

# Transactions

OF THE

## BANFFSHIRE FIELD CLUB.



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MONDAY, MARCH 19, 1928.

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Mr Alistair Tayler of Glenbarry journeyed from London at the week-end to give the Banffshire Field Club another delightful paper, which was heard with high appreciation by a representative company at a meeting of the Club at Banff this evening. His subject on this occasion was Banffshire M.Ps. from the Union of the Parliaments till the present time, and it was dealt with in Mr Tayler's able and authoritative way.

Sheriff More, president of the Club, presided and remarked that he need hardly say anything in introducing Mr Tayler to the Banffshire Field Club because on two occasions in the last two years they had been fortunate in having him read papers of the very greatest interest historically to the county of Banff. That night he was to give them some account of the Members of Parliament for the county since the Union of the Parliaments in 1707, and he assured Mr Tayler of a very hearty welcome from members of the Club. Mr Tayler, unfortunately, lived in London—why, he did not quite know—but he was really a Banffshire man. His heart was in Banffshire and it seemed like wasting good material on the Sassenachs for him to be living in such a poor, benighted place as London. (Laughter.) But when Mr Tayler got the chance of coming to Banffshire he always jumped at it and came all that way to give them of his great knowledge of Banffshire history in the form of those intensely interesting papers of his, papers that future historians of Banffshire would find of the greatest possible use and interest to subsequent generations of the people of the county. It was a great thing in any community to have somebody who could wrest them from oblivion and put into permanent form much that was of the greatest interest about the past. It was a pity more of that had not been done, but Banffshire had been fortunate in having such writers as Cra-

mond and Imlach and so on to preserve some of its valuable history. Mr Tayler was a more than worthy successor to those writers in the work in which he was engaged at present and which he communicated to the outer world by means of the Club. He thought they should feel very flattered and complimented that he should do that very useful work through the Field Club, not only for the Club, but for the whole county of Banff. His contributions to the history of the county genealogical and, that night, political, were things that would be kept and would be treasured, he knew perfectly well, by future historians of the county. (Cheers.)

### BANFFSHIRE M.Ps.

Mr Tayler's paper, which was heard with high appreciation, was as follows:—

Previous to the date (in the reign of Queen Anne) at which the Union of the two Governments took place, Scotland had her own Parliament, called the Estates, to which the Freeholders of the various counties and burghs elected Commissioners, and the nobles attended, in virtue of the office of Duke, Marquis or Earl conferred upon them by the Crown, but all sat in one Chamber. Down to the date of the Union of the Crowns, 1603, "the Estates" were elected annually, which did not of course prevent the same Commissioner from sitting for a great number of years. After that date the Parliaments were triennial.

When the separate Scottish Estates were abolished, the number of members to be sent to the British Parliament was fixed at 45 (30 for the counties and 15 for the burghs), and all freeholders who held an estate worth £400 Scots (about £33) had a vote in the counties. In the poorer counties this meant very few voters, but on the other hand the owners of large estates could "make" or split votes by granting a nominal superiority over small portions of these estates to their political supporters and they frequently did so. When all the electors were known by sight to the returning officer and voting was open (often indeed by show of hands), the elections were

almost entirely controlled by the great men of the country, and members were chosen from among the great families.

### **1. Alexander Abercromby of Glassaugh, 1707-27.**

Alexander Abercromby of Glassaugh was the eldest son of Alexander Abercromby and his wife, Katherine Dunbar of Grangehill, and succeeded his grandfather, John, in Glassaugh. His wife was Helen, daughter of John Meldrum of Crombie and Laithers. He represented Banffshire in Parliament for over twenty years, being re-elected six times. He sat in the last Scottish Parliament at Edinburgh before the Union with England, for which measure he voted, having succeeded as M.P. Alexander Duff of Braco, a keen opponent of the Union, who threatened to behead any supporter of the same "like a sybow" (spring onion). Alexander Duff died on 19th December 1705 and Abercromby was elected in 1706, mainly through the influence of the Lord Chancellor Seafield. The Scots Parliament met on 3rd October 1706, and the Act ratifying the Union was passed 16th January and consummated on 1st May 1707, but in terms of the treaty the Scots members in the first Parliament of Great Britain, much reduced in numbers (45, as said above) were elected not by their constituents, but by the expiring Scots Parliament. Alexander Abercromby was so elected for Banffshire, and retained his seat until 1727. He died in 1728, and left by his marriage with Helen Meldrum, two sons and four daughters. The eldest son, James, later General James Abercromby of Glassaugh, was afterwards M.P. for Banffshire. One daughter, Katherine, married Alexander Innes of Rosseburn, and was grandmother of Catherine, wife of Captain John Byron and mother of Lord Byron.

### **2. William Duff of Braco, 1727-34.**

He was eldest son of William Duff of Dipple and through the failure of heirs male to his uncle, Alexander of Braco, succeeded to the family estates. Both his uncle and his father had been very good business men, and William Duff of Braco was no unworthy follower in this respect. It was he who made the large pur-

chases of the forfeited estates of the Earl of Mar, and thus founded the Aberdeenshire property of the Fife family (almost all that now remains to them of the vast estates in three counties owned by William Duff, 1st Lord Fife).

William Duff was born in 1697, and was remarkably well educated for a country gentleman of the period (even in Scotland!). In addition to the Classics, Philosophy and Mathematics taught at all Scots universities, he was well versed in modern languages and in history, and was probably the most cultivated and efficient member of Parliament for the North of Scotland at the period. He was elected in 1727 for Banffshire to the new Parliament called upon the demise of George I., and sat for seven years.

The story of his contribution to a debate on the subject of Hessian troops, told by his brother-in-law, William Baird, must be given again:—

“In 1730 a debate came on whether to continue the Hessian troops in British pay. William Duff stood up in his place and said that the affection of the people was the best security of the Government, and if they possess that, there would be no occasion for hiring mercenary forces from any foreign country in time of peace; and besides it was reasonable to give our own Fish-guts to our own Sea-maws (Gulls). The English members did not understand this phrase, but when explained to them, said it was a most significant and judicious expression.”

William Duff had ceased to be member for Banffshire by the time of the Jacobite rising, the seat being then held by his brother-in-law, and when Hessian, Dutch, Danish, and Swiss troops were all brought over and paid with good British money to fight against British men, he must have felt torn between his support of the Hanoverian throne and his natural dislike to letting money leave the country (and glad, perhaps, that he did not have to vote on it). He was an ardent supporter of King George and the Protestant succession, whether entirely from conviction or with some views as to the rise of a new family under the new dynasty has sometimes been doubted. He belonged to that section of the Whigs which opposed Walpole.

When Cumberland came to Banff on his way to Culloden in April 1746 William Duff, then Lord Braco, entertained him and gave £250 of drink money to his troops. Having established friendly relations with the redoubtable young leader, he was emboldened to ask for protections for various friends and relatives on the other side; notably William Baird, whose account of him is very laudatory, only tempered by a hint that he was rather too fond of managing other people and trying to run the whole business of Banff, Aberdeen and Moray. Baird adds: "After all, it must be acknowledged that considering his large property and numerous connections in the County of Banff, he was extremely well entitled to the greatest political interest in it, and that in Moray where his estate paid a third part of the Land Tax of the whole shire, it was unreasonable in any other great family to propose to make a Cypher of him."

While a Member of Parliament, William Duff seems to have attended pretty closely to his duties (the sessions of those days being limited to the spring and summer months). He had married in 1723 his second wife, Jean Grant, whose father, Sir James, was member for the Elgin Burghs, and before the end of his parliamentary career, three sons and three daughters were born to him. He was a voluminous, if somewhat illegible correspondent to his adored wife, and at the close of one letter (written from London and full of politics), he adds "God give us a happy meeting for long doe I think to see you—I know not how it is with you, but I assure you that I find it very cold to be here without a bed fellow."

After 1734 he no longer went to London, but he had much business which took him to Edinburgh, being as he himself says, "like all Scotsmen, litigious."

In 1735 his loyalty to the reigning house brought its reward, in his elevation to the Irish Peerage with the title of Baron Braco, and in 1759 he was advanced to be Earl Fife and Viscount Macduff, also "of Ireland." These titles did not, of course, give him a seat in the British Parliament, and he never took

the trouble to take the one to which he was entitled in the Irish House of Lords. He died on 30th September 1763.

### 3. James Abercromby, 1734-54.

The successor to William Duff of Braco as member for Banffshire was James Abercromby, eldest son of the Alexander Abercromby of Glassaugh who had preceded William Duff. He was already in the army at his first election in 1734, but it is not until the second time he presented himself to the electors, in 1741, that he is described as Captain. He became eventually Colonel of the 44th Foot, but his military career was not specially distinguished. In 1745 he was commanding his regiment in the campaign against the French in Flanders, but in January 1746 he was with Cumberland's army before Carlisle, and later was back in London and in his place in Parliament.

He belonged to a Whig family and was in Government employ, so he was applied to, to intercede for several condemned Jacobites, especially Sir James Kinloch of Nevay on whose behalf he wrote a somewhat lukewarm letter, ending with "his wife is a relation of Mrs Abercromby, in fact, her sister." Sir James had more powerful advocates in all the ministers of the Presbytery in which Nevay is situated and was eventually pardoned.

Another letter, apparently wrung from Abercromby, was written on behalf of Francis Farquharson of Monaltrie and John Farquharson of Allargue, Jacobites who had both been reprieved but were still in Southwark gaol. He suggests that they might be removed to the house of a messenger "as this would give satisfaction to many of my constituents," i.e., the Farquharsons of Upper Banffshire. One feels that in their case also the tepid advocacy of the Member for Banffshire alone, would not have procured their release.

In 1754, Abercromby resigned his seat, being then a General, and went to North America in command of a portion of the Army operating against the French there. In the year 1758 he replaced Lord Loudoun in the chief

command. Pitt considered him as somewhat old for the post, and placed the more active Lord Howe as Brigadier on his staff.

Abercromby was certainly both slow and opinionated. Lord Chesterfield called him the "sedentary General," and a military history of the period describes him as "a vain and obtuse military Martinet." The French General Montcalm still more cruelly nicknamed him "Mrs Nebbycromby," and had apparently no fear of him whatever.

Early in July the British force, consisting of 9000 colonials and 6000 regulars, under Abercromby, crossed Lake George in order to besiege Ticonderoga, in which Montcalm was entrenched with only 4000 men. For some unknown reason the General himself with the guns remained on the shores of Lake George, while he sent the army, without artillery, to storm the fort. The result, in spite of superior numbers, was what might have been expected. The repulsed British troops rejoined their general, who conveyed them back to the south end of Lake George where they remained in camp for the rest of the season. On September 18, 1758, Abercromby was recalled, and replaced by Lord Amherst.

He married Mary Duff of Dipple, sister of William, Lord Braco, and had three sons who all died without issue, and two daughters, of whom the elder, Jean, married first George Morison of Haddo, and, secondly, Admiral Robert Duff of Fetteresso. Through her both Haddo and Glassaugh came into the family of Duff of Fetteresso, and her grandson, Arthur, who succeeded to Glassaugh, took the name of Abercromby. (He was the father of Robert William Duff, our member for 31 years, of whom we shall speak in due course.)

General James Abercromby died at Glassaugh in 1781, aged 74.

#### **4. James Duff, Viscount Macduff and 2nd Lord Fife, 1754-84.**

The fourth Member for Banffshire since the Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland,

was James Duff, son of William Duff of Braco, the 1st Lord Fife.

Fuller details about the parliamentary life of the day can be gathered from him than from any of the three previous holders of the seat, because of the mass of his correspondence which was so carefully preserved by his factor, William Rose. The privilege of sending unlimited letters, free of charge, was one of which he availed himself to its fullest extent, sometimes writing and despatching half a sheet more than once on the same day, giving details of budget proposals, election petitions, the wonderful eloquence of Burke, Pitt and Sheridan at their best, the American war, rows in the House, or later, the King's health and the progress of the Regency Cabal.

I feel I must guard against being too prolix in my account of this member—he is so very dear to my heart, and having lived in the midst of his vast correspondence for several years, I know him so much more intimately than any other of the twenty-one members for Banffshire, even those I have seen in the flesh. He was elected for the family seat of Banffshire in 1754 when twenty-five years old, and at least twice after that seems to have spent the greater part of the year on the Continent. Members of Parliament at that period frequently took long holidays from their duties, whether "paired" or not does not appear. Sir John Burgoyne was M.P. for Preston during the whole of his disastrous American campaign, and we have already seen that James Abercromby fought in Holland while member for Banffshire.

After his marriage in 1759, Lord Macduff, as he then was, made a prolonged residence with his wife in Luxembourg and France, and had his own house and foreign household. During all these travels he kept his eyes well open for details of domestic or farm management which might be of use to his compatriots and constituents, and there is something very quaint about the young M.P. on his travels explaining to his factor how the Germans economise coal by forming briquettes of coal-dust mixed with clay, and the Belgians make

their corn for feeding purposes go further by mixing it with finely chopped straw, both of which plans he recommends for use in Banffshire.

He is also most careful to answer letters from constituents wanting favours, such as an unconsciously humorous one from a cousin (Charles Baird), who says he fears he is very troublesome in asking for an appointment. "but I certainly will remain so until you have procured me one."

Or another letter from a minister, asking for the next presentation to a living of which the incumbent was reported to be dying. Lord Fife's interest procured this presentation from the Prime Minister of the day, with as little delay as foreign mails would allow, and then Mr Touch, the incumbent in question, did not die. Lord Fife merely remarks, somewhat ruefully, "I wish Mr Touch had declared his intention to recover, before I wrote to the Duke of Grafton."

After these excursions to the Continent, Lord Fife settled down seriously to his parliamentary duties, and arranged the course of his life so that almost the whole of the session should be spent in London, usually journeying south from Duff House before Christmas, even in the worst of weather (it took him five days), though he welcomed the change which came in 1785, after which date the session opened in January. He remained in London until May or June, when he returned to his Banffshire estates and then passed on to Mar for deer-stalking. As a true lover of the country and of fresh air, the confinement in the House of Commons was a real hardship to this conscientious legislator and he sometimes bursts forth to William Rose, as once on May 11, "We have the finest warm weather I have ever seen. I shall never bear the smell of the House of Commons!" In 1779 for some reason, whether delayed by snowstorms or otherwise, he did not reach London until February 22nd, and writes next morning, "I have been to pay my duty to the King, so far began right. You may be sure a gracious reception. I hope I shall make my peace at the House of Commons. I am ordered to attend 25th, next

Thursday, otherwise a messenger to be sent for me, so you see I have not much time to spare." A "call of the House" had been taken and he found absent. The rule in this case was that if no excuse for the Member's absence had been received, a messenger was sent to fetch him, wherever he might be, the cost of the messenger's journey being charged to the Member! So no doubt Lord Fife, who though generous, could not bear waste, wished to avoid the expense of post horses, &c., all the way to Duff House!

He was very assiduous in his duties, frequently sitting all night in the House and going for his morning ride as usual, without going to bed. He cannot resist rubbing in his own activity to William Rose, who seems to have been more than usually fond of his comfort and his bed!

During the thirty years in which Lord Fife sat for Banffshire, he never had any anxiety about his seat. His local influence was no doubt too great for that. He was re-elected in 1761, 1768, 1774, and 1780.

In 1784 Lord Fife declared his intention of resigning the Banffshire seat in favour of his natural son, Sir James Duff, and standing for Morayshire, in which county his territorial interest was equally great. At the same election, James Ferguson and George Skene were to contest Aberdeenshire, and a letter from John Durno, a law agent, throws a curious light on the way in which elections were then conducted. He thinks it will be a close fight, and that "any candidate with tolerable influence of his own must carry it, if supported by Lord Fife. The Duke of Gordon has declared that he will take little trouble in the matter, of which I doubt, unless the great men understand one another, in which case they may put in whom they please." At the same date William Abercromby, son to General James the former M.P., wrote to Lord Fife from Bath, offering to make the journey of 600 miles from Bath to vote for Sir James in Banffshire. "Think not of the inconvenience of my journey if I can be of use to you and yours." Apparently his offer was declined.

At the same time Charles Gordon of Wardhouse wrote thus to Lord Fife—

April 14, 1784.

My Lord,

I received your Lordship's letter soliciting my vote in the County of Moray at the present election. Since none of the family of *Gordon* are candidates, I know nobody who I would as readily support as Lord Fife and certainly should have attended at Elgin had any opposition appeared against you.

Both father and son were successfully elected and Lord Fife sat for five years longer in the House of Commons, representing Morayshire. In 1790 he was raised to the British Peerage and from that date until within a very few years of his death (which occurred in 1809), he was diligent in his attendance in the House of Lords, and spoke frequently and well on Scottish affairs and took part in some interesting debates, and in the six years' trial of Warren Hastings. He had therefore an active and uninterrupted Parliamentary career of over 50 years, quite a remarkable record. His politics, as with all those of the later 18th century, are very difficult to define. He was nominally a Whig, but became an ardent follower of Pitt, and his own personal feelings may be summed up in a phrase, which occurs over and over again in his letters—"I hate all change."

##### 5. Sir James Duff, 1784-89.

In the Dictionary of National Biography, Sir James Duff is described as the son of a mythical Alexander Duff of Kinstown. The political handbook of the period, compiled for the use of Pitt's opponents, notes concisely, "Sir James Duff of Kinstair got his vote from Lord Fife, whose son he is." Sir James' mother was Margaret Adam of Keith, of whom nothing is known save that she was throughout her life supported first by Lord Fife and then by Sir James, but in her old age was living in one room with an old woman to look after her. Letters on this subject were found among the Rose papers.

Sir James Duff, who was born in 1752, when his father was twenty-three, was educated first in Keith and afterwards at King's College, Aberdeen. A commission was obtained for

him in the First Foot Guards before his sixteenth birthday, and when he joined his Regiment in London he was a great deal with his father at Fife House, Whitehall, was universally recognised and became a favourite at Court.

In 1779, when he was 27 and a Captain, he was knighted by proxy for Sir James Harris, afterwards the first Lord Malmesbury, and his father, Lord Fife, who seems to have grudged him nothing, notes that "his abominable dress at the Procession will cost me £100." 1784

His standing for Parliament in 1874 was frankly done in order to increase the family influence in the North of Scotland. His father had held the seat for 30 years, and as the largest landowner in the county, looked on it almost as a family appanage. Indeed he wrote to Rose: "It is hard if I cannot have a seat for myself and one for Sir James also." Lord Fife finally decided, as we have seen, to stand for Morayshire. His letter to his former constituents asking them to vote for Sir James is curiously unlike those of the present day, in that it contains no suggestion of the services that Sir James will render to his constituents. It merely asks that he may be returned, as a favour to his father!—

Duff House, 3 April 1784.

Sir,

The day of the Election for the county of Banff is fixed for Thursday next the 8th Curt. I take this opportunity of thanking you for your kind support to myself on former occasions and to request that you will be so good as to be present on that day and give your vote for Sir James Duff, who I am certain will be grateful for the favour.

I am with great regard

Your most obedient humble servant,

FIFE.

James Duff himself wrote even more curtly to his prospective supporters—

March 22, 1784.

Sir,

Lord Fife having proposed me as a candidate for the County of Banff, I am to request the Honor of your support which will be an obligation I shall ever retain a grateful sense of.—I have the honor to be, sir, &c.,

JAS. DUFF.

Sir James was duly elected and sat in Par-

liament for nearly five years. He was an active and conscientious member, and served on many Parliamentary Committees, particularly one which sat in April 1785 on the disputed election for Kirkwall of the previous year. It will be remembered that Charles James Fox had stood simultaneously as one of the two members for Westminster and for the Orkney Burghs. While the validity of his majority over Sir Cecil Wray in Westminster was still in doubt, he took his seat for the Orkney Burghs after a Committee had sat upon that matter. Lord Fife writes with pride to William Rose, "Sir James is on the Kirkwall Committee. They did not leave another Scotsman on, so that is a compliment to him from both sides." Members were chosen by ballot to serve on these Committees of enquiry, and it is reasonable to suppose that Fox's friends would welcome Sir James Duff's help, because of his known attachment to Fox's friend the Prince of Wales.

At this time Sir James lived with his father, and when Lord Fife went north for deer-stalking, stayed on in Fife House alone. He also made a point of being there when the session opened, and in one hard winter wrote to his father, who was still at Duff House, "Your Lordship and Mr Wemyss are the only Scotch members absent," and to William Rose at the same time, "I hope my Lord will leave you as soon as the snow will allow him. Hurry him. In these times every man ought to stand forth and take a part."

On June 21, 1785, when his father had already gone north, he writes to him—

I have the pleasure of acquainting you that Mr Pitt has agreed to make the following alterations respecting the duty on horses. That farmers are to be exempted under a certain yearly rent, and none liable to the Tax who do not keep a horse for the saddle only, and that those occasionally riding Horses used for labour, either to Church or to Market shall not be liable to the Tax. This last will in my opinion obviate the grievance the people in Scotland complained of. The late hour and my being fearful of missing the bellman prevents my enlarging any more at present.

Your Lordship's devoted,

JAS. DUFF.

In the summer of 1785 Sir James married Basilia Dawes, a West Indian heiress, and with her fortune and an allowance from his father, was very well off, and had a house in London. He had one son and three daughters.

He resigned his seat owing to a difference of opinion with his father on the question of the Regency. It had been intimated to him that he was expected to fall into line, and he wrote to William Rose announcing that he had applied for the Chiltern Hundreds, as he could never dream of holding his seat when totally debarred from having an opinion of his own, adding that a young officer with his way to make in the world must give his support to the Prince of Wales who was his Commander-in-Chief. The support was apparently to be given, whether the Prince was right or wrong! One rather gathers that Sir James's own views would have been less extreme than that of the party of unlimited Regency which he nominally followed. His divergence from his father did not go so far as retaining his seat and changing sides.

In another letter he says that his father had urged him, if he could not "support Pitt on the Regency question," to resign his seat, but apparently had neither expected nor really wished him to do so, for on meeting his son in the street, after the resignation was announced, Lord Fife deliberately passed him by, without recognition. James Ferguson of Pitfour, a Whig, was brought in for the vacant seat without a contest.

The estrangement between father and son lasted four years, and it was not until the eve of Sir James's departure on foreign service that the old autocrat relented. He wrote to Rose, "The Guards and Sir James Duff go on Monday. The King goes to Greenwich with them and I believe, so shall I. God send them all back. I wrote a kind note to Sir James this morning." Sir James replied—"My heart is relieved by your kind letter. But much too agitated at present to say more than assure you of the eternal gratitude of your devoted, Jas. Duff."

In the year 1795 the idea was mooted that Sir

James might again represent Banffshire in Parliament, but nothing came of it.

No cloud ever again came between father and son, and at Lord Fife's death he left everything he possibly could to this beloved son, though of course the title and estates had to go to the legitimate heir, his brother, Alexander.

Sir James lived on into the reign of Queen Victoria, the 5th sovereign he had known, and died on 5th December 1839 at his house at Funtingdon in Sussex, being then the senior General of the British Army and one of the few officers who have held a commission for over seventy years.

#### 6. James Ferguson, 1789-90.

The member for a year and a half, January 1789 to June 1790, was James Ferguson of Pitfour. The son of another James Ferguson and Anne Murray, daughter of Lord Elibank, he was born in 1735 and called to the Scottish bar. His great ambition was to become a member of Parliament (Lord Fife says "Ferguson's passion is Parliament"), and he first offered himself as a candidate for the seat in the county of Aberdeen in 1785. There was a riotous election in which Ferguson was narrowly beaten by George Skene.

In the end of 1788 Sir James Duff decided to resign his seat for the County of Banff as we have already seen. A writ for a new election was therefore moved on January 1, 1789, and James Ferguson writes from Edinburgh to William Rose, on the same day—

Sir,

Sir James Duff having resigned his seat in Parliament, I beg leave to solicit the support of your vote and interest to succeed him as representative for the County of Banff. As the election will probably very soon take place, I am extremely sorry that it is impossible for me to pay my respects to you personally, which I should otherwise certainly have done, and I hope that circumstances and the Multiplicity of letters which it is necessary to Dispatch in so short a time, will likewise serve as an apology for conveying my request in another hand I have the honour to be,

Dr Sir,

Your most obt. and most humble servt.,

J. FERGUSON.

From that delightful work "The Political State of Scotland in 1788," we are enabled to give the exact number of constituents whom James Ferguson had to canvass. There were 122 of them, Morayshire at the same date having 77 and Aberdeen 178—the average for the Scottish counties was 80). The anonymous compiler of the volume has further classified these 122 Banffshire constituents as

"Votes belonging to Lord Fife"	50
(Thirty of these were members of his family)	
Duke of Gordon .. .. .	37
Mr Ferguson of Pitfour .. .. .	9
Mr Hay of Mountblairay .. .. .	4
Lord Banff .. .. .	2
Mr Hay of Rannes .. .. .	4
Individuals .. .. .	16

And it seems almost superfluous to add (as he does) that "Lord Fife and the Duke of Gordon (and indeed Lord Fife singly) overshadow all the small and independent proprietors."

As this is the election which coincides with the compilation of the list before us, the opportunity must not be lost of quoting one or two of the thumb-nail portraits of voters. The first is Ferguson himself—

"James Ferguson of Pitfour—

A very independent estate. A batchelor, a lawyer, wants a gown (that is a Judgeship). Present member for the county. Brought in by Mr Dundas and Lord Fife. A man of real good sense, but indolent."

it will be seen that not only had he the support of the "great man of Banffshire," but that of the "uncrowned King of Scotland," the future Lord Melville himself, and could have had no real anxiety as there was no opposition.

Another portrait is that of—

"Andrew Hay of Rannes.

An estate of £500 or £600 a year. A batchelor, connected with Charles Hay, advocate, the Independent Friend, and companion of the Dean of Faculty; also with Lord Erroll. He never takes the oaths to Government."

This was natural, as Hay had been a proscribed Jacobite for nearly 20 years. In 1788 he was an old man.

Sir James Dunbar of Durn is briefly dismissed, as "Estate sold, Purchaser dead, and his succession disputed." His vote was probably not worth soliciting, and the same might be said of the last voter—"Colin Morrison of Rosieburn. Lives at Rome. A painter. His father dead. Was a minister in the North."

The year during which Ferguson sat for Banffshire was entirely uneventful, but in 1790 he was elected for Aberdeenshire, which he represented for thirty years, until his death on 6th September 1820.

All the well-known stories about him belong to the Aberdeenshire time, but some may be given here.

He was an ardent supporter of Pitt throughout the career of the latter, and himself said that he never voted against him but twice, and on both occasions mature reflection convinced him that Pitt was right and he himself wrong.

He is also said to have remarked on one occasion that he had heard many speeches which changed his opinion, but never one that changed his vote. It is to be noted that during the 31 years he sat in the House of Commons, he himself never once addressed it, save to propose that the window behind his seat should be repaired!

The bill to the returning officer, Alexander Tilleray of Banff, for his first election was not paid until 5th March, two years later. It amounted to three guineas. It was carefully preserved.

Four years before his death, Ferguson erected at the gate of Pitfour, a monument bearing a Latin inscription, which may be translated thus—"To the memory of William Pitt and Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville, men of ancient virtue, this tribute, from the most durable native marble (than which their fame shall be more lasting) is given by James Ferguson of Pitfour, in the year of Salvation, 1816." Many Prime Ministers would be glad to have supporters whose activities were confined to voting for them for thirty years and putting up memorials to them after death!

**7. Sir James Grant of Grant, Member for  
Morayshire from 1761 to 1768 and for  
Banffshire from 1790 to 1795.**

He is described by Sir William Fraser, in the Chiefs of Grant, as "one of the most amiable of men, known in Strathspey as the good Sir James."

Of 12 children which Lady Margaret Ogilvie bore to her husband, Sir Ludovick, James was the only son, born in 1738. His father as M.P. for Morayshire lived much in London, and young James was sent to Westminster School. From there he went to Cambridge, and he subsequently travelled on the Continent. He married at Bath in 1763 Jane Duff, only daughter of Alexander Duff of Hatton. After marriage they lived chiefly at Castle Grant; he founded the town of Grantown, building a town house, a jail, and a stone bridge. He resigned his seat in Parliament for Morayshire in 1768, and thereafter lived chiefly in Edinburgh, but in 1787 was at Castle Grant, and Burns visited him there.

In 1784 he had unsuccessfully contested the Inverness-shire seat, and in 1790 proposed to stand for Banffshire. The occasion was Lord Fife's elevation to the Peerage of Great Britain which would leave his seat in Morayshire vacant, and this seat had been promised to Sir James Grant's son, Lewis. At the same time Ferguson was to be transferred from Banff to Aberdeen. Before the General Election came on, Lord Fife wrote to Rose, March 8, 1790—"I hear the Duchess of Gordon is canvassing in Banffshire, so I wrote a few lines to Sir James Grant, that in the event I did not offer myself he might request aid. I think it pretty certain I shall set no more in the House of Commons."

Sir James Grant had thus all the family interest of both Duffs and Grants, and Lord Findlater offered him the house and farm of Rannes, just purchased from the Hay family, "where he might live and be acquainted with the gentlemen of the County," objections having been raised by some that Grant was not, except in right of his wife, a landholder in Banffshire. He was duly elected and sat for

five years, but towards the end of this period Lord Fife comments on the fact that "Banffshire has been quite neglected in the Navy Act, as indeed everything has been, since Sir James Grant represented it, except the little thriving of his creatures. As long as there is a creature Grant in Strathspey or indeed any hanger-on, they will always be preferred."

As a voter in Banffshire, Sir James's character is given in the "Political State of Scotland," as "A very independent man. His son, by agreement with Lord Fife, is to represent Morayshire." This agreement was carried out, and Sir James thereupon wrote to Lord Fife

I hope and trust my dear Lord the good understanding which is now re-established betwixt your Lordship and your Mother's family will continue uninterrupted.

Believe me,

with perfect respect

Your Lordship's affectionate cousin  
and obedient Humble servant,

J. A. GRANT.

Five years later, in 1795, Sir James obtained the appointment of General Receiver and Cashier of the Excise in Scotland. This appointment, which was a lucrative one, was intended as some compensation for the losses his family had sustained in Government service in the two Jacobite risings.

He died at Castle Grant 18th February 1811 and was buried at Duthil, though his ancestors for generations had been interred at Holyrood. Had he lived eight months longer, he would have succeeded his cousin as 5th Earl of Seafield.

Sir James Grant had very lofty ideals as to the "character most consistent with the man of honour as representative of his country in the House of Commons." That is his own phrase, and he wrote a long letter describing the character and education of one who should aim to fill his place, ending with "He should in short be a father to his family and tenants, a slave to his country, subject to his King, and friend to all mankind." He brought up his eldest son Lewis, afterwards 5th Lord Seafield, with the aim of entering political life, and the young man apparently had this end in view from the first, for when reading law in

London at the age of twenty-one, he writes to his mother—"I dined the other day with a ministerial party at Mr Dundas's, and had the superlative honour of being helped to a cheese-cake by the Right Honorable William Pitt."

Three years later, when both father and son were in the House, Sir James writes to his wife "I have had the pleasure of being in company twice this week with Mr Pitt, and must say he pleases me fully as much in private society as in the House of Commons. The first time was at Mr Wilberforce's where we had Lord Grenville, Mr Dundas, Mr Charles Grant, Mr Poulteny, Mr Ferguson, &c., all agreeable men, and I really believe Mr Wilberforce gave the dinner on my son's and my account. The second time was at Mr Dundas's. . . . It has, I hope, rubbed off the rust and shyness in some measure, which bears heavy upon me.

Yr. ever affectionate,

JAMES GRANT."

#### 8. David M'Dowall Grant, 1795-96.

David M'Dowall Grant held the seat for one year in succession to Sir James Grant. He was the 7th son of William M'Dowall of Garthland and Castle Semple, Co. Renfrew, and married Mary Eleanor Grant of Arndilly. David M'Dowall had previously been a Captain, R.N., but left the Navy on his marriage with the heiress of Arndilly, assumed the name of Grant and settled down as a Laird and freeholder in Banffshire, otherwise he would have been ineligible as a candidate for the County seat.

There was in 1795 as we have seen some idea of Sir James Duff's returning to the House of Commons and David M'Dowall Grant wrote shortly before the election to William Rose in Edinburgh—

Banff. 7th July 1795.

¼ past 9 o'clock.

Dear Sir,—I breakfasted with Dunlugas and I am sorry to find he has engaged himself to Colonel Duff. I was with Lord Fife before dinner but *he* seemed determined to support Sir James Duff. I came back to dinner and before it was put upon the table I had some conversation with his Lordship, he then seemed willing to support *me*, but Dinner interrupted

us. We have had a long walk together and he now seems undetermined what to do. The subject has been stated to him in every point of view and he has told me that I shall have his determined answer to-morrow morning. I hope and even think it will be favourable. I therefore beg you will come north immediately. From what I have said, I trust he will know me better than to put me off with a view to do his own interest any good. We shall even now be pushed very hard to carry it, with your and all other friends' assistance—  
—I am yours sincerely,

D. MACDOWALL GRANT.

The Colonel Duff who was standing against David M'Dowall Grant was Patrick Duff of Carnousie, lately returned from India.

In the previous month, March 18th, Lord Fife had written to William Rose as to how the election was to be manipulated! "I send you enclosed a letter for Arndilly. His brother and Mr Dundas dined here this day and I hope to get the latter to write to him. It is of great consequence to break the Association. . . I think the Colonel will make but a bad figure. I must look for a list of the Roll at last Michaelmas. You know it well—see what can be done."

As Sir James Duff was ordered with his Regiment to Gibraltar about this period, the idea of his standing was abandoned, and Lord Fife supported M'Dowall Grant, who was duly elected.

He had six sons and three daughters and is the ancestor of Mr Menzies of Arndilly, of the Gordon Duff family of Drummuir, and of the present Lord Saltoun.

### 9. William Grant of Beldorney, 1796-1812.

William Grant of Beldorney, the 9th Member who has represented Banffshire since the Union, was perhaps the most important *public* man who ever held that seat.

He was the son of James Grant, a small farmer in Beldorney, who afterwards became collector of Customs in the Isle of Man. There is some doubt as to the exact date of William's birth. The obituary notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine* says he died in 1832, aged 77. This would place his birth in the year 1755 and make him fourteen when entered at

Lincoln's Inn and nineteen when called to the Bar, both of which are manifestly impossible. In the letters of Patrick Lord Elchies, edited by H. Duff M'William, his birth is given "from the Rothes parish register" as 13th October 1752, but "Foster's M.P.'s," generally very correct, gives his age at his death as 83, which places his birth in 1749. It is possible he was not baptised till he was three years old, and it was *this* date which was chronicled in the parish register. The registration of births had not then begun.

He was educated at the Elgin Grammar School, King's College, Aberdeen, and Leyden University, entered at Lincoln's Inn 30th January 1769, and called to the Bar 3rd February 1774, becoming Attorney-General for Canada in 1776.

He had gone to the colony in the previous year, presumably in search of adventures and arrived in time to command a company of volunteers at the Siege of Quebec. (Long afterwards he commanded the Lincoln's Inn Volunteers.) Upon his return to England after a few years' practice at the Canadian Bar, he found it very uphill work, and eventually, on the advice of Lord Thurlow, abandoned the common law for the equity courts. The lucky accident of his being called upon to give first-hand information to Pitt, who was preparing a bill for the better regulation of Canada, was the turning point in William Grant's career. He made a great impression upon the Prime Minister, who advised him to enter Parliament, and at the General Election of 1790 he was returned as one of the two members for the small borough of Shaftesbury. His maiden speech was not made until 15th April 1791, when he spoke in favour of armament against Russia. A speech which made a greater impression on the House was that on the Government of Quebec Bill, when he gave a very able elucidation of the actual state of Canadian law, known probably to *no* other member.

Two years later, his appointment as Joint Justice of Carmarthen Quarter Sessions compelled him to vacate his seat and he was not re-elected, but in 1794 he was elected for Wind-

sor, becoming Solicitor-General to Queen Caroline, and at the General Election of 1796 he successfully stood for Banffshire, which seat he held uninterruptedly for sixteen years until his retirement from parliamentary life at the dissolution, which occurred in September 1812.

Owing to various appointments, he had to seek re-election seven times (in 1793, 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1806, 1807). In March 1800 he wrote to W. Rose, a most beautifully expressed letter—

Dear Sir,—I understand Mr Jas. Duff (afterwards 4th Lord Fife) has signified to the Freeholders of Banffshire his intention of becoming a candidate to represent the county in Parliament whenever a vacancy or a dissolution shall take place. Tho' I am not aware that there is any very speedy prospect of either event, I hope you will think me excusable in now troubling you with an application for your future support. Indebted as I am to the gentlemen of Banffshire for the very liberal and honourable manner in which they have conferred on me the character of their representative, I should be much mortified to suppose that they have seen reason to alter the favourable opinion of me which they have on three former occasions evinced by their suffrages. I am sorry that the harmony of the county is likely to be disturbed, but I trust I can incur no blame by my anxiety to retain an honour I am not conscious of having done anything to forfeit.—I remain dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient Serv.

WM. GRANT.

He was an uncompromising Tory, and the second Lord Fife, then in the House of Lords. lamented bitterly that he himself had let slip the opportunity of buying the estate of Beldorney, which Sir William purchased, and thus permitted Sir William to acquire the stake in the county of which he made such good use to further his own political ends.

In 1799 Pitt had appointed him Solicitor General and he was knighted by King George III. On Pitt's resignation in 1801 Grant was sworn a Member of the Privy Council and appointed Master of the Rolls, which office he held until 1817 when he retired "to the great regret of the Bar," with a pension of £4000 a year. For a few years after this, he occasionally sat in the Cockpit and assisted in the

hearing of appeals, but he gradually retired from public life, and went to reside at Dawlish, Devon. He was a bachelor, and his sister, the widow of Admiral Schank, lived with him. He died, after a lingering illness, on 23rd May 1832. His portrait, painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence, "for the Gentlemen of the Chancery Bar," formerly hung in the Rolls Court, but was in 1833 presented to the National Portrait Gallery.

Lord Brougham thus describes Grant's oratory—"In Parliament he is unquestionably to be classed with speakers of the 1st order. . . . No speaker was more easily listened to, none so difficult to answer. Once Mr Fox, when he was hearing him with a view to making that attempt, was irritated in a way very unwonted to his sweet temper, by the conversation of some near him, even to the show of crossness, and (after an exclamation) sharply said, 'Do you think it so very pleasant a thing to have to answer a speech like that?'"

#### 10. Sir Robert Abercromby, 1812-18.

For six quite uneventful years, as far as Banffshire was concerned, the county was represented by Robert Abercromby, younger of Birkenbog, afterwards Sir Robert, 5th Bart., being the eldest son of Sir George Abercromby, 4th Bart. and Jean Ogilvy, daughter of the 7th Lord Banff. Robert Abercromby married whilst a member of Parliament in 1816, Elizabeth, daughter of Samuel Douglas of Netherlaw, Kirkcudbright, and had four sons and eight daughters. He succeeded his father in 1831 and died in 1855.

#### 11. James, 4th Earl Fife, 1818-27.

James, 4th Earl Fife, the eldest son of Alexander the 3rd Earl, was born October 6th, 1776.

Owing to his uncle the 2nd Earl being childless, James and his brother Alexander were brought up chiefly under that uncle's eye. They began their education at the well-known Academy kept by Dr Chapman at Inchdrewer when only six and seven years old, and the careful directions as to their clothing and diet and their not being allowed to fight with other

boys, are still extant. They afterwards went to Westminster School, and while there James was much with his uncle and began early to take an interest in politics. When 17 he wrote a long letter to his uncle, then at Mar Lodge, giving a most sensible account of the state of the political world, and his views thereon, ending quaintly—"I go to school Monday."

He went to Christchurch, Oxford, and, on leaving there was entered at Lincoln's Inn, where he studied law more or less seriously for two years, at the same time taking lessons in declamation from Bannister the comedian, all this with a view to a future parliamentary career. In 1796 he went abroad for a time. After the tragic ending of his brief married life (his wife, Maria Caroline Manners died in Edinburgh from the bite of a dog) he again went to France and was one of the peaceful travellers unlucky enough to be taken prisoner by the orders of Napoleon in 1805. On obtaining his liberty in the following year, he went to Vienna and saw some service with the Austrian army, but on hearing of the disturbances in Spain he went there and joined the Spanish army, taking part in many battles, amongst others that of Talavera (1809) where he was severely wounded. Just previous to this date, his father having succeeded to the title of Earl Fife, James Duff became Lord Macduff. In 1810 he was again wounded, at Fort Matagorda, and in 1811 he succeeded his father as Lord Fife but did not go home till two years later, covered with military glory and having been created a grandee of Spain and a knight of the Military Order of St Ferdinand. He was received with enthusiasm in London, and especially at Court, where the Prince Regent made him a Lord of the Bedchamber. He lived almost entirely in London, but his family interest was sufficiently strong to bring him in as member for Banffshire in 1818 in succession to Mr Robert Abercromby, and to secure his re-election in 1819, 1820 and 1826, though this last election was subsequently, as we shall see, declared null and void.

On 28th April 1827 his old friend the Prince Regent, now George IV., created him a Peer of

the United Kingdom, as was his uncle James before him.

Like his uncle, he may be described as a virtual Tory; he also belonged to the Canningite faction; in his later years his opinions became somewhat modified, and he called himself a Whig.

He was a Lord of the Bedchamber again from 1827 to 1833, and served King William as he had served King George, but he was never a politician in the House of Lords, and in 1833 left London for good and resided at Duff House till his death twenty-four years later. He was an excellent landlord, one of the pioneers of small holdings, and a firm opponent of vast deer-forests and sheep farms. Many traditions of the "good Yearl James" survived to our own day. He died on March 9th, 1857, aged 80.

#### 12. John Morrison of Auchintoul, 1827-32.

The election of June 1826 was fought out between the sitting member, the 4th Lord Fife, still only an Irish peer, and John Morison of Auchintoul. The former was declared elected and seems to have taken his seat, but a parliamentary enquiry of the kind held on the election of Fox in 1784, afterwards declared his election invalid. All that is known of this is contained in a letter from Cambridge from William James Tayler (my father, then an undergraduate, aged eighteen), of April 3, 1827—"I have this moment received a piece of very bad news. One of the Gordons of Newton, who is at Caius College, a relation of Mr Morison of Auchintoul, has just come in to say that the Committee of the House have declared Lord Fife's election illegal and that Mr Morison is in consequence the member for the county of Banff. This I am afraid is quite final; what therefore is to be done in consequence I do not know. I believe there is no doubt that Lord Fife may get into the Upper House, but still it is a great pity that the county influence should be lost, and all the trouble that has been taken about it unavailing."

This was the last General Election before the Reform Bill. It has not been possible to dis-

cover the technical irregularity which invalidated Lord Fife's election.

John Morison was a useful but undistinguished member, who quietly succeeded Lord Fife, and was re-elected in 1830 and again in 1831. After the passing of the Reform Bill the seat was won by George Ferguson, who will next be considered.

John Morison was the second son of Alexander Morison of Bognie and his wife Katherine Duff of Culbin, so that he still belonged to the same clan which has produced nearly all our members for two hundred years. He himself married Jane Fraser of Strichen, and his only son, Alexander, married Jessie Duff of Hatton. He owned Auchintoul and Cobairdy and succeeded his brother Theodore in Bognie and Mountblair only a few months before his death, which occurred on 12th February 1835 in the 78th year of his age.

**13. Captain George Ferguson, R.N., of Pitfour, 1833-37.**

Down to the very end of the 19th century, every member for Banffshire was connected with one if not more other members, and this, the 13th on our list, was nephew to James Ferguson of Pitfour, who was succeeded in the estate of Pitfour by his younger brother George, for many years Governor of Tobago. George only held the estate for a few months, dying in 1820, unmarried, and leaving the estate to his natural son, George Ferguson, R.N., then 36 years of age.

Captain George Ferguson holds the double distinction of having been the first member elected for Banffshire after the passing of the Reform Bill, and also the last Conservative who held the seat until the election of Mr Templeton in 1924.

Ferguson had unsuccessfully contested the seat in 1831 against John Morison. After the passing of the Reform Bill he stood again, and it is curious to note that the first effect of the extension of the franchise in Banffshire was the election of a Tory or Conservative. The story is told that after the passing of the Bill, the Liberals of Banffshire felt some effort

ought to be made to preserve the seat from the Conservatives, and Colonel Thomas Gordon of Park and Alexander Morison of Bognie, son of the retiring member, tossed up as to who was to stand and to bear the expense. The lot fell to Colonel Gordon, who stood and was beaten.

In 1835 Admiral Ferguson was re-elected, but in 1837 the seat was contested in the Liberal interest by Mr James Duff, afterwards 5th Lord Fife, and won, Admiral Ferguson retiring into private life. He died in London in 1867, aged 81, and was succeeded by his son, George Arthur Ferguson.

#### 14. James Duff of Delgaty, afterwards 5th Lord Fife, 1837-67.

James Duff of Delgaty, afterwards 5th Lord Fife, was the eldest son of General Sir Alexander Duff of Delgaty. He was born in 1814 and educated at Edinburgh Academy. Subsequently he was in the Diplomatic Service, and was an attache in Paris. In the year 1837 he contested Banffshire in the Liberal interest, defeating Admiral Ferguson. He represented Banffshire for twenty years, only vacating his seat on succeeding his uncle, the 4th Earl, in the Irish honours, and being himself made a peer of the United Kingdom as Baron Skene. He married Agnes, daughter of the 16th Earl of Erroll, and was father of the late Duke of Fife. His father had been member for the Elgin Burghs, and his son, the late Duke, became in 1874 Liberal member for the counties of Moray and Nairn.

It is interesting to note that the first time James Duff had to seek re-election, in July 1841, his opponent was Viscount Reidhaven, afterwards the 7th Lord Seafield, who died in 1881. On a poll of 589 the Liberal majority was only 43, the two great landed interests pulling against each other. In 1847 Mr Duff was unopposed, and in 1852 he held the seat against Mr Macdonald Grant by a still narrower majority of 26. In March 1857 he was re-elected unopposed, but resigned his seat as already stated.

### 15. Lachlan Gordon Duff of Drummuir, 1857-61.

When James Duff of Delgaty succeeded as 5th Lord Fife, he was followed in the family seat in the House of Commons by Lachlan Gordon, the Laird of Park, eldest son of Colonel Thomas Gordon.

Thomas was the son of Lachlan Duff, W.S., who in 1804 had succeeded to the estate of Park in right of his mother Helen Gordon. Thomas bore the name of Gordon all his life, but his eldest son, the second Lachlan (the M.P. under consideration), began life as Gordon and became Duff on succeeding to Drummuir.

Lachlan Gordon (afterwards Duff), was born in 1817 and had a commission in the 20th Regiment with which he served in India and later in Bermuda and Canada. When returning from active service in India in 1836 he and a brother officer travelled by small coasting vessels round the Persian Gulf and up the Red Sea. They were wrecked on the Egyptian coast and subsequently proceeded to Greece and Constantinople, suffering great hardships from prolonged quarantine in various ports. The latter part of their journey was accomplished on horseback, across Europe and lasted so long that when they reached London they found their names just about to be struck off the Army list, they being given up for dead.

In the following year, Ensign Lachlan Gordon carried the Queen's Colours of his Regiment at the Coronation of Queen Victoria. Later in life he served in the West Indies (where he met and married his wife Jane, daughter of Thomas Butterfield of Bermuda), and retired as a Major in 1851. His father having died of smallpox at Fort George, where he was in command, in 1855, Lachlan succeeded to Park.

As already stated, he entered Parliament in 1851, and was re-elected in 1859. In 1858, on the death of his cousin, Archibald Duff of Drummuir, he had succeeded to that estate, and reassumed the name of Duff, previously dropped by his grandfather on succeeding to Park.

In 1861, being in failing health, he accepted the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds and retired into private life, residing at Drummuir, until his death in 1892.

### 16. R. W. Duff of Fetteresso, 1861-93.

On the retirement of Major Lachlan Duff in 1861, he was succeeded by Robert William Duff of Fetteresso, Kincardineshire, who held the seat in the Liberal interest for thirty-two years, for the first twenty-four of which he was never opposed. When opposition came, owing to the Home Rule split, Mr Duff retained the seat by large majorities, and it was said that such was his personal hold on the electors of Banffshire, he could have professed almost any opinion without losing his seat.

He was born at Glassaugh in 1835, the only son of Arthur, fourth son of Robert William Duff of Fetteresso, Arthur having in 1833 assumed the name of Abercromby on succeeding to his mother's estate of Glassaugh. Young Robert William Abercromby, as he then was, was educated at Blackheath and the Royal Naval School, entered the Navy in 1848 and became a Lieutenant in 1856, retiring as a Commander in 1860. His naval experiences were very useful in the House of Commons and he also took an active part in Scottish fishery questions and in protecting the Moray Firth from foreign trawlers. He served as Junior Lord of the Treasury and Liberal Whip from 1882 to 1885, and as Civil Lord of the Admiralty in 1886. He was re-elected, unopposed, in 1865, 1868, 1874, 1880 and 1882, five times. In 1885 he was opposed in the Conservative interest by Mr Stormonth Darling, Q.C., but defeated him by 1700 votes. In February 1886 he was unopposed, but in July of that year a General Election was fought on the Home Rule question and Mr Duff was opposed by Sir Charles Grant, who was defeated by nearly 1200. Mr Maltman Barry in 1892, running as an Independent Conservative, had no better luck; barely half of the electors of the county went to the poll, but the majority was still nearly 700!

In the same year in which he first stood for Banffshire, Robert Abercromby had succeeded his uncle, Robert William, in the estate of

Fetteresso and re-assumed the family name of Duff.

In 1893 he was appointed by Gladstone to be Governor of New South Wales in succession to the Earl of Jersey, and at the same time was made a G.C.M.G. and a Privy Councillor. He died at Sydney during his tenure of office in 1895.

#### 17. Sir William Wedderburn, Bart., 1893-1906.

On the departure of Sir Robert Duff for New South Wales, Sir William Wedderburn stood, for a fairly safe Liberal seat. He was opposed in the Conservative interest by Mr James Augustus Grant of Househill, who made a second attempt in 1895, the Liberal majority being 771 on the first occasion and 510 on the second.

Sir William Wedderburn of Ballindean, Perth, was a comparative stranger in Banffshire, the rule as to a candidate for a county seat being a freeholder having been abolished. He was, however, the head of an ancient Scottish family and numbered well-known Jacobites among his ancestors. Sir John Wedderburn, 5th Baronet of Blackness, Forfar, having joined Prince Charles Edward's army as a volunteer in Lord Ogilvie's Regiment, was taken prisoner at Culloden, tried at Southwark and executed on Kennington Common on November 28, 1746. This was Sir William's great-grandfather. The son of the attainted Sir John, who but for the attainder would have been the 6th Baronet, was a Cornet in Lord Ogilvie's Regiment, but escaped and went to Jamaica. He married Margaret, daughter of the attainted Lord Ogilvie. His son, David, became M.P. for Perth Burghs, and Postmaster-General for Scotland. He was created a Baronet of the United Kingdom in 1803, with special remainder for his brother, John, father of Sir William. This Sir John was in the Honourable East Indian Company's service, and had three sons (1) John, who with his wife and child was murdered in the Mutiny; (2) David, who succeeded him as 3rd Baronet, and (3) William, who succeeded his brother, David.

William was educated at Loretto and Edin-

burgh University and entered the Indian Civil Service in 1859, at the age of 21. He became Judicial Commissioner in Scinde in 1874, was Acting Judge of the Bombay High Court, and when he retired in 1887 was acting Chief Secretary for Bombay. All his interests lay in India, and during the seven years he represented Banffshire in Parliament, it was, with some truth, said that local affairs occupied him far less than did those of our great Oriental dependency. Very soon after his appearance in Parliament, he formed an Indian Committee there and founded the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, twice journeying to India to preside at its meetings. He kept open house for Indians at his country seat in Gloucestershire, and gave liberal financial help to support their political cause. He resigned his seat for Banffshire at the General Election of 1900, but survived until 1918 when he died at the age of eighty.

#### 18. A. W. Black, 1900-07.

Sir William Wedderburn was succeeded by Alexander William Black, W.S., son of the Rev. James Black, Minister of Dunikier Free Church, Kirkcaldy.

The seat was contested by Mr George Watt, but in an electorate now officially given at 8156, only just over 5000 went to the poll and the Liberal majority was only 298! At the "khaki election" of 1906, Mr J. A. Grant stood again, but Mr Black held the seat by a majority of over 2000. Mr Black was a partner in the firm of Menzies, Black & Menzies, Edinburgh. He was unfortunately killed in a railway accident at Elliot Junction near Arbroath in 1907.

#### 19. Major Waring, 1907-18.

Mr Black was succeeded by Major Walter Waring, who sat for eleven years. He is the son of the late Charles Waring, Liberal M.P. for Poole, was in the 1st Life Guards and saw service both in South Africa and in the late war.

When he left Banffshire he became Member for the Blaydon division of Durham from 1918 to 1922. In the latter year he was elected for

East Lothian and Berwickshire, but was defeated in 1923 and has not stood again.

He and his wife, Lady Clementina, eldest daughter of the 10th Marquis of Tweeddale, have been well known to most of you.

#### 20. Sir Charles Barrie, 1918-24.

Sir Charles Barrie held the seat in the Liberal interest for the six years immediately succeeding the War. There was, as is well-known, in the year 1918 a political truce, and when a redistribution of the electorate led to the disappearance of the "Elgin Burghs" as a Parliamentary unit, it was agreed that Mr John Sutherland, the sitting member for the disappearing constituency, should be adopted in the Liberal interest for Banffshire. Mr Sutherland, however, died before the change of constituency took place and in October 1918 Charles Barrie was elected, unopposed, to succeed him in the Burghs, and at the General Election which followed the Armistice was naturally again returned unopposed for Banffshire. Four years later, November 1922, he enjoyed a third unopposed return, and in November 1923 a fourth. In October 1924 he was defeated by Mr Templeton.

As is doubtless well known to you all, Sir Charles Barrie is a merchant and shipowner of Dundee, and was knighted for his services to the Ministry of Shipping during the War.

#### 21. William Paterson Templeton, 1924—.

Of our present member it is hardly necessary that I should speak, Mr Templeton, the Organising Secretary of the Unionist Workers' League, being well known to you all, although he came to us as a stranger to the constituency. In 1924 he broke the long tradition of Liberalism which had lasted 90 years, actually since the date of Queen Victoria's accession.

I have now gone through the 21 members who have sat for the county of Banff since the Union of the English and Scottish Parliaments. It may be interesting to point out that of the 17 members who filled the seat during the 18th and 19th centuries there was only one, and

that the last, who was not in some way related to some of the others! Among the 17 also, there were only six surnames and eight Christian names. All of them, moreover, except the last, were natives either of Banffshire or the neighbouring county of Aberdeen and descendants of nearly all of them are living amongst us to-day.

A vote of thanks to Mr Tayler proposed by Dr A. B. Murray was passed with enthusiasm.