RULE WATER
AND ITS PEOPLE
An Account of the Valley of the Rule and its Inhabitants

BY
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LATE 17th LANCERS AND ROYAL SCOTS GREYS
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'THE ANNALS OF A BORDER CLUB'

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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CHAPTER IV

WOLFELEE

The lands and residence of Wolle or Woollee, now Wolfelee, from their outlying situation in the forest of Jedburgh, were exposed to much danger in Border warfare. They had, however, a safe guard in the neighbouring fortalice and strong tower of Wauchope, which was occupied by a notorious family of Turnbulls who were a terror to English raiders. In the year 1496, the lord of the regality of Jedwood Forest was William Douglas, fifth Earl of Angus, and Woollee was within the confines of his territory. As a reward for the good services of his armour-bearer and 'beloved Esquire,' David Hume, he bestows upon him the lands of 'Wolle and Wolhopelee' for his 'services done and to be done to him.'

It is said that David Hume had an elder brother, Alexander, of whom the following story is related by Godcroft. In 1424 when Douglas, who had been created Duke of Touraine in France, was about to sail for that country with his retainers, among whom was David Hume of Wedderburn, Alexander Hume came to see him sail for his destination. Douglas could not restrain his sorrow at parting with his friend and companion-in-arms, and embracing Hume, said he had not thought that anything would have parted them. 'Well, then,' said Hume, reciprocating the like emotion, 'nothing ever shall.' David was left behind, lest in the event of a reverse both should fall. At the battle of Verneuil Douglas and Hume were slain. Sir David Hume of Wedderburn, who was married and had two sons, David and Alexander, is said to have tended carefully the interests of his brother who took his place in the French expedition. Sir David died in 1467, and his eldest son David, who married Elizabeth Carmichael, predeceased him. By her he left two sons, George and Patrick. This George succeeded his grandfather in the Wedderburn estates, and also as second laird of Woollee.

These two young men fell in love with two sisters, daughters of John St. Clair of Herdmanstoun, who died leaving these girls joint heiresses. Their uncle, who acted as their guardian, did all in his power to prevent their matrimonial intentions, and as a last

1 Historical MSS. Commission Reports.
resource he carried them off to Herdmanstoun Castle, and there the maidens were shut up by him, and every care taken to prevent their lovers from communicating with them. Their uncle found this a more difficult task than he anticipated. The young ladies succeeded in conveying the tidings of their imprisonment to the Humes, who lost no time in summoning their retainers and riding across the hills to the rescue. Investing the castle of Herdmanstoun, they demanded their lady loves, who after some parley on the part of their uncle, were surrendered, and, with no unwillingness on their part, were carried back whence they came, where the brothers married them and divided their lands between them, Patrick, the progenitor of the Humes of Polwarth, marrying Margaret, and George, his elder brother, Mariota. The mother of these two sisters was Catherine Home, sister of Alexander, Lord Home. George of Wedderburn and Woollee was killed in an encounter with the English in 1497. He left two sons by Mariota: David, his successor, and John. Sir David Home of Wedderburn, knight, succeeded his father, and married Isabella Hoppringle, obtaining all the lands his father held, Woollee among the number. By this alliance eight sons were born, of whom seven were of sufficient age to accompany their father to the fatal field of Flodden in 1513. Here Sir David and his son George were slain. Their surviving retainers bore the lairds of Wedderburn, elder and younger, from the field of battle wrapped in the Wedderburn banner for burial. According to tradition it was again employed, when the like catastrophe for the second time overtook the house of Wedderburn at the ’Drove of Dunbar,’ 3rd September 1650, on which occasion father and son, in this also an eldest son and bearing the same names, Sir David and George, fell on the battlefield.

David Home, on the death of his father and elder brother, became possessed of all the family estates, together with that of Woollee in Jedforest, of which he was fourth laird. His career was somewhat short. He became involved with Archibald, sixth Earl of Angus, in his efforts to retain possession of the young King James V. David Home had married this Earl’s sister, Alison Douglas, the widow of Robert Blackadder, younger of that Ilk, who had been slain at Flodden. On Angus being forced to take refuge in England, much trouble ensued to the Homes. Lord Home was executed for treason, and his brother William, prior of Coldingham, was assassinated by the Hepburns. In revenge, David Home of Wedderburn slew De la Bastie, the Frenchman whom the Regent Albany had installed at Home Castle as Warden of the

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1 A portion of this old historic flag was discovered in a tattered and bloodstained condition in an old iron-bound chest at Wedderburn Castle in 1822, and steps have now been taken to preserve what remains of it.
Eastern Marches, and placed his head on the top of the castle. He managed in some manner to make his peace with Albany, and he assisted the Regent at the siege of Wark, and so signally distinguished himself in this affair that James V., greatly pleased with his personal bravery, presented him with a gold chain from off his own person. Inheriting the fate of his ancestors, this laird of Wedderburn and Woollee was killed in an encounter with the English in 1524. He left a young family, three sons and three daughters, George, who succeeded, being only nine years of age. His uncle as tutor or trustee acted for him until he came of age, when he was confined in Blackness Castle for some years for the purpose solely of securing the peace of the Merse. James V. granted him a Crown charter under the Great Seal in which he acknowledges the good services to the Crown rendered by the family of Home, and confirms to him the lands possessed by his father, which included Woollee in the lordship of Jedburgh. George Home of Wedderburn married Joan Hepburn of the family of Waughton, and by her had a son John who predeceased him, and two daughters who died in infancy. At the bloody battle of Pinkie in 1547, where the Earl of Hertford commanded the English, George Home fell fighting in the front rank of the battle, at the early age of thirty-one.

David Home, next brother of George, became laird of Wedderburn and sixth of Woollee. He gave his allegiance to Queen Mary and supported Bothwell. After her abdication he loyally adhered to the administration in support of the young King James VI. He married first Mariota Johnstone, daughter of the laird of Elphinstone, and secondly (in 1564), Margaret Ker, widow of Pringle of Whitebank. His eldest son was George, and his second son David Hume of Godscroft, the well-known historian. An unusual occurrence now took place in this fighting family. In the year 1574 the laird of Wedderburn died in his bed.

George, afterwards Sir George Home of Wedderburn and the seventh laird of Woollee, was born at Elphinstone, the residence of his maternal grandfather. He was an extremely sickly child, and the greatest care was taken of him. It is said that for some time he had to be wrapped up in black wool, but after his childhood he grew so rapidly that when he was twelve years of age he was shown to the Queen-Dowager as a prodigy. He was much at Court and for a time was Warden of the Eastern Marches, and later he filled the post of comptroller of the royal household to both King James and his queen. But it is to be feared that Sir George's connection with the honours of courtly office only brought to him, as it did to so many others, trouble and loss. Among his charters there is one which proves that with certain lands he had
the custody of the castle of Berwick, and other deeds show transactions with Robert Logan of Restalrig, noted for his connection with the Gowrie Conspiracy. Sir George Home married Jean Haldane, daughter of the laird of Gleneagles, and had a son David. It seems when Sir George held the appointment of comptroller of the King's household, James the Sixth became considerably indebted to him, and this debt was never paid. This, with other losses incidental to his long sojourn at Court, obliged him to part with his Woollee estate, which had been in the family since 1436. Sir William Cranstoun was the purchaser in 1605. Sir George Home died eleven years afterwards, in 1616.¹

Sir William Cranstoun was Captain of the Guard to James vi. and was an old friend of Home’s, and also a blood relation through the Johnstones of Elphinstone. In 1609 he was raised to the peerage. Lady Cranstoun was heiress of her father, John Cranstoun of Cranstoun, and held lands in her own right, and very probably had a share in the purchase of Woollee.

William Lord Cranstoun was a man of untiring energy, taking a leading part in the reduction of the Borders to a comparatively orderly condition. He died June 1627.

John, second Lord Cranstoun, was the successor to the landed property possessed by the first Lord, including Woollee. His first wife was from the house of Buccleuch, and his second a daughter of Lord Lindsay of the Byres, there being no issue with either.

James, Master of Cranstoun, brother to the second Lord, by his first wife had an only daughter, and by his second, Lady Elizabeth Stewart, daughter of Bothwell, had a son, William, and three daughters, of whom the second, Isabella, became the wife of Sir Gilbert Eliott of Stobs. The Master died in the lifetime of his brother, and William succeeded as

William, third Lord Cranstoun, and also the third and last of that name who inherited Woollee. It was the fate of his lordship to live in stirring times. He accompanied King Charles ii. into England in 1651 and was taken prisoner at the battle of Worcester and committed to the Tower. Before he left Scotland he took the precaution of disposing to William Elliot of Stobs his lands of Woollee and Stonedge with remainder to his son Gilbert, fìar of Stobs, dated 1651. Lord Cranstoun was particularly excepted out of Cromwell’s act of grace and pardon, April 1654. His wife and children were allowed £200 a year, and his estates were sequestrated. Lady Cranstoun was a daughter of Alexander, first Earl of Leven. The downfall of this distinguished old family may be traced from this period.²

Very little has been recorded about the old house of Woollee.

¹ Extracted from Historical MSS. Commission Reports.
² See Cranstoun Pedigree.
WOLFELEE

It seems that in the year 1612 a contract of marriage of some importance was signed before witnesses at Woollee House. The contract was between Adam Kirktown of Stewartfield (now Hart-rigge) and Grissell Rutherfurd, eldest daughter of Thomas Rutherfurd of Hunthill. Cranstoun of that Ilk and two other Cranstoun names appear in the contract.

Sir Gilbert Elliot, bart. of Stobs, died in 1688, and his widow occupied Woollee as a dower-house until it got into bad repair, when she changed her quarters to Hobsburn House, of which she also had a lierten. Her daughter-in-law Elizabeth, now a widow, had to get the trustees of her son to put Woollee House into order. She appears in the tradesman's bill as Lady Stonedge. I have in my possession two bills concerning the house, both dated 22nd August 1709—the one from the blacksmith for making nails for the repairs, receipted and signed before the minister of the parish, and schoolmaster; the other from the carpenter or wright, for removing the old roof above the vault of the house of 'Woelie' according to an agreement with the Lady Stonedge. This vaulted chamber is still in existence and forms two of the many rooms on the ground floor to the present house.

Gilbert, the eldest son, who was still a youth at his father's death, got the best education the now limited means the family had at their disposal could give him. He married early, and did not go far to seek his wife. Cecily Kerr, daughter of William Kerr of Abbotrule, was his choice. They had issue; the eldest son being Gilbert. To satisfy the creditors Woollee was ordered by the Court for public sale, and it was purchased by William Elliot, writer in Edinburgh, in 1730 for the sum of 43,000 pounds Scots. He became the first Elliot of Woollee, and his descendants are still in possession. William, as far as is known, was not much of an improver, but was a keen buyer of land, and added at different times several lairdships to Woollee. He was a man of considerable means in after life, and possessed a very large Border estate business, as his name frequently appears in numerous charters, marriage contracts, and bonds relating to this county.

William Elliot was born at Oakwood-miln, and his father was Thomas Elliot, who decided to bring him up for the law, and for that purpose sent him to Edinburgh and placed him in the office of his friend Andrew Haliburton. The rather sudden change from the quietude of the country to the bustle and temptations of a town life were at first trying for this naturally impetuous young man. It is said that not until he had fallen over head and ears in love with Helen Elliot, daughter of the laird of Midlem-miln, did he make up his mind to lead a steady life and attend to the business of his office.
Naturally enough the lady’s father did not favour William Elliot’s addresses to his daughter. In the first place he was a young man with his fortune still to make, and secondly, from his quick and rather doubtful temper he feared something might come in the way of his daughter’s future happiness. For these reasons the laird of Midlem-mill thought it wise to give them time for consideration. William Elliot waited patiently for some months to obtain the hand of the fair Helen, and her father then allowed the marriage to take place. William by all accounts was a tall handsome man, with fascinating manners and good abilities. He had to all appearance sown his wild oats and reformed his ways, which proved to be the case, and now he was rewarded by being united to her whom he so dearly loved. Although tied to his office in the Lawnmarket, he often visited Woollee and the neighbourhood. It is stated in the diary of Mr. Grieve of Branxholm Park that his favourite breakfast when in the country consisted of oatmeal porridge mixed with butter and sugar, the repast being finished with strong ale. Mr. Grieve adds, ‘I have as a boy more than once licked the dish after him.’ Mr. Elliot usually passed a night at Branxholm Park when he visited Roxburghshire.

By his marriage with Helen he had a son Thomas, and a daughter Elizabeth who married William Ogilvie of Hartwoodmyres, brother to her father’s third wife. Thomas became a physician, and married Helen, daughter of Sir John Elphinstone of Logie, and died soon after his marriage, to the inexpressible grief of his young widow. An interesting and romantic account of this lady is given by a Mrs. Gordon many years afterwards.

LETTER FROM MRS. GORDON TO LADY DALRYMPLE ELPHINSTONE

CRAIG, March 30, 1847.

My dear Lady E.,—When you paid your friends at Craig a visit last summer the name of a lady deceased who was a near relation to Sir Robert’s family, was accidentally mentioned in the course of conversation; and as it had been my fate to learn some very singular events in the life of that lady, with whom my deceased aunt, Mrs. Johnstone of Hawkhill, had lived in strict terms of intimacy, and to whom my father, Mr. Johnstone of Alva, shewed many marks of kindness, you expressed a wish that I should commit to paper all which I remember of her eventful history. This I am enabled to do, as although I was very young when I first knew Mrs. Elliot, I cannot forget the singular events which my aunt related to me of her history: and one in particular, which Mrs. Elliot herself detailed to
us in my presence, I can vouch for, exactly as I heard it from her own lips, for it made a deep impression on my mind.

‘In 1745, the memorable year of the rebellion, Megginch Castle, an old-fashioned building with low passages and vaults in the ground floor, was the scene of the following occurrence. Miss Elphinstone was residing there with her cousin Miss Drummond, who had a brother a captain in the King’s Service and in a regiment which was marching towards Culloden. Miss Drummond from anxiety about her brother was seized with a low nervous fever, and Helen Elphinstone watched over the sickbed of her much-loved friend. One stormy night whilst sitting very late in her room, a servant came up and in a low voice said that the bell of the castle had rung, and that a gentleman who appeared to be an officer, desired to see Miss Elphinstone alone. To this intimation, although somewhat alarming, she did not hesitate to comply. She hoped he might be Capt. Adam Drummond, and it was that officer; wet and cold, and apparently fatigued, he appeared to be; he ordered his horse to be fed, then only allowing himself a slight refreshment, he explained his situation to his astonished cousin. But his first inquiry was for his sister, and not wishing to agitate her, he said to Miss Elphinstone that he placed the greatest confidence in her prudence and fortitude, and that he was about to put both to a trial. Certain valuable family papers and plate were concealed in a vault below the castle, unknown to any one, except his parents and their law agent in Edinburgh, and he would shew her where to find them. She must go alone the following night and take them out, and a person would come to receive them. Miss Elphinstone promised to execute this request, and he then lighted a lantern and bade her follow him. He took her down to the vaulted chambers of the castle and at last entered a small vaulted apartment with a wooden press fixed to the wall, with a heavy-looking door attached to it. Capt. Drummond had carried in his hand a shovel from the dining-room fireplace, and went to the corner of the apartment next the press, and with the shovel scraped the sand from the floor, when a trap-door became visible. He raised the trap-door and went down a stair to a lower vault; and he showed Miss Elphinstone the large chest in which the family records and plate were deposited. Captain Drummond then gave her the key and a list of such papers as were required, and told her that he had not a moment to lose, that his commanding officer had allowed him to ride in advance of his regiment, as he had stated that his business was urgent, and must now gallop fast to come up with them, as they were only to halt for a short time at Dundee for food. He bade her farewell with much emotion, and having left the trap-door in such a manner as to allow of her raising it herself, and recommending silence and fortitude, he departed. Miss Elphinstone endeavoured to regain composure and resumed her watch over her cousin,¹ Miss Jean Drummond.'

¹ Miss Jean Drummond married first James, second Duke of Athole, in 1749; and secondly, Lord Adam Gordon.
Next night, when she was sure that all were in bed and everything was quiet, she proceeded to execute her task. She raised the iron trap-door and descended the stair, and after selecting the papers marked in the list, was about to close the heavy iron-bound lid, when it escaped from her trembling hands and fell with violence, so as to shake the iron trap-door above by the concussion, for to her great horror it fell with a loud noise, and she heard the heavy door of the press burst open, and thus it remained across the iron trap-door, and no power from below could raise it. In this dreadful situation she fainted, and to make matters worse her lamp went out. How long she lay unconscious she knew not, but she awakened from her swoon and found herself in darkness. She prayed for resignation, and overcome with despair she again became insensible; but when Mrs. Elliot related to us this singular event, she added, "A pang arose from the thought that my sick cousin, Miss Drummond, would conjecture I had deserted her, and had fled with her brother." She again revived, and after a space of horror, and of most bitter agony, she heard a noise above her head in the upper vault, and some one raised the iron door and looked down, and there stood Capt. Drummond, his countenance exhibiting every mark of alarm and amazement. At the sight of him, the revulsion of her feelings again rendered her insensible; he raised her in his arms and carried her out of the vault. All hope on her part having vanished, their mutual agitation was extreme, and when composure in some degree returned Capt. Drummond explained his unexpected return, which was caused by remembering that he had omitted to mark in his list a paper of the utmost importance, and his commanding officer had allowed him to return to the castle.

It was long ere the health of Miss Helen Elphinstone recovered the dreadful shock she had sustained.\(^1\) I never learned the fate of her cousin, or if they ever met again.

After leaving Megginch Castle, she resided in Edinburgh, and there she became acquainted with a medical student called Thomas Elliot. The attachment they formed for each other was deep, and after a few years of opposition the consent of her parents and friends was obtained, and they were married. The marriage contract is dated 1st June 1751, and it is described "as a post nuptial" deed. Dr. Elliot, for he obtained that degree, joined a volunteer corps then raised in support of Government. He was a man possessed of great benevolence, and never shrunk from his professional duties. It was only about six weeks after his marriage that whilst giving his gratuitous attendance to a poor family, Dr. Elliot caught an infectious fever which proved fatal. He died! and the senses of his unhappy wife fled! In her despair, she said, "I prayed that I might be united to him; and I never will pray again, nor see the light of the sun." Mrs. Elliot accordingly did shut out the light, and resided for a year in the dark. She would not see her friends; she sat in

\(^1\) Captain Adam Drummond, born in 1713, succeeded as laird of Megginch, and married Katherine Paulet, daughter of Henry, fourth Duke of Bolton. He served in the Rebellion of 1745 and in the first American War. He had no issue, and was succeeded by his brother.
sullen and deep despair, ungrateful for her former wonderful and most merciful deliverance from a painful and horrid death, and almost in a state of rebellion against her Maker. Heaven was again merciful, and in its compassion sent a friend to this deeply afflicted lady. The Rev. Hugh Blair, whose valuable works are well known, received information of Mrs. Elliot's melancholy state of mind, and he resolved to rescue her from her alienation of mind if possible, more particularly when he reflected on her singular deliverance from the vault. The Rev. Dr. Blair wrote to Mrs. Elliot a very touching letter, and requested permission to pay her one visit. This request roused her from the apathy into which seclusion had sunk her mind, and she replied she would receive his proffered visit. He went to her dwelling, he found her apartment dark except from the light of a candle, and she was all alone. After some conversation the Rev. Doctor exclaimed, "Now, madam, kneel and join me in prayer"; and she did so, and after prayer he rose and said, "Now, madam, I will show you the light of the sun," and he opened the shutters. Mrs. Elliot after that memorable day admitted her friends; she regularly attended the services of the High Church, of which church her friend Dr. Blair was minister. Still a shade of melancholy remained on her countenance, and a shade of singularity marked her demeanour. She hung her deceased husband's uniform in the room in which he breathed his last, and placed his sword over the mantel. Mrs. Elliot died in the year 1807, on the 12th day of April, surviving her husband for nearly fifty-six years.

Mr. Elliot of Woollee lost his first wife, and in the year 1727 he married Margaret, the eldest daughter of William Scot of Stonedge. Her married life was of short duration, as within three years she died leaving no children. Mr. Elliot entered the bonds of matrimony for the third time in 1732 with Margaret, eldest daughter of Adam Ogilvie of Hartwoodmyres, and the eldest son of the marriage was Cornelius, born in 1733. William Elliot died in 1768 and in harness, as on the last day of his life he was engaged in the sale of the Crieve estate, which belonged to him. Thomas Beattie and his father in Meikledale were the purchasers. Thomas rode into Edinburgh in January 1768 and waited on Mr. William Elliot, and agreed to the price of the Crieve estate. On his way back to conclude the purchase next morning he was told that Mr. Elliot had died of apoplexy the previous evening. His office was in the Lawnmarket, at that time a favourite locality for men of the law. Cornelius now succeeded to Woollee, and also to the business, in which he had taken an active share, continuing to live in Edinburgh. He had married in 1765 a daughter of James Rannie, merchant in Leith, and had several sons and daughters. Adam, next brother to Cornelius, possessed the same charming manners peculiar to his father. Being a merchant of Dantzic, he lived much abroad. It was at that place that he married Rosa,
daughter of Monsieur Leonardi, merchant there. She died 31st January 1796, leaving one daughter, Charlotte. Robert, the next brother, was a merchant in Amsterdam, and when he retired he bought a house in London.

Of the sisters, Jane Elliot married Major Balfour, of the family of Pilrig, and of the 2nd Battalion Royals. He served with distinction during the American War, and when he left the Army he settled down as a wine merchant at Leith. Helen married in 1780 Captain Robert Davidson, Bengal Army, and of Pinnaclehill, Kelso. There were nine children of this marriage, all of whom died before they attained the age of forty except Margaret, the eldest daughter. The Davidsons sold Pinnaclehill, and it was bought by Robert Elliot, who was anxious to have a place of his own in this county. He had made a nice fortune in Amsterdam, and on making this purchase gave up his London house. He died at Pinnaclehill, leaving it to his nephew James Elliot, together with a sum of money said to be £60,000. The will was drawn up on unstamped paper and was insufficient to convey the property. The legal heir was Charlotte, Adam Elliot's only child. She was commonly known as 'Black Charlotte.'

We must now return to Cornelius, who having married an Edinburgh lady spent the most of his time in that city. His eldest son was William, who served in India in the Madras Cavalry, and died there soon after he had been promoted to the rank of major. Judging by a portrait of him by Raeburn which hangs in the dining-room at Wolfelee, he must have been a handsome man. His next brother was James, who had been brought up in his father's office. He never liked the sedentary employment; it neither agreed with his health, nor was it consonant to his manner of life. He quietly and gradually withdrew himself from the routine of the office; but for some years he transacted all the country business and paid special attention to the improvement of Woollee, which it much required. He certainly soon made a great change for the better. Woollee about the year 1803 had no great quantity of timber. He planted in all directions not only timber, but hedges. Stone dykes and cottages were not forgotten, and it was generally thought in Rulewater that James Elliot was inclined to spend money rather too freely.

At this time they possessed 65 Queen Street, Edinburgh, where his eldest son Walter was born. In 1804 as a country residence they rented the house of Fairnington on a short lease. In a few years afterwards they were tenants in Teviotbank. From there the Elliots of Woollee occupied Stewartfield, near Jedburgh. James Elliot married in 1799 Caroline, daughter of William Hunter of Polmood, by Lady Caroline MacKenzie, his wife.

1 Robert Elliot died November 1823.
WOLFELEE

Old Corrie, as he was called, seldom left Edinburgh now that the hand of time began to leave its mark upon him. The office life which he had led seemed to agree with him, as in the year 1817 his name stood at the head of the list of the Society of Writers to His Majesty's Signet. He lived until 1821, and died at the age of eighty-eight years. James Elliot, now laird of Woollee, was father of a large family. His eldest surviving son had gone to India the year before, and in 1824 his wife died. By this time he had been living at Stewartfield for some years, and a good many of his children were born there. He now betought himself of building a house on the foundation of the old place at

This stone, now built into the present house, belonged to the old vaulted house of Woollee. The letters represent Dame Magdaline Nicolson, Gilbert Elliott her son, and his wife Elizabeth Scott. See Pedigree Eliotts of Stobs.

Woollee, of which nothing was left but a vaulted apartment which required some alteration. The trees which he had planted in such profusion at the beginning of the century now made some show in the landscape. Smith of Darnick was architect, and also did the work. Some failure in one of the contracts caused a good deal of delay, and although the work began at the end of 1825, it was not until April 1827 that it was ready for habitation. He then foolishly changed the good old name of Woollee to Wolfelee. There is little doubt that this was inspired from the name of the
neighbouring farm Wolfhopelee, and also from the mistaken idea that the wolf was a more noble animal than the peaceful sheep, with its useful coat of wool. Even to this day the country people stick to the old name, and prefer it to the perversion of James Elliot. He was a heavily built man with a good temper which nothing seemed to ruffle. During the building operations at Wolfelee he lived at Mackside farmhouse. In 1826 he announced that he was engaged to be married to his cousin Margaret, the eldest daughter of Captain Davidson of Pinnaclehill. Mr. Elliot found that the new house could not be ready for his occupation until well into 1827, and as the day of his marriage had been fixed for the 17th of January of that year, he had to put in order the small and inconvenient house at Mackside. This was accordingly done, and he lived a good deal at Weens with the Cleghorns when the farmhouse was being beautified for the coming bride. From there he went to Kelso, and a few days after the marriage he and his wife arrived at Mackside. Mrs. Elliot became a great friend of Mrs. Cleghorn, which friendship lasted until her death.

In the beginning of August the house at Wolfelee was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, and the tenants were much pleased to have their kindly landlord living on his estate. After the house was completed he turned his attention to building farmhouses on some of the smaller farms. Hedges were planted everywhere and numerous enclosures were made where none existed before, and Mr. Elliot spared no money on the improvement of his property.

Two of his sisters, now old ladies (1840), caused him a good deal of anxiety. To them he was most liberal, and paid the debts of one who was not worthy of this kindness. The other, Elenora, had in early life married a Mr. Robert Anderson, Eskbank, near Edinburgh, and as she was apparently left a widow without sufficient for her support, her kind-hearted brother supplied her with funds.

In the beginning of 1840 Mrs. Elliot, who was never very strong, became unwell. Her medical man recommended a change of climate, and she and her husband went to St. Heliers, Island of Jersey. They remained there nearly a year, and after a visit to Germany to go through a course of baths, they returned to Woollee. I can well remember them in 1846 calling at Weens, then an old couple, both riding on ponies. In his young days 'Jamie Elliot' (as he was always called both by rich and poor) obtained the rank of major in the first Roxburghshire Local Militia. This was in the year 1810. In politics he was a Liberal,

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1 Mrs. Elliot of Wolfelee died in London in 1856 in the house of Mr. Spencer Percival, 13 Portman Square, and her body was placed in one of the catacombs under the chapel at Kensal Green cemetery as a temporary resting-place. Her remains are still undisturbed.
SIR WALTER ELLIOT OF WOLFELEE, K.C.S.I.
and a supporter of the Minto family. In his later days he got very infirm, and to add to his difficulties his money concerns were not in a prosperous condition. But in spite of these and other vexations the same equal temper and kindly disposition never left him. He died in February 1855, at the age of eighty-four.

Walter, his eldest surviving son, succeeded to Wolfelee at the mature age of fifty-two. He found his father's affairs in much confusion, but was obliged to return in haste to India to fill the important office of Senior Member of Council. Mr. Elliot engaged the services of his friend and neighbour, Mr. William Oliver of Langraw, to act as factor for the estate. This was an excellent move on his part, as it relieved him of all anxiety about the management of Wolfelee during a very critical period in the history of the Indian Empire. The stirring period of the Crimean War was drawing to a close, and no sooner had peace been proclaimed with Russia and our army reduced than the great Indian Mutiny broke out with all its horrors, and our power in India trembled in the balance. Walter Elliot set an admirable example of cool judgment during this trying period. Lord Harris, the Governor of Madras, was invalided in 1858, and Walter Elliot was made Provisional Governor of Madras during the autumn, and it devolved upon him to give effect to the Royal Proclamation which was to be announced to the princes and people of India that the sovereignty of India had passed from the East India Company to the British Crown. The period of his service in India was drawing to a close. A public dinner was given him under the presidency of Sir Charles Trevelyan, then Governor of Madras, who summed up his opinion of him in his farewell speech in these words, 'In short, if there be anything that I ever wished to know connected with India from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall, I would go to Walter Elliot for the information.'

My acquaintance with him began in 1860 on his final return from India. I did not see much of him for the next two or three years, as I was then in the Army, but I soon became aware that my neighbour could help me in my numismatic hobby, which I soon found was only one of the many subjects on which he was an authority. His son, Major Elliot, has lent me his diary, which commenced in 1862, and records what he did daily. No day seemed long enough for him, and his active brain was never idle. Most of us waste time frequently, but Sir Walter very seldom did. The Sunday was always with him a day of rest, and if he could not get to church, he read the Church service at home. Lady Elliot (then Mrs. Elliot) returned from India in 1859, and occupied Wolfelee House, and when he returned it was decided to make an addition to Wolfelee, which was carried out by the
RULEWATER AND ITS PEOPLE

architect with much good taste, making the house more convenient, and in every way more comfortable. During the two years it was in the hands of the tradesmen they shifted about from place to place, and about Christmas time in 1862 it was nearly completed, and they came home.

Walter Elliot soon took his place in the management of county and parish affairs. The new church of Hobkirk was built that year, and Mr. Elliot was the chief mover in all connected with it. In 1866 he received the honour of knighthood, being among the first who was created a Knight Commander of the Star of India. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and in 1878 the University of Edinburgh conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws. He was a member of many learned societies, in all of which he took an active interest. Without doubt he was a most pleasant companion, and could adapt his conversation to any company.

Early in the year 1866 a good deal of excitement was caused in Rulewater among the young people by a rumour that Miss Elliot of Wolfelee was to be married to Captain W. Eliott-Lockhart, younger of Borthwickbrae and Cleghorn. A report got about soon afterwards that the wedding was to take place in the parish church, and the ceremony to be conducted by an English clergyman. This unusual marriage arrangement produced a great deal of speculation in our little community. The report proved to be correct, and the 11th of April was fixed for the event. Marriages even now are of rare occurrence in a rural parish church, and with an English clergyman officiating, as in this case, such a proceeding astonished the whole county. No one but the Rev. John Ewen dared to have allowed such a departure to take place from the constitutional usages of the Established Church of Scotland. On the morning of the 11th of April the bride’s uncle, the Rev. John Elliot Bates, rector of Walton, Northumberland, appeared in full canonicals, and proceeded to the upper end of the church and stood with his back to the pulpit, and waited the arrival of the bride and bridegroom. She soon appeared, leaning on her father’s arm, and, as he says in his diary, ‘looking really beautiful.’ Captain Lockhart was supported by his best man, and the service commenced. By this time the church was full of people, and among the number were several Presbyterian ministers who were drawn there by curiosity. When all was over the bride and bridegroom retired to the vestry to sign the register, the people still remaining in their seats to see the happy pair depart from the church. Being kept waiting a short time, Edward Maxwell of Teviotbank heard one say to another, ‘What will they be aboot noo?’ The reply was, ‘They will be carrying on their Paternosters or sic-like.’

There is little doubt from the old names of places in the
precincts of Jedforest that the wolf, the stag, and the wild cat were bred in this district. Sir Walter Elliot, who was noted for research, devoted some of his time to investigating the matter. He had heard that on Keilder, an estate of the Duke of Northumberland not far from Wolfelee, the wild cats, or as they were called by the country people, wulcats, were of common occurrence at one time. The following story is told by a Mr. Telfer in 1853, and appeared in the Kelso Chronicle:

‘An old shepherd, John Hutton of Peel, who died only ten or twelve years ago, aged above eighty, used to say that when he was a young lad the Keilder herds very seldom went to their sheep without seeing one or more wulcats, and my own grandfather, a shepherd, was once nearly worried by one in Keilder. The animal attacked him without provocation, with the utmost ferocity, aiming at his throat; and it was not without both danger and difficulty that he, a tall stout man, overmastered it. He kept it from him in its spring with his arm, but was unable to shake it off. He, however, managed to get it to the ground and to plant his knee upon it, and then with the help of his collie he finished it.’

The elk has disappeared out of this country for several centuries, and the stag for very many years. When Doorpool Moss was drained a fine specimen of an elk’s head and horns and several stags’ heads were discovered. Mr. Henderson of Abbotrule presented the elk’s head to Sir Walter Elliot, by whom it was shown to Mr. W. B. Dawkins, who said, ‘I examined the head yesterday afternoon, and it is, without exception, the finest I ever saw from a peat bog. There are only two cases on record of its occurrence in England, and so far as I know, two in Scotland, of which yours is one.’

Sir Walter Elliot, from whose notebooks I have derived a great deal of interesting information, mentions some of the superstitions of the Borders. With the old folks of Roxburghshire and the adjoining counties, in their established customs and forms of daily life, good and bad luck were always considered to be the result of certain circumstances. Although education has gone far to do away with some of the absurd notions of a bygone age, still to a modified extent they hold their own in many parts of the country. The ignis fatuus, Will-o’-the-Wisp, or ‘Spunkie,’ as it is known in this part, was not an uncommon ‘apparition’ about fifty years ago. It is said to be caused by certain evolutions of nature. The Rev. J. B. Johnstone, late of the Free Church,

1 Old Gilbert Amos when a boy remembers it being said that wulcats were occasionally found on Wolfelee.
2 Keilder at that time was much overgrown with natural wood, which formed a good refuge for these destructive animals.
Wolfelee, went from there to the Presbyterian Church at Warrington, and he read a paper on his experience of the ignis fatuus. The reverend gentleman said the subject might appear somewhat laughable, but he hoped some of his scientific hearers might be able to throw some light on the matter.

Mr. Johnstone described a remarkable phenomenon he witnessed some years ago whilst riding through the valley of the Rule. He had been preaching at Crailing, and in the evening returned to his manse on the back of a little pony. As he passed through the valley of the Rule night had set in, and a black cloud hung overhead. He was hieing along, afraid of being caught in the impending shower, when to his surprise a light sprang up clear and sharp on his right hand. He soon perceived that it followed close by his side, and in a few minutes he felt convinced that his whip, which was of gutta-percha, was aflame. To make sure, he whisked it rapidly round and it made a ring of light. He rode on watching it for some minutes, when the rain came down heavily and extinguished it. He examined the whip when he got home, and found it charred and blackened. Before leaving Crailing he had noticed that it was split in two at the point, but it was only on reaching home that he found one end was quite burnt away. He mentioned the fact to Mr. Oliver a few days afterwards, and curiously enough he told him that whilst coming home from Jedburgh on a market day after dark in his gig, a light sprang up between his horse's ears as he passed near the same place, played there for some time, and then vanished. Another evening whilst returning, Mr. Johnstone gave the miller a lift out, and he described a similar occurrence. He had been at Jedburgh market, and 'jogging hame' on his beast, when 'a' at once he got sic a gliff, for a queer light got in between the lugs o' the horse.' He set off at a gallop, but the light stuck to him till he got past Fodderlee.

Mr. Oliver of Langraw, after reading Mr. Johnstone's paper, says:

'From what Mr. J. writes it would appear that his ghostly visitation did not occur at Swinnie Dyke Nook—the reputed locale of the bogle—but near to what I believe was at one time called the Scaterford, a place which has also borne the name of Crawdenford, and which is on the Fodderlee burn, a branch of which takes its rise on Bowsett hill. There was until within the last twenty years a cairn of considerable size at this ford, which I have always been inclined to connect with Dacre's skirmish, although I have never heard of any tradition countenancing the supposition. I have a clear impression that Mr. Johnstone understood me to say that my encounter took place at Swinnie Dyke Nook on the road from Jedburgh, and it is evident from his description that he saw the light somewhere between Fulton peel
and Crawdenford, places not on the Jedburgh road. Immediately below the ford, which is now occupied by a culvert, is a very flat, marshy piece of ground, suggestive of the spies in question, and I think it not beyond the bounds of probability that the contents of the cairn might have some effect, if they are not more ancient than the time of the skirmish. Such appearances are nowadays uncommon in churchyards, and as a case in point there was at Battlingburn on Lustruther, a cairn, on the top of which a spunkie would sometimes wander from a bog at no great distance. To return, when I saw the spunkie I was not driving, but was riding, and alone. I was well mounted, and going along at an easy canter when the occurrence took place, which it did rather suddenly and not between the ears of the horse, but the tips of the ears. The night was very still and close and dark, with a heavy rain like a thunder shower, though there was no thunder. I pulled up in order to examine the phenomenon, and could distinctly see the vapour rising from the horse's ears, and passing up through the pale phosphoric-looking light. In a minute or two the light began to fade. This I was inclined to attribute to the cooling down of the horse by the drenching rain, and to test that, I proceeded briskly on again when the light increased for a short time and then disappeared after I had ridden about a quarter of a mile and had descended considerably. I was of opinion at the time that there was a cloud brooding on the high ground and reaching so far down the flank of the hill. Mr. Johnstone I think mixes up his miller story with one connected with Mackside Demnings, where another miller—Peter Smith of Harwood Mill—had an encounter with a spunkie and did gallop.

This letter is dated from Langraw, 29th March 1871.

The Rev. Mr. Johnstone writes to Sir Walter Elliot as follows:

'I have failed to thank you for the reading of Mr. Oliver's interesting letter. He is quite right; it was not on the Jedburgh road that I saw the light. It went out just before I crossed the burn or hollow, for there is scarcely a burn. There is not the slightest doubt as to the whip burning.'

I will close this subject with another instance in which two old women are concerned. This also is an extract from Sir Walter Elliot's notebook:

'Close to Battlingburn, the name of the little rivulet between Lustruther and the farm of Westshielis, now occupied by Andrew Common, near where a cairn formerly existed, stood a cottage inhabited by two old women, aunts of James Telfer of Saughtree. The removal of the cairn not very long ago probably had something to do with the event. On the night on which one of them died her sister's attention was attracted by a light on the cairn. She left her sister's bedside to look out of the window, and whilst doing so the spirit