Yet, withal, the sunshine was more congenial to his Southern nurture, and had enticed him to the peristyle which adjoined the mess-hall. It was a long, narrow loggia built of whinstone, unrelied by any adornment save for the skins of beasts that were thrown upon the seats and on the pavement. Its roof was supported by slender stone pillars, and the entire length of one side opened to the garden, which in this case was scarcely worthy of the name, consisting as it did of a small cultivated patch of ground (ornamented by some rude statues in wood or stone carved with doubtful skill by the legionaries), where a few hardy shrubs maintained a precarious existence. The peristyle commanded a fine view of the surrounding country, and although open to the air, it afforded a shelter from the chill wind that was ever winnowing around Borcominum.

As all the other officers had gone to attend the sacrifice, Marius found himself in sole possession, and an unwonted quietness reigned throughout the fort. He had opened Cunobelin's prized roll of papyrus, and was earnestly engaged in deciphering the fine characters upon it, when the sound of a voice singing came floating to his ear through the stillness.

He listened, wondering. It was a woman's voice, not harsh and discordant as those of the legionaries' British wives that often rang shrill through the fort, but sweet and tuneful. Whoever sang seemed to be coming towards the peristyle. The air fell very clearly now, and sounded strangely familiar to his ear. Then, with a start of amazement, he realised it was the song, he had first heard in Nero's Golden Circus in Rome, and again from Cunobelin's lips out on the hill-side. And now, surely, it was sung by none other than the legate's daughter.  

(Continued on page 614).

SOME SCOTTISH GOSSIP OF TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

By Lady Skerrington.

PART I.

It is probable that one of the first incidents of English history to become vividly impressed upon a child's mind is the Great Fire of London. The account of the glare, the excitement, the destruction, as the fire ate up house after house and street after street, appeals with a horrible sort of fascination to a child's imagination. But it is equally probable that not one person in a thousand has ever heard of the fire which, some years later, destroyed a great part of the city of Edinburgh.

Those who like to rummage amongst little-known and more or less unimportant scraps of British history may be interested to read an account, written by George Home of Kimmerghame, who was an onlooker, of the great fire of Edinburgh which broke out on the evening of February 3, 1700. The account is as follows:

'A very little after 10 o'clock, as I was sitting in the Lady Ryselaw's chamber, Jessie Hamilton, the lass in the house, came and told us there was fire somewhere about the meal-market. I went and looked out, and saw a light there, but thought not much of it. She came again, and told us it grew greater; so I went to the window again, and see it much greater, so as to perceive it was in, or near, my Lord Crosrig's, and that the Town Guards were at his door, and heard all our neighbours in a stir. I was once thinking to have gone to give what assistance I could to my Lord Crosrig, but the fire being just below where I lodged, and the wind south-west—which would, if it once broke out, certainly drive it in at the windows of the lodgings under us— I put up what things I had, in my trunk and leather cloak-bag, and in a bundle in my tartan night-gown. I had sent my man (who did not lie in the house) to his bed, and was at a stand how to carry off my things, when Sir Andrew Home's footman—whom his master had sent—came to see if I had any use for him. A little after came my man upon the noise of the fire: the drums by this time beating ane alarm, and the bells ringing. They told me it had broke out in Mr John Buchan's, just in the story below my Lord Crosrig's; and that my Lord's family had been all in bed, and he just a-going, so that the fire was upon them before they could get any clothes on.

'My man got another man, and I came away, but had a great deal of difficulty to get through the narrow transe [passage] that leads to the Parliament close, there being such a crowd pressing in like a tide, and some stopping the way with burdens. I got out with pressing forward, and threatening those in my way. I went to Sir Andrew Home's chamber with my things, and sent back my man to make what help he could to those I left in the house behind me; but after an hour's stay he came back, and told me he could by no means get up for the crowd in the transe.

'Aymouth, who lodged with me—as he told me afterwards—was forced to come off with his son in his arms, and his lady carrying his trunk. Sir James Cockburn and his lady got help by Swinton's and some other servants.

'I have reason to bless the Lord I was within when the fire began, for in a little I should not have been able to get up to my chamber, and so
should have lost all the writs of what I have, and all other papers of any value; besides some money, linens, and other clothes. I was only at the loss of 21 ells of linen I had given to my landlady to keep, which I designed for shirts, which I had no mind of when I came away.

The wind being high, the fire soon broke in upon the land [tenement] where I was lodged; and, there being few, or no hands at the beginning, it gained such strength that it burnt down the Meal Market: all the back land where I lodged, which was thirteen stories high, beside the cellar and garrets: the highest fabric of lodgings, I believe, ever was known. It advanced towards the Parliament Close and burnt out to the street: and if it had not pleased God the wind fell about 5 o'clock, and turned north-west, the whole town might have been burnt, as was the finest part of it.

I walked out to see it about 2 o'clock on the Sunday morning. It was the most terrible sight I ever saw: the sparks were flying just like a shower of thick snow. I went to Sir Walter Pringle's lodging, and see the fire in the lower stories in the back land — where my chamber was —gaining from story to story: a very dreadful sight. Certainly it would be much more so when the whole thirteen were on fire together.

About 4 o'clock my Lord Chancellor (the 1st Earl of Marchmont) came up to the Council House; and a little after, a party of the Foot Guards, to defend the Parliament House, which was threatened, the houses on fire being close to it and the Treasury Room. But by building up the windows with the flag stones of the Close, and covering them with horse-dung, and continual throwing water on the place next the fire, the House was preserved. The fire got once into the roof of the Treasury Room, but the lead was pulled off, and water thrown in, which extinguished it. The Council called for Drury, the Engineer, to blow up some houses, but he would not undertake it. He is but an ignorant fellow, and deserves not his place.

Sir Andrew Home and I, not thinking ourselves secure in his chamber, though on the north side of, and below the Cross, he had down his furniture and books, and sent them to the Canongate, and I took my things to my sister's chamber in the Lawn Market. The wind changing in the morning, and not being so high, the fire burnt more faintly.

The Chancellor went home about 12 o'clock, at which time the Duke of Hamilton came up to the House, and made a great bustle as if all things were neglected, and met the Chancellor going home in his coach, and called to him: "My Lord Chancellor, pray come out and shew yourself concerned!" My Lord answered him that he had, already, given all necessary orders, and went on. The Duke went up and down, talking of blowing up houses, but after all, did nothing but make a noise.

Money, 5th Feb. 1700. — The fire is put out for the most part, but the cellars, especially where the coals were, are still burning.

I dined with my sister, and visited my Lord Crosig, who is lodged in his daughter, Wallisford's. He has saved little save his cabinet: most of his books and papers are burnt; and some, he says, of other people's: particularly, all Anne Cockburn's — his niece — and some of Blackader's and mine, though I do not remember he has any of consequence of mine.

Feb. 15, 1700. — Yesterday Sir Patrick Home was saying several were of opinion (which has been mine ever since the fire) that it has been a providence in God to send it, because the houses, though fair, were so very ill built they could not have stood, and might have fallen, and done much more hurt by killing people than the fire has done.

A month later, the writer of this account mentions that he was told by the Lady Hiltome that the night the fire was in Edinburgh the sky was so red and clear, all the Merse over (that is, in the Merse of Berwickshire), that people were astonished at it.

In pre-war days the citizens of Edinburgh were accustomed to look upon the procession of the Lord High Commissioner, when he went to open the General Assembly, as quite a fire-sight; but such a spectacle sinks into insignificance when compared with the pageantry that attended the arrival, in olden days, of the Commissioner to the Scottish Parliament. Then the excitement began directly he approached the Borders. The following account of the reception given to the Earl of Marchmont when he came to Scotland as Commissioner to Parliament is interesting, as it brings vividly before us those bygone usages. It also indicates that in those far-away days people suffered heart-burnings — just as they do now — when their friends did not receive as much honour as they believed that they deserved.

July 7, 1698. — I went to Blackader where I found John Home, who came from Edinburgh the night before. Sir John Home, he, and I went to Berwick. My Lord Polwarth was gone out of town before we came. We dined in the post house with Sir James Hall, Torwoodlee, Commisary House, &c. After dinner we went out and met the Chancellor [the Earl of Marchmont was at this time Lord Chancellor of Scotland] near Godswishe sands [Goswick sands]. He got the guns of the town when he came in. He lodged in the Post-House. Sir John and I lodged at the Crown. I supped with the Chancellor: Cavers, and Deucher, and Mr. Welderburn were also there. We bespoke supper, and though neither Sir John Home nor I came, we paid our share.
The Earls of Moray, Eglinton, Lothian, and Loudoun, Sir James Ogilby, Secretary of State, now made Viscount Seafield, and appointed to preside in Parliament, and the Lord Lorne, being last night at Belford, my Lord Polwarth and most of the company met them on the hill beyond Tweedmouth. They dined with my Lord Chancellor. The night before, Mr Thomas Griev, the Mayor, and Aldermen waited on my Lord Chancellor, and made my Lord Polwarth a burgess. They offered the same compliment to the Lords that came in the morning (for my Lord Chancellor was burgess before). But Secretary Ogilby took it ill that, having been several times there before, they never had offered him the compliment before (though they have a law among them that no Scots man, unless a nobleman, can be made a burgess). This did not satisfy the Secretary, who refused it; and upon his account the rest of the Lords did the like. They were commanded by some for it, but I am sorry it should have fallen upon the present Mayor.

After dinner we came from Berwick. The Town gave the bells, which is an extraordinary compliment; and the Governor the guns. At the bound road my Lord Dunglass and the two Ladies of Wedderburn met me. The Chancellor and Secretary came out of their coaches to him, he having alighted from his horse. There was a number of gentlemen with him. At Ayton the custom-house office gave the Chancellor a glass of wine; most part of the company went off there.

At night the Chancellor came to Dunglass; the other Lords came to Dunglass and got a glass of wine, and went on their way to Dunbar. I stayed and supped there (at Dunglass); we had a very magnificent meat. Commissary Home and I lay at the Pathhead, in the Post-House, being afraid the house should be throng; but they seemed to take it ill next morning, telling me there was an empty room, which was designed for me. My Lord Crosrig came to us next morning at Dunglass from Haddington.

My Lord went from Dunglass a little before 9 o'clock. Several met him on the road, and the Lords joined him again; yet very few of the East Lothian gentlemen came out. They dined at Haddington, at the Post-House. By the way to Edinburgh many met us: the Earl of Home, particularly. At Edgebuckling Brae the Magistrates of Edinburgh met the Chancellor; and on the way, the burgesses of Edinburgh and Canongate were drawn up in a hedge on horseback, which made a great company.

It was taken notice of that the Earl of Annandale went to his house at Craigmull that morning, and took the Earl of Raglan with him. The Viscount Teviot came to Edgebuckling Brae, but did not come forward, which, also, was noticed. None of his officers that were in Dumse came out to meet the Chancellor. We came to town betwixt 7 and 8 o'clock. It was noticed that he got not the guns of the Castle. Others in his station, say, any Chancellor going to Court, or coming from it, used to get them.

Monday, July 11, 1698.—I went with my Lord Polwarth to the Abbey, where I see some furniture they had put up, which is very fine. The hangings of the drawing-room have silver on them, and chairs of crimson damask. The bed of state is very fine: the curtains of damask, broid and white, &c., and lined with green satin, and orange fringes. I never thought broid and green suited well near each other. The chairs are like the bed. The hangings were not up. There are, also, two cabinets, two tables, two large glasses, four stands all finely japanned. I see the coach, which is very fine, and very high, but they say the painting was spoilt in the ship; but it is done up, but not so well. My Lady has, also, a very fine chair japanned. They tell me they have spent £1200 more than their allowance.

A few days later, on July 19, the same writer records:

'The Parliament sat about two hours. It met at 12 o'clock, and it rose at 2, being adjourned till Thursday at 10 o'clock. I went to the Abbey in the Usner's coach: most part of the members dined there: there was a great crowd, and a great entertainment, yet the Earl of Tulibardine, the Earl of Annandale, the Viscount Teviot, and some others were not there—some on one pique, and some on another. I did not think it fit to sit down as long as I saw several members that got not room; yet others less interested than I, did. I dined at another table with Mr Blair, B. Home, Rentone, and several of the members.'

(Continued on page 604.)

WEST INDIAN SUPERSTITIONS.

By J. H. Clark.

It should not be inferred from the above title that we of these tropical islands are pre-eminently the children of superstition. In almost every country in the world belief in pixies or fairies, in omens and divinations, will be discovered amongst the poor and uneducated, based partly on ignorance and irrationality; and when the various branches of belief are compared with each other, the student is almost forced to conclude that, in spite of apparent differences, variations, and modifications, they all possess a common origin.
Rome, but of the Rome in which he had moved and taken delight he dared not speak before her.

‘What shall I tell you?’ he asked, almost shamefaced, rising from his stooping position. ‘Rome is so wide a subject, I am at a loss where to begin.’

‘Oh, tell me of the sunshine and the blue sky; of the flowers and the orange-groves; of the fountains, streets, and palaces! Or, say, tell me of the ladies of Rome—my countrywomen whom I have never seen!’

Again Marius’s heart sank. The ladies of Rome! He quickly reviewed them as one after another of his acquaintances rose to his mind: Berenice, the voluptuous beauty, whose name was a byword of scandal; Octavia Pamphilia, brilliant, but venomous as a scorpion and cruel as a tiger; Poppaea, Nero’s mistress; Lydia Metella, vain as a peacock, heartless as a stone. How could he speak of such as these to the legate’s daughter, who had breathed only in the pure atmosphere of this green isle? Even the spectacle of the Christians in the arena would be preferable; there at least had been something worthy of Rome—chastity, unswerving devotion, and a valiant facing of fearful odds.

Yet speak he must, even if he had to invent fictitious characters. She was waiting expectantly, watching him with eager eyes, while her fingers worked deftly at her spinning. Then, with happy thought, he remembered those matrons whom he had hitherto despised and ridiculed for the integrity of their conduct, in whose boudoirs he had never lolled, whose eyes had never looked into his with sensuous passion; and so he fell to telling Minia of such women as Pomponia Graecina, the wife of Aulus Plantius, the late Imperial legate to Britain, whom rumour reported tainted by the foreign superstition; and of her ward and friend, the beautiful British princess, Claudia, the wife of the Senator Pudens—names that in later years were to be numbered among the first in the Christian Church at Rome; and of the gentle Octavia, Nero’s neglected consort, who also, it was whispered, had ‘leanings’ towards the new doctrines.

Minia listened with deep interest, breaking in at times to question him, eager ever to hear more of their surroundings, of their pleasures, duties, and pastimes, till the day waned and the sun began to deepen towards decline.

At length, as their eyes strayed out upon the prospect of hills stretching beyond the walls, they saw the bright sunset glow reflected dazzlingly upon the brass breastplates and helmets of the legionaries marching down the hill-slope from the altar of Mithras.

‘They are returning,’ announced Minia with a regretful sigh. ‘I could wish their absence had been twice as long that I might have quenched my thirst for news of Rome.’

Marius laughed pleasantly. ‘Would you not be weary of me, Lady Minia?’ he asked, bending towards her with tender regard.

Again their eyes met in a long gaze, so that both might read what was mirrored there.

‘I would it were beginning, not ending,’ was her answer.

‘The sun sets now, but it will shine again on another day,’ returned Marius with a meaning glance.

The girl’s eyes sparkled, and her lips smiled, with happy understanding. Gathering up her spindle and wool, she rose and held out her hand. ‘Farewell until that day of sunshine, Marius Tarquinius!’

He stooped and kissed her hand with graceful deference.

In a moment Minia was speeding towards the legate’s quarters, her face glowing as the sunset, and her heart beating like the tramp of the marching men as they filed through the gateway of Borneium.

(Continued on page 629.)

SOME SCOTTISH GOSSIP OF TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

PART II.

IT is, perhaps, unreasonable, but any one persuing old diaries or letters is apt to experience a shock of surprise on realising that people in the olden days, which we look upon as almost barbaric, thought and felt and acted very much as we do now. There is something almost eerie in reading odd scraps of gossip jotted down long, long ago, detailing the joys and the sorrows, good deeds and evil deeds, love-making and funerals, of people whose very names have been long forgotten, yet recording events which might have happened yesterday.

The wooing by Sir John Swinton of that Ilk of the daughter of the then Lord Advocate, Sir James Stewart of Goodtrees, seems to have aroused much interest among his friends. Sir John was a widower, and as his first marriage took place in 1674, and he began paying his court to Miss Stewart in 1697, he can scarcely have been in his first youth; and we gather also that he cannot have been a very thin-skinned person. The account begins on September 29, 1697, when things seem to be going smoothly:

‘Sir John Swinton has now gained his mistress, the Advocate’s daughter, and there is a minute of a contract signed between them.’
By October 15, however, clouds had begun to gather:

'Mistress Margaret Home came and sat with me a good while this night. She tells me, as do others, that Sir John Swinton's marriage is like to blow up. They say the Advocate's daughter has told him that, though she will obey her Father in what he commands her, yet if the thing be left to her own choice, and that death were laid in one balance, and he in the other, she had rather choose death; and that her affection is otherwise engaged. I know not what truth is in this, but I see him very pen- sive all Tuesday, and he went to the country on Wednesday.'

'October 22, 1697.—Mr Andrew (the youngest son of the Earl of Marchmont) told me in a secret that James Scott—the Advocate's last lady's nephew—had sent to him to come and be witness to his marriage on the Advocate's daughter—she whom Swinton is in suite of, that they design to marry privately this night, without asking the Advocate's consent. Mr Andrew acquainted my Lord Chancellor with the invitation he had got; but he ordered him to write to Mr Scott that he could not wait on him at present, he having some business of his father's in hand. This is an old intrigue, before Swinton came in play, and it seems there has been mutual engagements betwixt them. Mr Scott either went, or gave out he went to London, so 'tis not known he is here.'

Evidently the intended marriage was not accomplished on the day intended, for on October 27 we find:

'Lord Andrew Home tells me Swintone will get the Advocate's daughter yet, the Advocate having threatened to ruin James Scott and his family, if he marry his daughter, and Mr Scott is gone to London.'

So, in spite of his pensiveness and the lady's plain speaking, Sir John was not to be turned aside from his purpose. However, one is glad to find that the lady escaped from the unwelcome union after all.

'November 10, 1697.—Mr Andrew told me the Advocate's daughter was married to James Scott, but that it was not known, and Swinton was still courting her,' &c.

We do not learn when Sir John discovered the truth, or what was the lady's fate afterwards; but Sir John certainly did not remain long inconsolable, as on February 17 following he married Ann Sinclair, a daughter of Sir Robert Sinclair of Longformacus. It may interest some to note that the second daughter of this marriage married Dr Rutherford in Edinburgh, and was the grandmother of Sir Walter Scott.

We are accustomed to hear people talk about the violent and rough manners of our Scot-

tish forebears; but a little delving amongst old documents teaches us that in this matter, as in many others, it is wise to avoid generalisation. There is, of course, no doubt that roughness and violence did exist in those old days—indeed, they are not altogether things of the past; but by the better class of Scotsmen they were deplored then, just as we deplore them to-day.

If people take the trouble to speak at all about the Scots as they were in olden days, it is generally to say something disparaging about them. They would have us believe that not merely were they a violent and mannerless race, but uncomplaining, and indifferent to the ordinary usages of society. But although some people may display bad manners, it is no evidence that such manners are approved. A few scattered quotes that were written by a Scottish hand about the year 1700 will help to illustrate this.

'December 29, 1699.—When I went to the street I met with William Proven, who told me my Lord Provost (who was married yesterday) desired I might dine with him. I excused myself, being engaged to Dr Stevensone; besides, I thought it was too short warning. He said he had been at my chamber, but nobody would answer. I told him I had not been abroad all the morning.'

'June 10, 1705.—Towards evening Sir John Swinton's lady sent in a servant desiring Robie [the writer's young son] might come out that she might see him. I thought this a little extraordinary, that anybody should call for my son without calling for me; yet I was going out to wait on her till, by chance asking for Sir John, the servant said he was in the coach with her. Then I thought there might be some slight designed in the case, and bid the boy [the servant] tell them they should be welcome to come in. He [Sir John] pretended being late, and several things. I bid him [the servant] tell them again, if they would come in they should be welcome, otherwise I would not send him [the son] out. So he [the servant] went out, and they went off. I have rarely seen such breeding, to come to a gentleman's house and call for his son, and at the gates, and not a word of himself. Looks as if I kept a boarding school, or a stocking a quarrel!'

These two anecdotes would rather lead us to suppose that the standard of etiquette was distinctly higher in those old days than it is now; and it is to be feared that if the writer of that entry could visit us to-day, his ideas on the subject of good-breeding would receive some severe shocks.

III.

A pleasant, friendly feeling seems to have existed in old days in Scotland betwixt landlord and tenant. The landlord attended the
weddings and the funerals of his tenants and servants, and took a kindly interest in their troubles. The following reflection, written down on June 17, 1694, by a Scottish laird after he had had a long talk with one of his tenants, indicates that the Scottish peasantry, even two hundred years ago, must have been shrewd and intelligent:

"I find it is a gentleman's interest, who is conversant in country affairs, to hear country people, especially the most intelligent, talk of business. They think of nothing else, and so are ready to make more solid remarks than gentlemen, who are more taken up with other things."

But shrewd common sense was not lacking in the upper classes either. The two following replies to requests for advice might serve as useful models at the present day, though they were spoken many, many long years ago. In the first case, a friend asked what course the writer would advise him to pursue, as his daughter wished to marry one man, while he wanted her to marry another.

"May 5, 1704.—I told him, if I were to determine the case, he might be sure the parent's inclinations would always balance me; though, if I were in the parent's place, I would be loath to impose on my child."

THE LOAFER.

IV.—BEGGING.

"Oh, yes," said Buliver, as the porter was helping him on with his coat, "I know all about that. But look at the fag of it."

"He was talking to the man who looked as if he had been a great deal round. They had come down from the cardroom, and they were going home.

"You had quite a run of luck, Buliver—quite a run. How much did you win?"

"Oh, about twenty five pounds. But look at the fag of it. Why I play cards I don't know. It always tires me. What I like to do is to take things easy—absolutely easy."

"Why are you always so ready to play, then?"

"Foolishness," answered Buliver—"foolishness. Man is, of all brutes, the most complicated. What I really like is peace and quiet and calm. I love to do nothing, to leaf, to dream. You ask me why I am always so ready to endure the fag of cards. And I ask you another—Why is man such a mass of contradiction? Why, oh, why?" He turned to the porter. "Get us a taxi," he said.

"No," said his friend. "We'll walk. It'll do you good."

And they left the club together.

In the second case, a friend told the writer that a match had been proposed to him.

"He asked my opinion about it. I told him I had made a resolution never to give advice in marriages, &c."

A pleasant little touch of kindness and goodwill comes to us across the wide gap of years, and shows us that a woman's lot in those days was not so hard as many people would like to make out.

"October 3, 1698.—MEM. Dr Trotter was here on Saturday and spoke to me of a match with Julian, and desired my countenance. I told him that my sister's part was to please herself in a choice, mine, to see provisions, &c. I wait to speak to the Chancellor in it."

"So, through good days and evil days, in those long past years, men and women acted their little parts in life's drama. The staging was somewhat rude than it is now, but the acting was much the same, for the passions that sway the human mind do not change. They survive through the ages, though the actors—even the men who felt those passions most poignantly—having played their parts and made their bows to the audience, pass one by one away behind the curtain, to be, in most cases, as completely forgotten as the play in which they had borne a part."

'Tell me of this ideal spot of yours,' said Buliver, 'this Granada. I should like very much to go there. You mentioned it at dinner. And two or three times to-night, as I was playing, the thought of it came to me. What is it like? Is it really, as you say, a dream paradise? Come, tell me all about it."

'It's impossible. But I'll do as well as I can. It's a wonderful jewel of a town set in the midst of great mountains. And the sun shines there as I have never seen it shine anywhere else. In it guitars are always sounding. I hear them sounding even now as I tell you of it. No one ever does anything. The people are the most delightful I have ever met. They are picturesque, and idle, and lazy, and gracious. Life goes on in a vague, enchanted way.'

'What about the Alhambra? What is it like?'

'Ah, the Alhambra! It is the crown, the glory, of this wonderful town. It overlooks it, is just above it. In it are great, cool, green elms under which you can sit and sit through the whole of the day. And as you sit you can hear the music of the water as it runs down from the great mountains, the Sierra Nevada. You can see in the distance the snow-covered tops of the mountains. They are as mountains seen in a dream. The Alhambra itself is as if