

CHAPTER X

PORTRACK

THIS branch of the Clan Carruthers claim descent from Carruthers of Fourteen Aikers, who in turn are supposed to be an early offshoot of Holmains. There is not, however, enough evidence to warrant a descent from Holmains, indeed the progenitor of this branch would rather seem to be descended from Dormont.

The lands of Fourteen Aikers in spite of its name amounted to a 3-merk land, or a 40/- land, and lay in Dalton Parish. From a very early date they belonged to Holmains. In 1571 a John Carruthers in Fourteen Aikers witnessed a Holmains Sasine.¹ He was clearly a tenant as must have been the William Carruthers of Fourteen Aikers who served on a Holmains Inquisition in 1583.² The last named may perhaps be identified with the William Carruthers, merchant burgess of Dumfries, "pretendit tenant of the 40/- land called Fourteen Aikers" who was summoned to remove from those lands by Nicolas Jardine, Lady Holmains, in 1616.³ By 1631 Francis Carruthers was the tenant.⁴

In 1662 Mr. William Carruthers of Fourteen Aikers was cautioner for John Carruthers of Holmains, though who he was and what interest he had in Fourteen Aikers is by no means clear.⁵ His interest must have terminated in 1666, for on May 26 of that year John Carruthers of Holmains leased Fourteen Aikers to John Carruthers of Dormont for the space of twenty-one years at a rent of £60 Scots.⁶ Two years later, the rent not being paid, Holmains obtained letters of Horning against Dormont.⁷ By 1689 Fourteen Aikers was tenanted by John Dinwoodie and John Ker.⁸ In April of that year the Laird of Holmains wadsett Fourteen Aikers for the sum of £1,086 4/- Scots to John Carruthers in Twathats⁹ who was the undoubted ancestor of Portrack.⁹

¹ Cal. of Holmains Writs, No. 30. ² Ibid., Nos. 37 and 38. ³ Ibid., No. 59

⁴ Ibid., No. 67. ⁵ Ibid., No. 100. ⁶ Ibid., No. 116.

⁷ Ibid., No. 121. ⁸ Dumfries Reg. Sas., 2nd Ser., Vol. iv, fo. 476.

⁹ Cal. of Holmains Writs, No. 148. Twathats was part of the lands of Knocks

According to the custom of those days John Carruthers in Twathats would take actual possession of Fourteen Aikers as security for his loan in the absence of any agreement to the contrary. This is what actually happened until 1710 when the wadsett was paid off and John Carruthers in Fourteen Aikers gave renunciation thereof to George Carruthers of Holmains.¹⁰ John Carruthers only survived this renunciation for four years, dying in February 1714. In his Testament he is described as John Carruthers in Twathats, thereafter in Mouswald.¹¹ His wife and family are not mentioned in that document. His eldest son, John Carruthers, had borrowed 700 merks from him in 1698 and in 1706 had married¹² Janet Johnstone, eldest daughter to the late Archibald Johnstone, wadsetter of Holmains,¹³ receiving from his father an assignment of the bond for 700 merks and other debts. In 1734 this John Carruthers described as "sometime of Fourteen Aikers" obtained sasine on apprising in the 20/- lands of Newlands, Ingleston and others in the parish of Kelton, appraised from Anna and Marianna, sisters and heiresses of Robert Johnstone of Kelton by William Veitch, W.S., who disposed to Carruthers.¹⁴ Two months later as "now of Ingleston", John Carruthers infeft his wife Janet in the 3-merk land of Craigley under his marriage contract¹⁵ and in 1736 gave a heritable bond for £350 sterling on this property to Francis Carruthers of Whitecroft.¹⁶ At that time he was living in Mouswald Place.

For the later generations of this family see the accompanying chart, mainly compiled from family notes and other sources by Mrs. Carruthers of Portrack, who is better known in the literary and political world by her maiden name—Violet Markham.

in the parish of Dalton, the superiority of which was acquired in 1659 from John Crichton of St. Leonards by John Carruthers of Dormont (Dumfries Reg. Sas., Vol. vii, fo. 119).

¹⁰ Dumfries Reg. Sas., 2nd Ser., Vol. vii, fo. 457.

¹¹ Dumfries Testaments. Recorded on February 24, 1731.

¹² Marriage Contract dated April 28, 1706 (see above Testament).

¹³ On February 22, 1689, Archibald and George Johnstones, brothers, in Hoddamstanes and William Johnstone in Slork, merchant travellers in England; were infeft in the mains and manor house of Holmains under reversion for 10,000 merks Scots (Holmains Writs, No. 147). Renunciation followed in 1719 by Joseph Johnstone, eldest son of Archibald, and by the said William in Slork then still alive (Dumfries Reg. Sas., 2nd Ser., Vol. ix, fo. 172).

¹⁴ Ibid., Vol. xi, Part 2, fo. 300. The lands were—Meikle Ingleston, 20/- lands of Newlands, 3-merk land of Craigley, 3-merk land of Westquarter and Summer-shields, with others on warrandice.

¹⁵ Ibid., fo. 310.

¹⁶ Dumfries Reg. Sas., February 20, 1736.