

At the Sign of the Crest"

MACKINTOSH COAT-OF-ARMS

By MABEL LOUISE KEECH



MacIntosh

TO the Highlander especially, there is no name so dear as that of his clan, no garb so grandly beautiful as that in which his ancestors fought against the invader in the renowned days of old. In fancy he marches under the banner of his chief; the pipes ring out in their wild and thrilling music; the old familiar war-cry makes the mountains tremble, and the tartan is perhaps steeped in the blood of the brave." This paragraph from one of W. & K. Johnston's little books on the Scottish clans, tartans and Armes, will find an echo in the heart of many a reader.

The name MacIntosh, or Mackintosh, in only one of such names, and if we were of Scottish birth, and had a book instead of a page, we could record countless traditions and customs of this bonnie land.

The Mackintosh and MacPherson septa are of the Celtic "Clan Chattan." In 1337, William MacKintosh was Captain of Clan Chattan, and Malcolm Mackintosh was first "chief-in-line" of his sept in 1430. Chief Lachlan died childless in 1731, and for a 100 years no son succeeded his father as a Mackintosh chief. The story goes that this was a curse placed on the Chief by a jilted lady!

Brac Lochaber, Badenoch, and Strathnair comprise the Mackintosh country; the boxwood or red whortle is the badge; Loch Moigh (Loch of the Plain) the slogan. The tartan, of course, can not be described—only appreciated when seen!

Mackintosh—He beareth for Arms:

Quarterly, 1st, or a lion rampant gules; 2nd, argent a dexter hand fesseways couped at the wrist and holding a human heart gules; 3rd, azure a boar's head couped argent; 4th, or a lymphad sable surmounted by two oars in saltire gules. Crest—A cat-a-mountain salient guardant

proper. Supporters—Two cats proper. Motto—"Touch not the cat but a glove."

Glossary

Quarterly, shield divided into 4 equal parts by a horizontal and a vertical line. 1st, upper right quarter (as on holds the shield). Or, gold. Rampant, on one foot, 1 foot passing the air. Gules, red. 2nd, upper left quarter. Argent, silver. Dexter, right. Fesseways, horizontally. Couped, cut straight off. 3rd, lower right quarter. Azure, blue. 4th, lower left quarter. Lymphad, sail boat with oars. Sable, black. In saltire, crossed diagonally. Cat-a-mountain, wild cat. Salient, springing. 2 hind feet on the ground. Guardant, looking toward you. "Proper," of natural color.

Color-Code

Gold, dotted; red, vertical lines; silver, plain; blue, horizontal lines; black, crossed lines, or solid black; "proper," naturally drawn and shaded.

Interpretation

The lion, king of beasts, is emblematical of service to his country, and fearless courage.

The hand is the pledge of faith, sincerity and justice, the heart, the symbol of charity.

Traditional as the main dish of the festive board, particularly at Christmas time, the boar's head is awarded for great hospitality. Although granted to the Lord Chief Justice, it does not always have that significance.

Many Scottish families bear the lymphad, as they were noted for their seamanship. All symbols of the sea, indicate that the bearer was engaged in some notable expedition on the waters.

While the cat, or cat-a-mountain designates liberty, vigilance, forecast, and courage, in this instance it is an example of the interesting and popular custom of "canting" or "singing" Arms, the symbol singing or speaking forth the name of the bearer. Thus, Clan Chattan is granted the cat.

"Touch not the cat without a glove," is this motto. In some books it is written with the word "but" instead of "but", which is not correct.

Helmet and Mantling

Pictured here is the helmet of the 15th century, with the pointed nose-piece or visor. The mantling, or scarf which covers the armour to protect the knight from sun's rays, his armour from rust, and to toll the enemy's sword, is usually drawn to fall down on either side of the shield, but when supporters are present, the artist paints it as flowing straight out and up from the helmet, so as not to hide the supporters. The mantling must be red lined gold—the main color lined with the main metal in a

quartered shield, using the tincture of the 1st quarter.

Supporters

In all countries, "Supporters" are royal grants, awarded by the sovereign for noble or outstanding achievement that have come to his attention. It was the custom at tournaments for a page or squire to hold the shields of the knights competing. And, for a long period, these guardians of the Arms dressed in grotesque costumes, simulating wild or fabulous animals, birds, men of the woods, etc., etc. Thus, when supporters were inaugurated as the royal grant, such symbols were used—never an inanimate object.

Scotland has quite different regulations in regard to the right of using supporters than other parts of the British Isles. Pages are written about these, difficult to reduce to a few lines, and always so fraught with exceptions as to be almost impossible to make clear. We quote partially from Fox-Davies' "A Complete Guide to Heraldry." Those entitled to supporters: (1) Peers of Scotland, and other peers who are domiciled Scotsmen. (2) Knights of the Garter, of the Thistle, of St. Patrick. (3) Knights of the Bath. (4) Knights Grand Cross of the Bath, of St. Michael and St. George, Grand Commanders of the Orders of the Star of India. (5) Lawful heirs of the minor barons. (6) is the most important difference between Scotland and other parts of the Empire. "There are certain others, being chiefs of clans and heirs of those to whom grants have been made in the past, who also have the rights, but as no new claim is likely to be recognized in the future, it may be taken that these are confined to those cases which have been already entered in the Lyon Register."

This last sentence tells the story of the reason of so many more supporters being in use among the Scotsmen than among those of other sections.

Similar Symbols

The quartering of Arms with certain symbols which are the same for different clans, is also a very common usage in the Highlands. Each of the four main symbols pictured here is found in other quartered Arms. For instance, the rampant in MacLachlan, the lymphad in Campbell, the boar's head in Gordon. The hand holding a cross is more common than holding a heart. MacPherson also has the cat-a-mountain, in different position, as the crest; and that sept, and other clans, have the same motto. The friendships following feuds, and intermarriages, are shown in this interchange of symbols and mottoes.