

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NEWE.

WILLIAM FORBES of Daach, "the White Laird," second son of William, younger of Pitsligo (son of the 2nd Laird) and brother of the third, married Elizabeth, daughter of John Forbes of Brux, and had two sons, Alexander of Newe and John of Sunhoney. (See p. 384.) William died about 1513 and is buried at Coldstone. He was succeeded by his eldest son,

I. Alexander, first Laird of Newe, who married Jean, daughter of Robert Lumsden of Cushnie, and had two sons and three daughters:—

William, his heir; Patrick of Pittallachie (see p. 382); Isobel, married (1) Robert Coutts of Auchtercoull, (2) James Farquharson, and (3) Robert Middleton; Margaret, married (1) William Skene of Auchtererne and (2) Arthur Skene; and a third married Robert Ross of Birsemoir.

Alexander died in 1561 at Auchtercoull and was buried at Coldstone.

II. William, second of Newe, had a charter from Robert, Lord Elphinstone, May 10th, 1560, and sasine of the lands and Mill of Newe, July 14th, same year. He married Margaret, daughter of John Gordon of Botary, by whom he had two sons and several daughters: John, his heir; Alexander of Invernochty. (See p. 383.) He died 1571 and was buried at Strathdon.

III. John, the 3rd Laird, called "Bluebonnet," had a sasine from Lord Elphinstone the year after his father's death and a charter from Alexander, Master of Elphinstone in 1591. He married Isobel Burnett of Leys, and had three sons and two daughters: Alexander, his heir, William of Culquhonny (see page 388), and John, called Blind John; Marjory, married William Leith of Newlands; and Isobel, died young.

John died in Aberdeen, January 28th, 1616, and is buried there.

The first house of Newe was built by John, the 3rd Laird ("Bluebonnet") and an old stone bearing his arms and those of his wife, i.e. the bears' heads and cinque foils of the Forbes of Pitsligo, quartered with the holly leaf of the Burnetts and the letters J.F. and I.B. was on the castle when it was pulled down in 1927, and unfortunately destroyed. The stone with the date 1604 has, however, been preserved, and another smaller one.

IV. Alexander had sasine from Alexander, Lord Elphinstone, as heir to his father, December 2nd, 1616; and another sasine of Miltown of Towie, December 16th, 1633. He married Janet Robertson of Lude and had two

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sons and three daughters: William, his heir; John, who married his cousin Isabel and acquired Newlands; Isabel, married William Forbes of Skellater; — married Gordon of Blelack; — married Donald Cattanach of Toldaquhill.

Alexander died November 14th, 1654.

V. William, the 5th Goodman of Newe, married his cousin, Helen, daughter of Arthur Forbes of Culquhonny, by whom he had four sons and three daughters: William, his heir; Patrick, merchant in Aberdeen, married and had one son, *o.s.p.*; George of Bellabeg (see p. 370); John of Deskrie (see p. 384); Isobel, married George Forbes of Skellater; Helen, married Adam Pantoun in Milntoun of Fyvie; Agnes, married William Forbes of Belnabodach.

William died January 10th, 1698, and was succeeded by his eldest son. The second son, Patrick, had sasine from his father of the Mill of Newe and that part of the estate sold by Arthur of Culquhonny, May 16th, 1670.

VI. William, the 6th Laird, born 1657, married (1) Christian, daughter of Alexander Forbes of Boyndlie, by whom he had one daughter, Jean, married Nathaniel Forbes of Ardgeith. He married (2) Isobel, daughter of Thomas Stewart of Drumin, by whom he had issue, two sons and two daughters: John, his heir, baptized December 16th, 1686; Alexander, baptized December 22nd, 1687, died young. (Alexander of Balgonen, born 1685, whose descendants at one time claimed to represent Newe, was *not his son*, the matter having been thoroughly investigated, and the MS. of George Forbes, Minister of Leochel, makes no mention of such a son.)¹

William, born 1689, died 1706. Isobel, married John Shaw in Glencarvie. Anne, married Alexander Michie in Glencarvie.

He died July 22nd, 1699, and was succeeded by his son,

VII. John, seventh of Newe, married July 3rd, 1707, Sophia, daughter of Arthur Forbes of Brux, by whom he had six sons and several daughters.

John is the first Laird of Newe to make any appearance in Scottish history. His sympathies during the Jacobite rising of 1745, when he was a man of nearly 60, would seem to have been Whig, from the fact that two of his sons were in Government service and also from the pleas put forward by the fifth son who made a brief excursion into Jacobitism. John of Bellabeg, first cousin to the Laird of Newe, paid the Cess demanded by John Gordon of Glenbucket, for the receipt is still in existence, the sum being "noontie nyne pounds, fyftein shillings and 2 pennies." The two eldest sons, John and William, as already stated, were in the British Army. John lived to succeed to Newe; of Peter, Charles and Alexander nothing is known save that they went abroad and died without issue.

Robert, the fifth son, who was about 18 years of age in 1745, had been

¹ The claims of Alexander of Balgonen and his descendants were set forth in a book called *Forbes of Forbesfield*, by Alexander Forbes.

apprenticed to a cabinetmaker, but, in common with many of his contemporaries in Aberdeenshire, was won over, either by the glamour of the cause, or, as he claimed, by the persuasions of Lord Pitsligo, with whom his family was connected.

It is not quite clear *when* he joined the Jacobite army, but he was with them in Carlisle though not as forming one of the garrison during the Jacobite occupation, and had made friends there. He would seem to have taken part in the march into Derby and when the Prince's army retreated from Carlisle to Glasgow he went with it, and on arrival at Stirling found his Jacobite ardour cooled, and before the battle of Falkirk he deserted and was making his way back to Carlisle, intending to follow in England his trade of a cabinetmaker, when he was apprehended near Dumfries in January, 1746, and taken to prison in Carlisle. On October 21st, 1746, after having been nine months in prison, he was tried for the second time, having pleaded guilty at his first trial on September 15th. At the second trial he was condemned to be hanged on the 15th November with Charles Gordon of Terpersie, Col. James Innes, and several others who actually were executed, but great interest was made on behalf of young Robert and he received a pardon conditional on his going to join the King's forces under Admiral Boscawen in the East Indies. He was actually on his way to Portsmouth to join the expedition, when he firmly refused to sign the required papers and in consideration of his youth and bad health from the long confinement, he was at length granted a free pardon and went back to Scotland. It is believed that he afterwards joined his brothers in the East Indies (but not in a troopship). Large numbers of petitions which eventually secured his pardon still lie in the Public Record Office. One gives the certificate of his baptism by John Lumsden, minister of Strathdon, on November 3rd, 1727. It seems not to have been noticed that the date of this reveals the fact that he was at least 19 at the time of his trial and not 17 as he pleaded.

Another exculpatory document is signed by one Mrs. Grace Blacklock of Carlisle who stated "that he had stayed in her house both going to and returning from Derby and was most civil and peaceable and always spoke well of the King and Cumberland. That he had two brothers officers under Cumberland and that he greatly regretted being with the rebels. He had no cockade or Highland dress."

When he was in Glasgow with the Highland army he was billeted on the Rev. Dr. Leechman, Professor of Divinity, who with his wife, Bridget Leechman, gave testimony on commission at the trial of September 16th, 1746, that "the prisoner remained behind and deserted when H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland had driven the rebels from Stirling and was taken on his way to follow his business in London." The Leechmans also signed a very flowery petition in favour of "the youth of 17, a younger son of a family remarkable for its attachment to the Protestant succession, and particularly distinguished for their unshaken loyalty during the rebellion of 1715." (It is true that the Forbeses who joined Mar were mostly rather distant relatives, with the exception of George Forbes of Culquhunny.) The Leechmans went on to state that "while in their house, Robert Forbes showed, by the whole train of his conversation, that he was very far from being hearty in a bad cause in which he was unhappily engaged and on many occasions

expressed an evident dislike of the cause of the rebels and the measures pursued by them and always declared that he had no esteem for the character of the Pretender's son, etc." This petition was subscribed by twenty-three ministers of the Strathdon district and *eight* copies of it exist. The reader is led to wonder why young Robert Forbes ever "came out" at all. He was certainly never of the slightest use to the Cause. One of the petitions puts this plainly when it says that "the Rebel Gentlemen at Stirling said they wished to be quit of the prisoner for they would be obliged to put him to death—he did their Cause more harm than good."

Finally the Lord Advocate of Scotland, Sir William Grant of Prestongrange, bestirred himself on behalf of Robert, his wife having had a letter from Robert's mother, mentioning that her eldest son John was a Captain in Lord Loudoun's Regt. and William, the second, was a Lieutenant in the Scots Royals and had been dangerously wounded at Hulst, "and it is hard to lose all." Prestongrange wrote to Andrew Stone, begging as a personal favour to himself that the matter might be laid before the Duke of Newcastle: "I confess I was moved with the circumstance of the son at Hulst, which as it heightens the distress of the poor lady, appears to me to afford an argument for shewing her farther compassion in respect of the younger son, the rebel." Newcastle apparently was also moved, and the young deserter received a pardon, denied to poor old Charles Gordon or his young son, to the veteran Col. James Innes, to Sir Archibald Primrose and even to the worthy Farquharson of Monaltrie who had to endure eighteen years of banishment in England before he finally got home.

Mr. Garden, Moderator of the Synod of Aberdeen, had given as a reason for granting a free pardon for young Newe "that the rebels may not rejoice over a well-affected family losing a poor deluded child." Perhaps that point of view also struck the Government. The details of the after career of "the poor deluded child" are not known. His father died in 1757.

His eldest brother John, the 8th Laird, who was a genuine Whig, got himself appointed factor on the forfeited estates of Lovat and others in the North, and a large amount of his correspondence is preserved in Edinburgh. He was also concerned in buying and selling again that portion of the estates of the 17th Lord Forbes which comprised the old Duchus lands including the old Castle of Druminnor (see page 274). The compiler of the account there given shows some animus against John Forbes of Newe, but Lord Forbes himself wrote to him several friendly letters on the subject before and after the sale took place. The brother concerned in the negotiations was presumably William. (See page 366.)

Captain John married Anne, daughter of Colonel William Grant of Ballindalloch, a noted Whig soldier, under the Duke of Argyll, and had one son, John the ninth and last Laird of Newe of the first family, and three daughters:—Sophia, who married William Forbes of Skellater, sixth and last laird, that estate being bought by the new owner of Newe; Anne, who married in 1767, John Lumsden of Cushnie; and Henrietta, married (1) John Forbes of Culloden and (2) Robert Grant, who became of Druminnor, having bought this estate from his father-in-law. Captain John Forbes died in 1775 and was buried at Kirkhill, Inverness-shire. His only son was a Major

in the 29th Regiment, and married Anne Duff of Muirtown. He became a bankrupt and died in the King's Bench prison in 1792, where he had been, it is said, for nine years, having parted with the estate of Newe to James Forbes of Seaton, who resold it to Bombay Jock, brother of the Rev. George of Leochel (see page 371).

Major Forbes' only child was Mary who in 1788 married Sir Arthur Grant of Monymusk, and some of the family portraits and other treasures went with her to her new home.

The following delightful letter is to be found among the Delvin MS. in Edinburgh:—

TO JOHN MACKENZIE OF DELVIN, FROM CAPT. JOHN FORBES OF NEW.

“ Castle Leod, 15 Jan. 1759.

“ Sir,

“ As I understand you are agent for the Earl of Murray, I beg leave to acquaint you that in Oct. last there was a whale of 61 or 62 feet in length thrown out upon the earl's estate near Connage within my Jurisdiction, as Deputy Admiral to my Lord Findlater. It is needless to trouble you with a recital of all that past between Lord Murray and me on that subject especially as I am informed you have seen the minutes of a Court which was held at Ardesier on that affair. I am advised from Edinr. and it is past all doubt, that the fish in question is a royal one and several of lesser size have been deemed such, but it is objected in the process that the Earl of Murray ought to have been called and this neglect was no oversight but a piece of respect I paid to my Lord Murray as looking upon the thing to be of too small consequence to trouble a person of his rank and distinction, with a summons before an inferior court. But I am advised that it is necessary and ought still to be done and that altho' he does not live in this neighbourhood at present, he may still be cited before the Admiral Depute or the High Admiralty Court of Edinburgh. The Whale is really of no considerable value. The Expenses will soon run away with the whole and I am very unwilling to give any unnecessary trouble to the Earl, for whom and for his noble family I have the highest respect and I am still more unwilling to be the instrument of creating any sort of difference betwixt him and another noble earl who is principally concerned here¹ and for these reasons I have adjourned the Court from time to time and will do so till I get your answer to the following request Viz. That altho' the Earl of Murray has promised and writ to me that the blubber should not be disposed of till the point in dispute was determined, yet I am satisfyd that his Lordship shall in the meantime give orders to sell it to the best avail, for fear of perishing on condition that the claim of the Admiral be submitted to any of the crown Lawiers which my Lord Murray proposed at first. Or if he is now satisfyd that the Whale is a royal fish, I will frankly agree to refer the value or even the whole matter to Mr. Mackenzie of Delvin his Lordship's doer. And as I propose to be in Edinburgh in the month of Feb. the case can then be determined. I would have done myself the honour to write to my

¹ *i.e.* Findlater.

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Lord Murray but being uncertain whether he was in London or not, I have taken the liberty to give you this trouble, for which I humbly beg pardon and wishing you many happy seasons

“ am wt very much esteem

“ Sir yr most obed. hum. servant,

“ John Forbes.”

The answer to this letter is unfortunately not extant.

BELLABEG.

(“ This estate belonged originally to the Earl of Mar, then to Farquharsons, and on the death of the last Farquharson, who married Jane Forbes, came into that family.” According to the Newe family tree the Forbes who married James Farquharson was Isabel, eldest daughter of the 1st Laird.)

I. George Forbes of Bellabeg, third son of William Forbes, 5th Laird of Newe, was born 1668. He married in 1701, Isobel Forbes of Asloun, by whom he had, besides several children who died young, three sons and two daughters :—

John, his heir ; George, wine merchant in London, and William, baker in Banff ; Isobel married Nathaniel Forbes of Ledmacoy ; and Jean, married (1) Mr. Thomas Anderson in Drummaline and (2) Mr. James Lindsay in Banff.

George Forbes died in 1745.

II. John, 2nd of Bellabeg,¹ born 1707, married in 1737, Christian, daughter of Rev. John Shepherd, Minister of Logie Coldstone, and had two sons and three daughters :—

George, his heir, born 1738, M.A. of Marischal College in 1758 ; John, born 1743, merchant in Bombay ; Isobel, married Peter Farquharson of Tullochoy ; Anne, married James Gordon of Croughly, and Mary, died unmarried.

John died in 1791, and his wife in 1760.

III. His eldest son George became minister at Leochel, and married Katherine Stewart of “ Inveraury ” in Strathdon, by whom he had eleven children :—

Anne, born 1768 ; Christian, born 1770, both died young ; John, born 1771, drowned in the China Sea 1787 ; Charles, born 1773, merchant in Bombay and 1st Baronet of Newe ; Col. Thomas, born 1774, killed at Toulouse 1814 ; Mary, born 1776, married Daniel Mitchell ; George, born 1778, Minister of Strathdon, owned Blelack ; Christian and Katherine, both died young ; Michie, born 1779, merchant in Bombay, married Mary Ashburner ; Gordon, born 1785, minister of Towie.

¹ This John Forbes planted 100 acres of his estate with young trees, a great innovation.

John, the second son of John 2nd of Bellabeg, went out to India at a very early age—it is said originally as a ship's purser, being known to many of his friends and contemporaries as "purser Jock." He soon obtained a footing in the mercantile world of Bombay and before long founded a most successful business house there, into which he was able to take two nephews, and with his own individual earnings to buy back from James Forbes of Seaton the family property of Newe, sold by his bankrupt cousin, and other lands in the neighbourhood, including his father's estate of Bellabeg, Blelack, etc.

The family of Forbes of Bellabeg, from whom the present family of Newe is descended, has kept a number of delightful letters of which a few specimens must be given.

George Forbes, the minister at Leochel, wrote at length if not very frequently to his younger brother John (who made the family fortunes), and later to his son Charles.

John, the eldest boy, who seems to have been a charming youth, was destined for the family mercantile house in Bombay, and, shortly before he sailed, he wrote the following letter to his younger brother Charles. The writer was 17 and the recipient, afterwards equally successful with his uncle as a business man, was 14 :—

" Dear Brother,

" I received your few lines in my father's letter which made me happy to think you was well. I have little time just now, being so hurried about getting all my things ready, as I go aboard Wednesday morning positively. You may be sure wherever I am I will always write, and what I am doing. I would advise you to give unwearied application to your learning, to make yourself as much a master of figuring as possible, to learn compound interest and everything you can in the way of keeping accounts. I will find it no small loss to me that I am not better qualified for that than I am, but I will make shift. But above all, be obedient to your father and mother and do every thing you can to please them. Be kind to your brothers and sisters, Don't anger the youngest. Be kind to the poor people and they will bless you. Be unto everybody as you would be done to. There is no news here that I hear, but always some robbery or wicked thing done. I have little to write, but I do not want you to think I had forgotten you. If I had not wrote you might have thought so.

" Dear Brother,

" Yours most affectionately,

" John Forbes."

John was drowned in the wreck of the ship *Hastings* ¹ Dec. 27th, 1787. In the following year, Nov. 10th, 1788, the Rev. George wrote to his brother, Purser Jock, giving news of all the family. Their father, old John of Bellabeg, was still alive, but 81 years of age and very much failed :—

" Dear Brother,

" I wrote you on the 18th ultimo a very long letter by Charles when he went to London, so that I have little to say. Our father and Mary and all other

¹ In which apparently his uncle also lost a good deal of merchandise.

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friends are in their ordinary, only our Father rather growing more failed and delirious. It is with difficulty he can be kept from going here and there through the country, as he seldom thinks himself at home. He often slips out and goes to New and Mill of Newe to see his father and Mother.¹ I am to engage a man to assist Mary and the maid to care for him and to prevent his wandering. Mary has an uncommon charge of him and in a month gets not a sound sleep. I am with him a day or two every week.² I entreat you write me how soon Charley arrives. I am sure he will please you, for he has not just now one fault I would wish mended, though perhaps I may be partial. By word and write I have advised and urged him to be implicitly guided by you as being his duty and interest, and he will know what strong obligations he and all here ly under to you.

“ I leave you full freedom to do with and dispose of Charles as you think most proper—he will tell you if he likes the sea and if he do, I would by all means prefer the country sea trade to the Military line. Tho’ his poor brother was unfortunate, yet I trust God will preserve Charles, equally well at sea as on Land. My dear Jock might have died as soon here as he did at sea and we ought to be resigned, but his death I am afraid will kill his Mother. If Charles were once safe with you, I have not the least fear but you will be everything to him his parents could and much more than we are able to do. Poor Jock’s spotless behaviour has I trust secured his future happiness which is a great consolation to us. If he had been a wicked boy, his death would have been harder on us. The thought of your so soon coming home gives me more joy than I can express. Happy will it make me to have you settled any way in this country. I hope you will be able to buy an estate. NEW can still be got if you are for it and it is the Estate on earth I hope you will be most anxious for, and it connects so well with Bellabeg. But I am afraid you have lost greatly by the unlucky “Hastings.” For God’s sake come home with what you have, and be not over ambitious. You are now, as well as I, pretty far advanced in years (*George was then 50 and Jock 45*) and it is high time for you to retire and spend your days in ease and peace and out of the hurry and bustle of this weary world. I hope you will find our father in life (which would give *you* pleasure tho’ it could give him little, for in five minutes he would forget you and mistake you).

“ Your most affectionate brother
“ Geo. Forbes.”

GEORGE FORBES, MINISTER OF LEOCHEL, TO JAMES, 2ND LORD FIFE, AS
TO A PROPOSED CHANGE OF PARISH, WHICH DID NOT TAKE PLACE.

“ Lochel. 9 April 1790.

“ My Lord,

“ Sir William Forbes was pleased with the assurance of my succeeding at Kildrummy and would have presented Mr. Lumsden to Inch but he was alarmed by a Letter from his Agent in Edinburgh, acquainting him that the

¹ Both dead more than thirty years before.

² A long ride from Leochel to Bellabeg.



JOHN FORBES OF BOMBAY.
Purchaser of Newc.



"KITTY FORBES" OF WIMBLEDON.

(From portraits at Newc.)

Crown Lawyers there had received Directions to claim the Patronage of Lochell. Till he should have time to inspect and consult his rights, he requested the favour of me to continue here and assured me he would some time hence either send me to Inch or do something better for me. Out of gratitude and good will to him I most readily complied and when he is satisfied as to his patronage right, I hope, with your Lordship's assistance, the Kildrummy plan may yet be carried into execution, as I am certain Sir William will do everything in his power to befriend me. He is much pleased with my resignation of Inch to accommodate him, after I had my presentation in my pocket. I am sure nobody will condemn me, as a contrary conduct would have been base and highly displeasing to my own feelings. I hope what I have done will meet with your Lordship's approbation. Inch, I would have resigned to please my worthy patron, tho' it were the last settlement in the church. I have the honour to continue with the highest respect and most fervent gratitude, My Lord, Yr Lordship's most obedient

“ and very faithful servant,

“ Geo. Forbes.”

(*Duff Family Papers.*)

Brother Jock remained long in India and made a very large fortune, eventually purchasing a number of estates in Aberdeenshire, which were administered for him until his return to Scotland, by his brother George. These included Culquhonny and Deskrie, Bellabeg and Invernochty, Newe, Bunzeach, Tollaskink and Buchaam, Culquharrie, Ardgeith, Blelack and Skellater.

He was also able to leave large sums to charities, among others £10,000 for a new lunatic asylum for Aberdeen.

It is not known at what date he returned from India, but the next letter from the family collection to be given was written five years later than the above, and is from the Rev. George to his son, Charles, then 20. He thanks him for a present of a shawl to his Mother, but adds :—

“ We all hope you will not send presents here for years, till you are fairly above water. Your frequent letters are a great cordial to us and make us infinitely happy, happier than anything would except a sight of you, which we never expect to live to be blessed with,¹ but while we have agreeable accounts of your health and happiness we ought to bless God and be satisfied. We hope your health is now perfectly confirmed and your liver complaint removed. Take care of your health and do not hurt it by anxiety and too close application to business, for without it, what signifies all in the world. I hope Providence will enable you one day to live at home, for by your worthy uncle's means you have begun the world with many advantages he had not.

“ Happy are we all with the thoughts of seeing him next summer. I hope your partner and you will agree well, which will please your uncle and promote your own interest. Be saving and attentive and live temperate and sober which will preserve your health, prolong your life and contribute to your success in

¹ So far off was India in those days, the voyage lasting *at least* seven months, and they never saw Charles again.

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trade. You will be happy to know that your Mother is in perfect good health and all your brothers and sisters. I bless God I am alive and well tho' beginning to fail, as I am now pretty far advanced in life and must use glasses.

" Since November last year, poor Geordie has not had a fit, but been well and in fine spirits. He is as stout a man as I am. (*The father was 55, the son 15 !*) First of Month he entered the Greek class at Marischall and likes it well, he speaks of being a minister and will have parts for anything. Tom writes with Mr. Morice the Advocate till his uncle come home, and contrive what he is to do. (*This was the future Colonel, killed at Toulouse, he was then 19.*) He inclines nothing so much as the Army, but it is impossible to live on an Ensign's pay and he would require at least £40 a year beside. (*This, evidently, the kind uncle afterwards provided.*) Michie is at figures and still wishes to be a merchant. (*He joined Charles in India later. At that time he was 13.*) Gordon minds you in his prayers still. (*He was the youngest, aged 8.*)

" Anne does well, is well disposed and very helpful to her Mother (*she was 25*). Mary (*17*) was this year eight months in Aberdeen at a great expense for board and clothes. She is a stout, smart, honest little girl. We have great pleasure in you all which is a signal blessing. (*The three younger daughters were dead.*)

The old minister continues

" Since the beginning of this unhappy war, much blood and treasure has been lost and in the end I am afraid Britain will gain little, and the War will be followed by heavy taxes. France needs much to be bridled. It is a most unhappy nation and considering its internal distraction it is amazing how it holds out against almost all the powers of Europe. By this time I fancy the French settlements in the East have been attacked. They must soon submit and be brought to order. God grant it may soon happen. Much need have we of peace. I wish to God my brother may not be taken on his way home."

After several more pages of domestic notes on all the friends and relatives in Strathdon, no doubt very welcome to the Indian exile, the old minister continues somewhat surprisingly:—

" If the Pitsligo honours are not forfeited in the collateral, as well as the direct line, I am the nearest collateral heir. I am to get a consultation from able counsel as to forfeiture. If I am told, as many lawyers think, that the collateral blood is not affected, I would get the honour, if I can prove that the first New was second son of Pitsligo, which he certainly was, and my grandfather second son of New. . . . The claim would go to the House of Peers and be determined there. Sir William Forbes, Edinburgh, tho' he got the Pitsligo estate from the late Mr. Forbes of Pitsligo, has no title to the honour for he is of the Monymusk family, and his mother was only the daughter of Lord Pitsligo. I enclose you Lord Pitsligo's patent which is very broad."

The Minister's son, Charles, after he had obtained his baronetcy, seriously considered making a claim to the attainted title of Lord Pitsligo, but as the Newe branch (descended as has been seen from a younger brother of the third Laird of Pitsligo) had "come off" from the parent branch five

generations before the title of Lord Pitsligo was conferred, there was considerable doubt as to whether, although undoubted "heirs male" of the Pitsligo line, the family of Leochel could be considered entitled to the Barony. Sir Charles was advised that the matter would be very controversial and very expensive, and contented himself, in the year 1833, with the grant of the Pitsligo arms and the recognition of his position as "heir male."

The patent of the grant of the Barony to the 1st Lord Pitsligo, *as quoted* by the Rev. George, is as follows. It was doubtless much longer in the original, and he had a little forgotten his Latin!

June 24th, 1633. Prefato Alexandro Forbes de Pitsligo durante omnibus suae vitae diebus et heredibus masculis de corpore suo legitime procreate vel eorum heredibus quibus deficiens heredibus suis masculis quibuscumque cognomina de Forbes de Pitsligo gerens [*sic*].

Note.—The position of the heirs of Pitsligo is still a curious one.

The 4th and last Lord Pitsligo died in 1762, and his son the Master died in 1781. The male heir of line was Sir William Forbes, 6th Baronet of Monymusk (grandson of his sister Mary), who had acquired the Pitsligo lands by purchase, and the grandson of this Sir William, Sir John Stuart Forbes, called 8th Baronet of Monymusk left only a daughter, whose son, the present Lord Clinton, is still holder of the *lands* and is *heir of line*, but the baronetcy which could not go *to* or through a woman, passed to his mother's cousin, Sir William, who became 9th Baronet of Monymusk. This estate having passed out of Forbes hands the succeeding baronets have called themselves "of Pitsligo" though there was no baronetcy in that line, and the arms they bear are (1) and (4) Forbes of Monymusk (2) Forbes of Pitsligo and (3) Stuart, for the heiress married by the 8th Baronet, Grandfather of Lord Clinton and uncle of the 9th Baronet.

In addition to these two who represent the descendants of the 3rd Lord Pitsligo, there is also the present baronet of Newe, who represents the heir *male* of the family of Forbes of Pitsligo, being descended from the younger son of the 3rd Laird. The three rival representatives may be thus shown (see Tree No. 16, page 376).

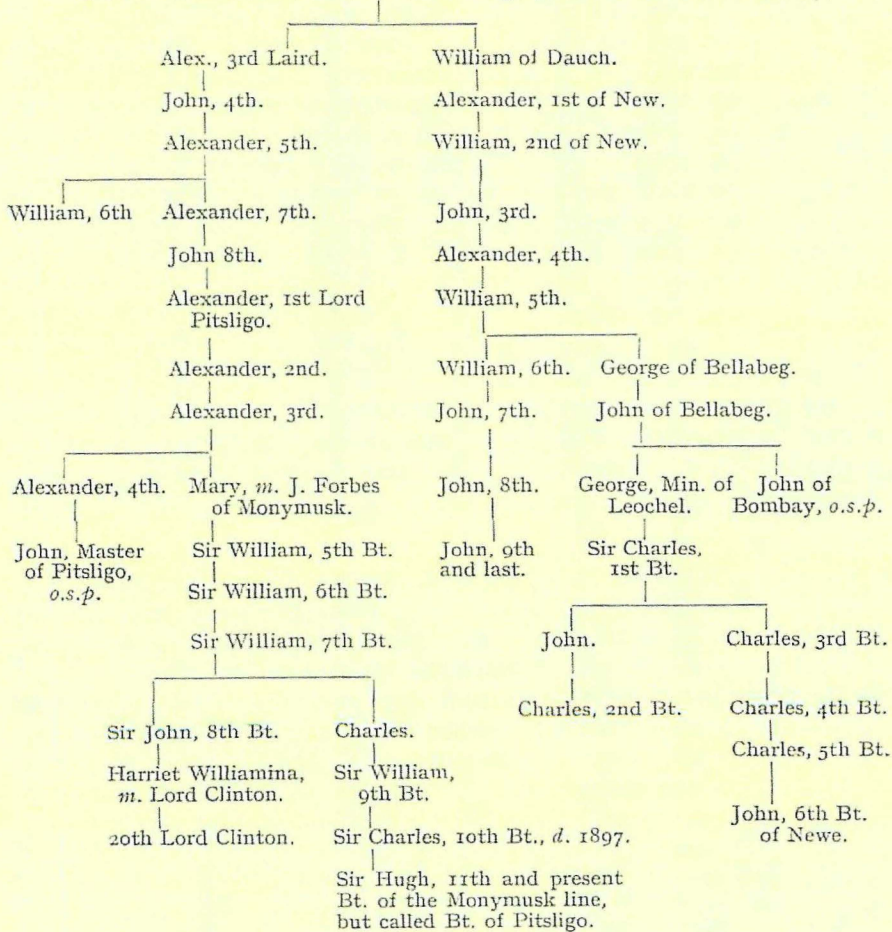
Old George Forbes then goes on to give his son a sketch of the whole family history, from the defender of Urquhart Castle downwards, being careful to point out that the family of Newe was older than that of Skellater, having "come off much sooner from the Lord Forbes family, which is the head of all the name." He then announces that "the annexation of the parishes of Leochel and Cushnie comes before the Lords next winter, so that when Mr. Adam or I die, the Minister of the annexed parishes will have the two Stipends, worth £112 with two glebes in one. Lord Forbes eldest son is in Flanders, and now Captain of Guards. In one week he got two steps owing to the slaughter of the Guards, which has been great. I wrote you that poor Miss Fairbairn married a concert fiddler, they are both in Aberdeen—and much looked down upon. Lady Blelack still alive, but begins to dottle. She often speaks affectionately of you. Little Gordon sings admirably and has a turn for drawing. I have enclosed a certificate of your

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baptism. Had Tom gone out to you I would have sent you out pictures, almanacks, newspapers, etc. Did you ever receive the camp boots, and four pair of shoes I gave Geo. Forbes to send you.

"I will write you again by the Spring fleet. At present I can think of nothing else that would amuse you. By last news I see a descent is intended upon the Coast of France to join the Royalists, which I hope may be successful. You will see that the French have beheaded their King and Queen many nobles Clergy—21 of the National Convention in 37 minutes. They are murdering one another—the Sabbath and all Religion abolished so that they are at war against Heaven as well as Earth. A Post Office lately is appointed at Kincardine O'Neil where the Post comes thrice a week from Aberdeen. But it will be of little use here except the Gentlemen near this get a runner, which they cannot afford as there are few of them."

No. 16. William, son of 2nd Laird of Pitsligo (died in his father's lifetime).



In January of the following year the Rev. George acknowledges a letter from his son, "sent in August last, by Express overland; it gives me great pleasure to learn that your Uncle and you are well and that he intends coming home this year and I heartily wish him a safe voyage and that he may escape the French. Never neglect writing of all our young friends and countrymen; it is a feast to their parents and friends, as some of them write but seldom. Our friend Gen. Forbes of Skellater¹ has gained great honour by defeating the French at the head of the Spanish and Portuguese troops. This will be delivered to you by Mr. George Paton, eldest son of Paton of Grandhome who goes out as a writer to Bombay. I entreat you will show him every civility. . . . I wish you to associate with all Scots people and especially those from Aberdeenshire."

Charles wrote to his father in October of the same year, sending him various Indian curios, and lastly "a red shawl-handkerchief with flowered corners and sides which will do better than a silk or cotton one to put round your head when riding up Strathdon in the cold frosty mornings."

The Rev. George Forbes lived until 1799 when he died at Newe, the home of his brother John, the Bombay merchant, on August 30th, in the 62nd year of his age and the thirty-seventh of his ministry. He is buried at Strathdon. His wife survived him nine years, but did not live to see again the beloved son Charles who returned to Scotland in 1811.

FURTHER DETAILS OF THE TWO YOUNGER BROTHERS OF NEWE.

THOMAS FORBES married Elizabeth, daughter of Captain Thomas Stewart of Pittyvaich. He was in the 37th and 45th Regiments, becoming Lieut.-Colonel of the latter October 6th, 1813. He served throughout the Peninsular war, having the gold medal for Badajoz, Nivelles and Orthez. Killed in action, Toulouse, April 10th, 1814. He had two sons, John, of the 33rd and 92nd Regiments, Michie, died unmarried in Aberdeen; and a daughter, died unmarried. John married Belinda Maria, daughter of Canon Garrett of Ballymote, Sligo, and had three sons and one daughter:

(1) Stewart, died in Australia, and (2) Augustus and Eliza died unmarried; (3) Charles Henry Hunter, 14th Bombay N.I., married Harriett White and had a son, Stewart Vibart Forbes, who married Christine Taylor and had issue, two sons and a daughter, Stewart, Lester and Elaine.

MICHIE FORBES married Mary Ashburner, step-daughter of his brother, Sir Charles. He was born March 16th, 1779, and died August 21st, 1839. He was in India as a young man but latterly resided at Silwood Park, Sunninghill, Berks, and is buried there. The arms on his grave are those of Newe, with crest, a bent arm holding a dagger and a motto "non sine causa." Not that of his elder brother.

He had five sons—three of whom, Charles, John and George, were all at Eton in 1832, and the two former went to Exeter College, Oxford.

The name of the fourth is not known—the fifth was James Sidney.

¹ Red Jock. (See page 447.)

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The last letter to be given is as follows :—

CHARLES FORBES IN BOMBAY TO HIS FATHER, THE REV. GEORGE FORBES AT
LEOCHEL.

“ 15 Feb. 1795.

“ My dear Father,

“ This will I hope be conveyed to you overland via Suez and may reach you by the end of May.¹ By the “ Duke of Montrose ” I wrote to Mr. James Forbes and begged the favour of him to remit you the sum of thirty pounds sterling for the purpose of enabling you to keep a helper at Leochell, which I hope he will comply with. This amount of £40 (*sic.*) per annum I shall in future take steps to secure the remittance of to you and shall be disappointed if it is not applied to the purpose for which I take the liberty to recommend it. . . . I have neither seen nor heard of Mr. Skene for a long time. I believe he follows his profession out of Bengal. Nathaniel and George Forbes of Madras are well, the former still at or near that place, George has been appointed Agent at Hyderabad (the Nizam’s capital) for supplying horses for the Cavalry, a very excellent post. The Rohilles War is happily terminated. Never, I suppose in this country was so much bloodshed in so short a period as during the continuance of it. I fervently pray we may soon hear of peace in Europe. Our last accounts are down to the 3rd of October and such as might have been expected. The French over running Holland. The King of Prussia and the Emperor deserting the cause and John Bull left to pay the Piper.

“ Mr. Pitt must now be in a ticklish situation, indeed his late Coalition shews that he begins to cheep. I hope he will profit by the experience he has had of the French armed Nation. I am inclined to think he would be glad to make peace, if the French shewed any inclination but they appear determined to take Holland first—they will then say, Give us back our E. & W. Indian colonies and Corsica, and we will evacuate Holland. If you don’t chuse that, then let both parties keep what they have got, and be friends ! A most mortifying alternative, when we consider the enormous increase of National Debt, and reflect on the ruinous taxes which must on the conclusion of the war be the consequences.

“ My uncle is well, but does not appear to be very anxious about leaving this country, and I shall not pretend to hazard a conjecture when he will.

“ I remain always

“ Your most affect. son,

“ Charles.”

LETTER FROM JAMES, 17TH LORD FORBES, TO REV. GEORGE FORBES, MINISTER
AT LEOCHEL.

“ Putachie, March 1. 1770.

“ Dear Sir,

“ When your obliging letter came here, I was over at Castle Forbes and only returned two days ago. I thank you for your congratulations on our late

¹ Three and a half months instead of seven !

purchase.¹ Had it not been for some of your friends, I durst not have attempted it, but now I hope to leave a nest egg to my son. When it is convenient, I will be glad to see you here, and I own I had hoped for that pleasure before now. I go to Aberdeen this day but will be home again middle of next week. My wife joins me in compliments to Mrs. Forbes and you.

“ I am dear Sir, yr most obed. humble servant,
“ Forbes.

“ P.S.—Thank God, my wife and children are bravely.”

Charles Forbes seems to have been from the first a pattern of what a business man in India should be, and continued the excellent traditions of his uncle's business house, in the management of which he was succeeded by his younger brother, Michie, the boy whose ambition it was to become a merchant. Charles Forbes married in Bombay in 1800 when he was 27 years of age, Elizabeth, daughter of Major John Cotgrave and widow of William Ashburner. She was only 21 at the time, but was already the mother of three children, Mary and Elizabeth and a son William, the eldest of whom cannot have been more than four years old, but she seems shortly to have sent Mary to England, in 1803, to the care of a Mrs. Morgan, a lady in straitened circumstances and apparently an American. Some seven years later, in March, 1810, poor Lady Forbes received the news in India that the little Mary, then a child of 12 or 13, had been taken to America, it was believed with the idea of subsequently marrying her to a relative of Mrs. Morgan's, as it was hoped some of the wealth of her step-father, Sir Charles Forbes, might come to her. It is an amazing story, and not the least remarkable part is that Mrs. Forbes at once started for England, and arriving in October, 1810, immediately set off for America, unaccompanied save by her little son John Forbes, aged 9. Both he and his brother Charles had been sent home from India in the previous year and were at school in London. The youngest Ashburner girl and the two younger Forbes children, George and Katherine, had accompanied their mother, but were left in London during that Mother's dash to America. Pretty little Mary Ashburner was safely retrieved from America, and lived to marry her step-father's younger brother Michie.

Extracts from Charles Forbes' letter to his uncle Jock and that of his brother George to him throw light on the above curious occurrences. In his letter of March 24th, 1810, Charles enters into many details as to the care of his little boys who were at school with a Mr. Pearson in London, under the eye of their kind great-uncle. Only after several pages, does he comment on the news sent him in a letter of August 22nd, 1809, by his uncle and confirmed by others “ Of the extraordinary circumstance of Mary Ashburner having been kidnapped and sent to America. . . . Her Mother has determined upon going to England per the ‘ Charles Grant ’ in order to rescue her daughter if possible. To this I cannot of course object and the case admits of no delay, altho' God alone knows the trial to my feelings in being thus obliged to part with my other two dear children George and Kitty, the former a fine honest boy of 4½ years old very like John, but stouter, and the latter a most lovely little prattling girl 2 years old, admired

¹ The whole estate of Forbes had been put up for sale, and Lord Forbes bought back a small portion. (See p. 274.)

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by all who see her." In the same letter he gives accounts of Michie's progress in the business, and the jealousy of another employé named Inglis, who had not spoken to Michie for 10 months!

The death of Charles' mother had taken place nearly 18 months before he wrote this letter, but he seems only recently to have heard of it.

The letter from his brother George is dated from London, Oct. 7th, 1810, and describes how he and the youngest brother Gordon hastened to London to meet their returning sister-in-law, three days after they got the news of her prospective arrival, and stayed with her there for a fortnight—all, as he naively explains, at the cost of the ever kind uncle, who advanced £200 to cover the expenses of Charles' two brothers and the wife of George, who himself wrote, "I would have been much more gratified had I been able to pay my own way upon such an occasion, but I was not, and I yielded to necessity. The expense of travelling and living in London is enormous. You can hardly look about you without seeing somebody claiming a perquisite from you for so doing! I hope you will soon be thinking of leaving Bombay. Your most valuable treasures are now in this country and I am sure your heart is here also."

Charles did not however retire and return to England for another year, when he became M.P. for Beverley from 1812 to 1818 and for Malmesbury 1818 to 1832¹ and Rector of Marischal College.

His youngest son James was born in London in January, 1813, and a second daughter, Elizabeth, who died young. He was created a baronet in 1823. Of his six children: John, the eldest, died at Ventnor, before his father, of a "rapid decline" at the age of 39. He married Mary Jane Hunter and had seven children, all more or less consumptive, including Charles the 2nd Baronet.

Charles, the 2nd son, succeeded his nephew as 3rd Baronet. George married, but had no children. James never married but became a great traveller and collector of pictures and furniture in the house at Wimbledon which he shared with his sister, the fascinating Kitty. He died in 1871. She in 1891.

The first Sir Charles built the Castle of New, as he says himself "with funds left by my good uncle for the purpose of enlarging the old family mansion, built in 1604." He then called it Newe. (It is said because letters addressed to him at New Castle went to Newcastle-on-Tyne.) The name is still retained, though his castle is no longer in existence, having been sold and pulled down in 1931 and the fine stone used for the building of the Elphinstone Hall, of Aberdeen University. The present family residence has been charmingly adapted from the old Castle Laundry.

He was able to add to the family estates, purchasing the property of Skellater, once in the hands of a scion of Forbes of Brux, and Auchmeddan in Buchan, formerly the estate of the Jacobite Bairds. He wrote a great many letters during the progress of the war with the French Republic and with Napoleon, being, like his father, strongly anti-French, but his comments on the battle known as the glorious first of June, i.e. Lord Howe's victory over the French, are original. He looks on it as merely spectacular, and an opportunity of "signalizing the British Navy" while the French continued to be victorious on

¹ He was an early advocate of Women's Franchise.

land, accomplished the safe arrival of their American fleet and continued to "capture our merchantmen—they are carried into the French ports by half-dozens."

The first Sir Charles Forbes of Newe died in Fitzroy Square, November 20th, 1849, in the 76th year of his age, having been for more than forty years head of the great Bombay house of Forbes & Co., leaving behind him such a reputation in India that a statue of him by Chantrey was placed in the Town Hall of Bombay between those of Mountstuart Elphinstone, and Sir John Malcolm.

His eldest son, John, as already stated, died during his father's lifetime in 1840. He lived most of his life in London, being M.P. for Malmesbury and a Director of the East India Company. He was always in poor health.

John's only surviving son, Charles, was 8 when he lost his father, and 17 when he succeeded his grandfather in the baronetcy. A diary which he kept in Madeira in the year after he succeeded shows his constant struggle with illness and depression—he died May 23rd, 1852, before he was 20.

Sir Charles, 3rd Baronet, son of the first and uncle of the second, had been born in Bombay in 1803, and sent home when very young to school in England.¹ He never returned to India, nor interested himself at all in the affairs of that country, being for some time in the 17th Lancers. He took a great interest in his Scottish estates and devoted large sums to the building of schools, kirks and houses, as well as bridges and roads. He was not so punctilious as his father and brother in the payment of bills, many of which were found unopened at his death, being collected in a large tin bath. He married Caroline Battye and had two sons and two daughters, Charles, 4th Baronet, and George of Asloun, Caroline who married Sir William Forbes, afterwards Lord Sempill, and Katherine, died young. He died in 1877.

Sir Charles, the 4th Baronet, married Helen, daughter of Sir Thomas Moncrieffe, and had Charles, 5th Baronet, and three daughters: Evelyn, married William James; Helen, married John Blundell Leigh; and Mabel, married Lord St. Oswald.

George Forbes of Asloun, brother of the 4th Baronet, married Henrietta Dudley Ward, and had one son, James of Asloun, who married (1) Lady Angela Erskine, and (2) Feridah Taylor, and has issue, George, Hamish and Ian and one daughter.

Sir Charles, 5th Baronet, married Theodora Maxwell and had one son, Sir John, and seven daughters. Sir John married Agnes Wilson Farquharson and has one daughter.

¹ His uncle describes him as being "like lightning for quickness."