A SCOTTISH LAIRD OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

By Lady Skerrington.

A GREAT deal has been said and written about the state of barbarism in which our Scottish ancestors lived until after the time of the Union; and if a thing is repeated sufficiently often, and with sufficient assurance, it is generally in the end accepted as true. The descriptions of the country that gave rise to these traditions were mostly written by English travellers, who recorded in far from flattering terms their impressions of the country and of the people. But it would have been too much to expect that after the two nations had lived at enmity for hundreds of years, they should suddenly settle down to live in brotherly love merely because they happened to be both ruled by one king. It is easy to comprehend that the English traveller would look upon all things Scottish with a prejudiced eye; and it is equally probable that the Scots looked upon these travellers as strangers spying out the land, and therefore did not trouble to show them what was best in their country.

Even though the Union is an old story now, Scotland has retained her distinctive nationality to this day. It often happens that a Scotsman when travelling abroad will be asked, 'Monsieur is English?' And he will immediately reply, 'Oh no; I am Scotch.' He knows, of course, if he comes to think of it, that he is British, but he would never allow himself to be described as English! This is a peculiarity that few English people realise.

Fortunately a few documents have come down to us that emanated from Scottish sources; and of these not the least interesting is the diary of George Home of Kinnerghame. He was not merely a laird of some importance in Berwickshire, but was related to many of the most influential men of the day in Scotland; therefore these records, which cover a period between 1694 and 1705, ending only ten days before the writer's death, give a wonderfully vivid picture of the life of a Scottish laird of that period.

The diary is a model in its way. It is beautifully written, but in such minute characters that it is almost necessary to use a magnifying-glass to read it. Scarcely a day was allowed to pass without some entry being made. The state of the weather, the direction of the wind, and careful details of his domestic arrangements were recorded, as well as matters of graver importance.

George Home seldom alludes to his early life, though he had been made the hero of a curious and romantic story. The Laird of Ayton, in Berwickshire, who must have died some years previous to 1677, had left his whole estate to his only child Jean. As she was very young, she was bequeathed to the care of the Countess of Home, who was directed to bring her before the Earl of the Privy Council when she should be twelve years old, so that she might choose her curators in the presence of her general kindred.

Certain members of the Home clan, however, seem to have thought that they could arrange the child's future better themselves. Accordingly, in December 1677, when she was nearly twelve years of age, a number of them, amongst whom were Sir Patrick Home (afterwards first Earl of Marchmont), Robert Home of Kinnerghame, Home of Ninewells, Johnstone of Hilton, and others, abducted the child, and carried her over the Border. There 'they, in a most unchristian manner, carried the poor young gentlewoman up and down like a prisoner, protracting the time till they should know how to make the best bargain in bestowing her, and who should offer most. They did, at last, send John Home of Ninewells to Edinburgh, and take a poor young boy, George Home, son to Kinnerghame, out of his bed, and marry him to the said Jean the very day she should have been presented to the Council.'

The ceremony was wholly irregular, and performed by an English minister, 'opening thereby a new way to slight the clergy of Scotland.'

The Council dealt with the offending parties in strict terms of the statutes which they had broken. The young husband lost his interest jure marii, the young wife hers jure veliceti. The former was fined in five hundred pounds Scots, and the latter in a thousand merks. Ninewells and Hilton were also fined, the Earl of Home was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle, and the young couple suffered three months' imprisonment there.

Of the after fate of the poor little bride nothing seems to be known, except that she died in 1684, and left no children. Lord Croesrig, in his Domestic Details, mentions that George Home went to France in that same year. Probably, like many other Scottish gentlemen at that period, he found it advisable to seek the hospitality of some other country during those troublesome times. 'This was a sad year for the country,' Lord Croesrig writes, 'with circuit courts, and imprisonments, and Polwatt fled in harvest.'—Polwatt being Sir Patrick Home of Polwath, who was afterwards first Earl of Marchmont. Lord Croesrig adds later that 'against the mind of all his friends, George Home returned to Scotland in 1687.' His second marriage must have taken place shortly after, for in 1694 he is again a widower with one little boy two years old. The second wife
was the only child of Sir James Primrose of Barnbogle, elder brother of the first Viscount Rosebery, who is frequently alluded to in the diary.

A thing that strikes one as particularly noticeable, after reading George Home's careful record of his daily life, is that the life of a country laird in those often days must have been a good deal livelier than it is now. Rarely a day passed without at least one visitor turning up at Kimmergame, and often there were half-a-dozen or more. Certainly the visiting hours were much less restricted than they are now. Friends occasionally appeared as early as four o'clock in the morning, which in our more sophisticated days we might find embarrassing, but which seems to have been taken quite as a matter of course by George Home. When he was not receiving visits he was busy paying them. Polworth House (afterwards called Redbraes Castle), Nisbet, Wedderburn, Kaims, Blackadder, The Hirsol, Hutton Hall, Duns Castle, and many others were frequently visited; and all the neighbours seem to have taken a keen interest in one another's affairs.

Another thing that is very noticeable is the wonderful standard of culture that seems to have prevailed amongst the circle of friends who are alluded to in the diary. It is doubtful whether, in the present day, country lairds anywhere in the United Kingdom are in the habit of taking up for their recreation biographies and histories written in French or Latin. Yet these were in such request in Scotland at the end of the seventeenth century that, when visits were paid, volumes were generally carried round and exchanged. George Home apparently suffered in very much the same way as lenders of books do nowadays, and he kept a special book in which he carefully recorded the borrowing and the return of his books. In June 1694 he writes: 'Came home by John Fish at Castletlaw's house. He was not at home, but I found his wife. I found upon the table Bacon's History of Henry the VII., which I lent him ten years ago. I brought it home with me; but he has spoiled the binding of it miserably; and beside inked it so in several places that it is not, or hardly, legible.'

On another occasion the diarist mentions that Sir John Home of Blackadder—his cousin, and near neighbour—had been over to see him; and they had spent the afternoon reading 'Boileau's Letters,' an occupation that might overtax the energies even of the enlightened and civilised country gentlemen of the present day.

One extravagance that George Home laments is his expenditure on books. In 1694 he found that he had spent during the past two years one hundred and seventy-one pounds nineteen shillings, and remarks sadly: 'A little money given out from day to day comes to a considerable sum at the year's end.'

Though George Home's general reading was of such a solid description, he seems to have taken a very vivid interest in the events of the day, and constantly mentions that he has written to some friend in Edinburgh or London for news of what was happening; indeed, his correspondence seems to have been voluminous.

Sir Patrick Home, who was first made Lord Polwarth, and afterwards Earl of Marchmont, and who was one of the last of the Lords Chancellor of Scotland before the Union, was a near relation and also a near neighbour. George Home was frequently over at Polwarth House, and he always seized the opportunity to read the News Letter, The Gazette, or the Flying Post; and he enters carefully in his diary any matters of importance he may have gleaned from them. These were the days of the ill-fated Darien enterprise, and George Home has much to say about it, and about the 'Africain Company.'

At present it is the habit to write and speak as if interest in education had entirely originated in this enlightened era. It is, therefore, instructive to read of the trouble and anxiety expended upon the subject by Scottish lairds more than two hundred years ago. In 1697 we find recorded by George Home, who was in Edinburgh, and had left his sister Julian in charge of his only child, Robie, who was then five years old: 'I wrote to Julian to see if she could entice Robie to ask a lesson from her by engaging John Lidgate to ask one.' John Lidgate was the manservant. This shows not merely anxiety about the child's education, but a kindly and tactful way of dealing with a child, which one would scarcely have expected.

In another place he says: 'Sir John Home came over to see me. We spent much time considering the best way to teach our little ones Latin.' It is to be doubted whether a consideration of this subject would seriously disturb the equanimity of the Berwickshire lairds of the present day!

George Home and his friends were constantly lending one another books which dealt with the subject of education, and also books for the instruction of the children. When Robie was eight he was already learning Latin, had begun to study French with his father, and had been provided with a tutor.

The care bestowed upon Robie's education does not seem to have been exceptional, for the school at Duns was already of some importance. In 1700 we find the scholars acting a play, to which their friends and relations were invited; and the description of the performance might serve quite well for that of a similar entertainment at a modern school.

At another time George Home mentions that the two sons of Sir John Home of Blackadder had passed by Kimmergame on their way to stay with their uncle, Sir Walter Pringle of Stichell, so that they might be taught writing.
by the tutor of their cousins, who was a specially expert writer. Robie and the other boys seemed to be supplied with lesson-books, dictionaries, &c. with the same painful frequency that is deemed necessary for the modern schoolboy.

In agricultural matters, as in education, the interest and knowledge seem to have been much greater than is generally credited. We find George Home recounting, quite as a matter of course, that having found blight on the barley, ‘like a small orange-coloured dust just under the beard,’ he took some of it home with him, and examined it under a microscope. He adds: ‘It looks round and transparent like amber, whence I imagine it is the spawn of some fly.’ Whether or not he was right in his idea, it at any rate shows what an intelligent interest was taken by country lairds of that time in agricultural matters. In the present day country gentlemen do not generally keep a microscope at hand wherewith to puzzle out such questions. If they had such an instrument, it is doubtful if many of them would know how to use it.

In ordinary household matters we might, with advantage, take some hints from our far-away ancestors. Whenever a new servant came to Kimmerghame a careful inventory was taken of everything that was placed under her care, and two copies made, one for the servant and one retained by George Home. When the servant left, this inventory was checked. In his choice of servants the diarist was very particular, and in 1695 he writes: ‘Margaret Johnstone came home yesternight, and this night told me that she was going away, but had engaged one of her sisters in her place. I told her I did not desire to have servants till I had seen them and agreed with them myself.’

In September 1700 the terms of the engagement of a manservant are entered in the diary in a most business-like manner: ‘I hired Jammy Orange, who was once with Lady Hiltone; he is to come home after Ayton Fair-day. I am to give him a livery coat, and breeches, and a pair of shoes in the half year, and £6 Scots. The livery is mine, and he is to wear his own clothes at work; and is to run and ride as I shall order him, thrust, ditch, and go to the coals.’

English writers have constantly stated with horror that no drinks were known in Scotland except light sour claret and thin new beer. If a large variety of alcoholic drinks is really the hallmark of civilisation, this stigma of barbarism may be for ever removed from the Scottish people, as George Home and his friends had quite a goodly assortment of liquors: beer and ale, brandy, rum, French light wine, sack, and flasks of wine from Florence. ‘But these last,’ George Home remarks, ‘we did not care for, as we thought them composed.’

If we were to believe English writers, roads, suited to vehicular traffic were unknown in Scotland until after the Union, ‘even the most delicate ladies being obliged to make all their journeys on horseback.’ It is, therefore, interesting to read that most of George Home’s friends owned carriages in which they drove about paying visits, and in which they travelled when they made journeys. ‘Coachers, ’caleches, ’Berlins, ‘chariettes’ are all mentioned; and there were, at any rate, three routes by which the Berwickshire gentry used to drive to and from Edinburgh. One route was by what is called ‘the west road.’ This went by Westruther, Lauder, Ginglekirk (now Channelkirk), and over Soutra Hill. Another route was by the ‘post road,’ by Preston, Quixwood, and Butterdene, Blackburn, Eccles, and Fulfordles to the post-house at Cockburnspath. As there is generally a good deal of discussion as to the old pronunciation of names, it is interesting to note that George Home always spells Cockburnspath ‘Coheraspath,’ and, as his spelling of names is always phonetic, we may conclude that that is how the name was then pronounced. The third driving route went from Berwick through Ayton, and over Coldingham moor to Cockburnspath and Dunbar.

George Home himself generally travelled on horseback, and very often used another road by Preston, and across the moors to Gifford. But this was probably only a bridle-road, as he never mentions meeting any coaches upon it, as he does upon the others. Even this road cannot have been very bad, as he records, on one occasion, that he left Edinburgh at twelve o’clock, dined at Gifford, and reached Kimerghame at eight o’clock. This meant good going, as the distance must have been at least forty-two miles, and for a good part of the way over wild hill and moorland. On arriving in Edinburgh, on another occasion, he writes: ‘The way was extremely well-paved and good, so that I told them that asked me that the sands of Musselburgh was the worst way I had got; and they were as good as they were used to be.’

In the present day people are fond of recording the time taken for runs by cycle or motor; but the taste is not a new one. Over two hundred years ago we find George Home timing himself on a ride from Kelso to Kimerghame just as carefully and minutely as might be done now: ‘About 2 o’clock I took horse, and came home. From Kelso to Ednam I rode in 21 minutes, from that to Eccles in 33, to Mersinton in 24, from that to Thos. Mitchel’s in 29, from that home in about as much.’

Before the end of the seventeenth century there were both hackney-carriages and mourning-coaches in Edinburgh. At the funeral of Lady Anne Hall, a daughter of the first Earl of Marchmont, three mourning-coaches followed the hearse to Dunglasse, and ‘a hackney with the Lord Provost of Edinburgh.’

In those early days Scottish lairds had already begun to take a great interest in their gardens
and in arboriculture. Frequent mention is made of orders for large consignments of fruit-trees from Holland, and of seeds of various kinds of trees and of vegetables, which were got from London. Several of the neighbouring lairds seem to have combined, and sent an order at the same time, which probably reduced the cost of carriage. The packages were sent by sea to Berwick or Leith. It seems likely that thorn hedges were already being used, as in February 1699 the diarist notes: 'I got a letter from Sir John Swintone for 1000 thorns, which I granted, he promising me that number of Dutch ones next year.'

It is pathetic to read how many out of the circle of George Home's friends and relations seem to have died from consumption. People were constantly sinking into a 'decline,' and then wasting away. As the favourite remedy for all ailments was bleeding, it is perhaps scarcely surprising that it is never recorded that any one recovered. On two occasions, however, quite a modern course of treatment was followed. On the one occasion two ladies who were threatened with consumption were sent to Alva 'to drink the goat's milk.' On the other, Baillie of Jerviswood, who was suffering from rheumatism and deafness, was sent to Prestonpans for steam baths at the salt-pans; but, as with the salt-water treatment of modern times, the relief seems to have been only temporary. Doctors were apparently quite well paid, for the diarist records the fees he pays on the occasion of their visits, and a guinea seems to have been a usual payment.

George Home was evidently not a greedy man, as he seldom writes anything about food, except on such occasions as when he was invited 'to eat a solan goose,' which was apparently deemed a delicacy. But he always records the orders he has sent to Berwick or Edinburgh for things for the household, and the lists are curiously reminiscent of our own. Oranges, lemons, prunes, coarse sugar, a sugar-loaf, spices, and so on seem to indicate that the style of living cannot have been very rough; and whenever a messenger was sent to one of the towns, he was always ordered to bring back a loaf of white bread.' At other times scenes were probably used instead; and mention is made of peas being stored for the servants' hannocks. The appearance of the first dish of asparagus, green peas, strawberries, &c. is generally noted, and the dates compare quite favourably with the dates at which they appear in the present century.

An old diary brings back with wonderful vividness, across the mists of years, scenes and people that have long passed away. Little incidents and anecdotes are recorded that would have been ignored as trivial by the historian, or probably might not have been known to him. But it is just such small details that clothe the dry bones of history with life and interest. Here is an account of an incident in Edinburgh in 1700: 'We have had one account that the Spaniards had sent 3000 men from Carthagena to attack our colony. Our people, having intelligence, sent 300 men, who lay in ambush and defeated them, killing 300 of them. It seems, on the news of this, the Marquis of Tweedale had some friends with him, and put up illuminations; several others did the like. Upon which the mob gathered, and, having first secured the Ports, went and broke all the glass windows in the street that had not out illuminations. Then they fell on the Town Guard, and disarmed them; then went to the Advocate, and desired to be admitted, which was presently done. There they demanded a warrant to set at liberty Heugh Paterson, the apothecary, and Watson, the printer, whom the Council had imprisoned for printing and disposing the Grievances.'

'The Advocate was wise enough not to deny them anything they demanded, telling them, "My hearts, you shall have it," and presently signed it.

'And, when they were going away, he said to them: "My hearts, cast no more stones at the glass windows." Being asked "Why?" "Lost it be ye miss the windows, and the stones hit the walls and come back, and hurt some of yourselves!"'

'From that they went to the Tolbooth, and the Keepers having retired, they set fire to the door, and got in; and not only took out the two mentioned, but dismissed all the prisoners (except two). Lantone got out, and is come home, and gone to England. They broke up Senfield's cellar, and drunk out his wine. The magistrates dust not appear. B. Johnstone, who thought he might have friends amongst them, returned, but was beaten by them. There are some killed, either of the guard by the mob, or of the last by them. They say there were several gentlemen with them, and that Earl of Marchall and Lord Drummond were seen with them. Row's regiment is now in possession of the Ports, and I think there is a design to make trial, and prosecute the ringleaders.'

A few days afterwards there is an entry which, at the present time, one reads with an understanding sympathy.

'I got a letter from Sir John with a doleful account of our Darien affair. He tells me that when all were big with the former account of our victory, there came on Wednesday night account that the Spaniards had attacked us by sea and land, and routed us, and forced our people to capitulate. This, it seems, he looks on as certain, but tells not what way it came; but says that the Spaniards could not have done it without the help of their allies. God, who brought light out of darkness, I hope will yet bring good out of all these troubles; let
us pray our sins may not stop His mercies; and
grant, Oh Lord, that I may so number my days
that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.'

'It gives one to think,' as the French say,
when one reads the daily jottings of a man who
died two hundred and eleven years ago, and
when one realises how little progress we have
made since his day in the things that really
matter. Of course, there were men then, just as
there are now, who acted meanly and dishonour-
ably; but on the whole, after finishing the read-
ing of the diary of George Home, one's chief
feeling is that one has had the privilege of being
admitted into the society of cultured, honourable,
and interesting people. Their readiness to help
and advise one another, and to sympathise in
one another's joys and sorrows, might well serve
as an example to us in the present day; and
they deserve to be honoured and remembered,
as this old manuscript ensures shall be the case.

THE KOLA PENINSULA, OR RUSSIAN LAPLAND.

By G. LINDSEY.

According to information recently received
from Norwegian sources, it would appear
that the line of railway which is to place
Petrograd in direct communication—vid Kun, on
the south-western shore of the White Sea, and
Kandalaks—with an ice-free harbour on the
Murman coast of the Kola Peninsula will in
all probability be completed before the end of
the year. Interest, therefore, attaches to that
remotely situated portion of the Russian Empire.

The great Kola Peninsula, which may be
described as bounded on the east by the White
Sea, on the north by the Arctic Ocean, on the
west by Norway and Finland, and on the south
by the White Sea and Karelia, covers an area
of approximately forty thousand geographical
square miles, of which at least one-half consists
of treeless and barren tundra, about three-eighths
of forest (pine and birch), and the remainder of
lakes and swamps. Its water-systems may con-
veniently be divided into two groups: those
which flow northwards into the Arctic, and
those which discharge into the White Sea. Of
the former, the most important, between the
Norwegian frontier and the Kola Fjord, are the
Pisoin, Bomenijok, Latscha, Oru, Tschadnajok,
Tulern, and Kola or Guolejok; while the vast
tracts of desolate tundra which extend from
the Kola Fjord to the east coast are traversed by
a number of streams, of which the largest are the
Tiriberka, Vuronge, and Jokonga. The Tschad-
vanga, Varsuga, and Umba flow southwards, as
does the Niva, which discharges the waters of
the beautiful Imandra Lake into the Gulf of
Kandalaks. The only river which runs from
west to east is the Ponoj, a majestic stream,
which is more than half a mile wide at the
mouth. With the exception of the Niva, which
has a very rapid course, none of these rivers
presents any natural obstacles in the way of falls
to the migratory fish, and salmon ascend with-
out difficulty to their upper waters. As a rule,
ice begins to form on the lakes about the end
of October, and does not break up again until
the following May. By a provision of nature,
heavy falls of snow invariably occur before the
setting in of severe cold, so that the ice is
prevented from attaining a degree of thickness
which would be injurious to fish-life.

In addition to salmon, the inland waters of
Russian Lapland abound with trout, grayling,
and pike, so that when peace returns once more
it is probable that British anglers will take
advantage of the new railway in order to exploit
this wide field of enterprise. Here, however,
it may be interpolated that whereas salmon may
be taken with the rod in Finmarken in the
middle of June, they do not make their appear-
ance in the Kola Fjord until a month later, and
in the Gulf of Kandalaks until August. The
Murman coast, which extends for a distance of
nearly three hundred miles from the Norwegian
frontier on the Jakobselv to Syjatoinou (the Holy
Cape) at the entrance to the White Sea, has
long been celebrated for the quantities of fish
which frequent it. Of these the most important
species is the cod; but halibut, coal-fish, had-
docks, and flounders are also captured in large
numbers.

With regard to the herring, a well-known
Russian writer states that 'they occur along the
cost from the Kola Fjord to Archangel, a
distance of one thousand versts. They are also
taken in the Gulf of Kandalaks and along the
coast to Petschora, a distance of fifteen hundred
versts, and they are captured still farther to
the eastward at the mouths of the Obi and
Yenisei.' 'To the Kola Fjord in autumn,' says
Bogualav Bjomorowski, 'there come such shoals
of herring that the inhabitants catch more than
they know what to do with by means of nets
set just outside their houses,' and in his
Statistical Survey of Russia Nabokinski remarks:
'When the herring come in from the Arctic to
the White Sea—generally in July—they are
often so closely packed together that they form
huge solid masses. Followed by other fish, they
enter the fjords, bays, and mouths of the rivers
in such numbers that they cover the shores for
long distances.... The White Sea herring,' adds
this writer, 'are fat, white, and of good
flavour, and when salted are not at all inferior
to the Dutch.'

In the middle of the sixteenth century the