Another Naesmyth (John,) fought at the battle of Preston. His claymore, inlaid with gold, bearing on one side, "For God, my Country and King, James the Eight," and on the other, "Prosperitie to Scotland and Nae Union," is retained in the family.

The lawyer's son, Sir James Naesmyth, was created a baronet of Nova Scotia 31st July 1706, with limitation to his heirs male. On his death in 1720, his eldest son, Sir James Naesmyth, M.P., became the second baronet. He distinguished himself by his improvements and plantations on the estate of Dalwick, and is described by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, as "a gentleman of much scientific acquirement. He was a pupil of Linnaeus, and studied under him in Norway. In addition to his own ordinary gardens, he created others for extensive botanical collections, with greenhouses for rare plants; and on these he put the strikingly appropriate motto: 'Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these,'" In 1735 he planted an avenue of silver-firs at Dalwick, most of the trees of which are nearly of equal magnitude. He had traveled into Switzerland and Italy, and was the first who brought over and planted the larch in Scotland, which he did in 1725, some years before the Duke of Athole. He died 4th February 1779. He had two sons. The elder, Sir James Naesmyth, 3d baronet, married in 1785, Eleanor, 2d daughter of John Murray, Esq. of Philiphaugh. When a child, this lady was saved from the flames of Hangingshaw castle, on its accidentally catching fire, by being let down in a basket through a window. Sir James died Dec. 4, 1829.

His only son, Sir John Murray Naesmyth, 4th baronet, born at Dalwick, Dec. 30, 1803, was educated at Rugby, and greatly exceeded his grandfather's example, in improving the beauty of the family seat. He married, 1st, Mary, 4th daughter of Sir John Marjoribanks, 1st baronet of Lees, issue, 5 sons and 1 daughter; 2dly, Hon. Eleanor Powys, daughter of Thomas, 2d Lord Lilford, issue, a son and a daughter. The eldest and only surviving son, James, of the Bengal civil service, born Feb. 9, 1827, married Eliza Gordon Brodie, eldest daughter of F. Whitworth Russell, Esq., Bengal civil service, 2d son of Sir Henry Russell, Bart. of Swallowfield, chief justice of India.