

CHAPTER XXVI.

PITSLIGO.

THE earliest cadet branch to come off from the main stem of the House of Forbes was that of Pitsligo.

Sir William Forbes, second son of Sir John Forbes of the Black Lip, and immediate younger brother of the 1st Lord Forbes, was born about 1385 and died 1445. He acquired from his brother, then Sir Alexander Forbes, the lands of Kynnaldy, Grody, Davach and Petnamore in the parish of Coldstone, and had a charter of the same granted by the Earl of Mar as superior, dated Aberdeen August 24th, 1419. Four years later he acquired by his marriage, with Agnes, only daughter of William Fraser of Philorth, the lands of Glasloch, Coulcanock, Tulynamoth, Nether Bulgne, Mydelmast, Bulgne and over Bulgne (Boyndlie) with the mill thereof and the stone quarry of Culburty and Achlin, all in the barony of Aberdour. The charter for these lands was granted by James Douglas, Lord of Balveny, the overlord, and is dated Falkland, June 24th, 1423. On August 12th, 1424, he had a charter of the lands of Petslegach and Achmacludy confirmed by King James I, July 18th, 1426. He had also been infeft on November 6th, 1423, by John Earl of Buchan in the lands of Carnywhing, Breckon Vor and Litill Breckon. On July 27th, 1429, his lands were erected into a free barony by charter of the King and he himself is then styled Sir William Forbes, Knight. On June 30th, 1432, he had a charter from Alex. Seton, Lord of Gordon, of the lands of Meiklewardis in the Garioch, which lands gave a territorial title to a junior branch.

On June 21st, 1433, he had a charter from Robert Erskine of the lands of Laskgownie in the parish of Slains. These he sold to Gilbert Menzies, burgess of Aberdeen. In 1445 Sir William had a gift from King James II of the lands of Bothrom and Kyninmond in the county of Banff, during his lifetime.

All these charters, etc., are referred to in the *Scots Peerage*, article Lord Forbes of Pitsligo.

I. Sir William Forbes seems to have been on intimate and affectionate terms with his elder brother, Sir Alexander, 1st Lord Forbes, and is mentioned by him in a deed (see p. 36).

By his wife, Agnes Fraser, he had at least two sons and one daughter: Alexander, his heir, and Malcolm of Meikle Wardes, whose descendants are not known.

It is also believed that he had a son, Arthur, who married Beatrix Douglas, widow of the Earl of Erroll.

Sir William was killed at the battle of Arbroath, January 23rd, 1445.

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II. Sir Alexander Forbes of Pitsligo, knight, married Maria, daughter of the Earl of Erroll, by whom he had three sons and five daughters. He had a charter of the barony of Pitsligo, October 10th, 1476.

1. William, his heir-apparent, died before his father, having married about 1466 Mariota, daughter of Sir John Ogilvy of Lintrathen, and left two sons, Alexander, who succeeded to Pitsligo, and William of Daach, from whom descended the families of Newe, Culquhonny, etc. (See p. 365.)

2. George of Lethenty. (See p. 359.) 3. Arthur of Rires, who also founded a cadet family. (*Ibid.*) The five daughters (Christian names of three being unknown), married respectively (1) John Gordon of Botarie; (2) Isabel married Alexander Urquhart, Sheriff of Cromarty; (3) Alexander Tulloch of Moncoffer; (4) Mowat of Balquholly; and (5) Elizabeth married Gilbert Johnston of Caskieben.

Sir Alexander died March, 1477, and was succeeded by his grandson,

III. Alexander, who married Isabel, daughter of Sir Patrick Wemyss (who subsequently married Thomas Blair), by whom he had a son John, and four daughters, who married respectively, Calder of Asloun, William Woodman of Fenzies, William White of Aberdour, and William Lawson of Dysart. He died about 1496 and was succeeded by his son,

IV. John, served heir 1506, married Jean, daughter of Sir William Keith of Invergie, and had four sons and three daughters:—

1. Alexander his heir; 2. Arthur, killed at Pinkie, September 10th, 1547 (having married Marjory Forbes, widow of Brux); 3. John, and 4. William.

The daughters married respectively, Christian, the Laird of Lauriston, Marjory, the laird of Waterton (presumably as a second wife, as she does not appear in the Waterton tree), and the third married the laird of Pittendrum.

He married secondly, Isobel Innes of Innes, widow of George Meldrum of Fyvie, no further issue. He died March 16th, 1556, in his 70th year, and was succeeded by his eldest son,

V. Alexander, the Red Laird, "sore wounded at Pinkie," married Beatrix, daughter of Alexander Abernethy, Lord Saltoun, by whom he had six sons and four daughters.

1. William his heir, called at first, William Forbes of Melgum; 2. Alexander, who succeeded William; 3. John of Boyndlie. (See p. 352); 4. Arthur of Newton, Meikle Wardes, etc. (See p. 361); 5. George, killed at Craibstone, and 6. Hector, married Hay of Crimonmogate. Anne married Alexander Gordon of Lesmoir, and secondly John Forbes of Brux; and three others, Janet, Mariota and Margaret.

Alexander died in 1562 and was succeeded by his eldest son,

VI. William, married in 1548, Catherine, daughter of Alexander Gordon of Strathdoun, by whom he had two daughters; Margaret, who married James Forbes of Fechil, and Janet, married first Robert Duguid of Auchinhove, and

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secondly, Duncan Davidson of Admacrone, son of Davidson of Auchinhamper, by whom she had three sons, of whom William the youngest was a doctor and Professor of Chemistry and "Directeur du Jardin des Plantes" in Paris. He was afterwards Physician to the King of Poland and died about 1670.

Janet Forbes, being one of her father's co-heiresses, was unfairly treated of by her uncle Alexander, who succeeded, and another uncle, Arthur of Meikle-Wardes. John her cousin, the 8th Laird, was preparing to put things straight when he died in 1628, leaving an infant son. Alexander, the 1st Lord Pitsligo, also dying young, the matter was only finally settled by the 2nd Lord, about 1657.

William Forbes died in 1566 and was succeeded by his brother,

VII. Alexander, 7th Laird, married first Alison Anderson, daughter of the Provost of Edinburgh and relict of Alexander Forbes of Tolquhon, by whom he had one daughter, Violet, married in 1571 to George Menzies of Pitfodels. Alexander married, secondly, in 1571, Barbara, daughter of William, 4th Earl Marischal¹ and aunt of George the 5th, by whom he had a son John, who succeeded, and two daughters, Elizabeth, married Menzies of Pitfodels, and Marjory married John Forbes of Brux.

According to papers at Fettercairn, Barbara Keith was granted in 1576 the tierce of the lands of Pitsligo, which she agreed to accept in lieu of Lathing Wardes, her original jointure lands. The date of her death is not known, but Alexander Forbes married thirdly Margaret, only daughter of William Mackintosh of that Ilk, by whom he had no issue.

He died October, 1587, and was succeeded by his only son,

VIII. John Forbes of Pitsligo, served heir 1600, married in 1597, Christian, daughter of Walter Ogilvie, 1st Lord Ogilvie of Deskford, by whom he had Alexander, his heir, and five daughters: 1. Anne, married as his first wife, Alexander, 11th Lord Forbes; 2. Violet, unmarried; 3. Jean, married Walter Forbes of Tolquhon; 4. Mary, married Ogilvie of Boyne; 5. Christian, married Thomas Fraser of Strichen.

John died in 1628, and was succeeded by his only son,

IX. Alexander, who had already had a charter of the lands of Braco, etc., Aberdeenshire, March 16th, 1618, and was served heir to his father in 1629. On June 6th, 1633, he was created Lord Forbes of Pitsligo with remainder to heirs male of his body, or their heirs whatsoever. He had married in the previous year, Joanna, youngest daughter of William, 6th Earl Marischal, by whom he had a son, Alexander, and a daughter Mary, married Sir John Gordon of Haddo. He died in 1636 when quite young,² and was succeeded by his son, then a minor,

¹ She had a charter of Ladysford in 1574.

² He and his wife, who died at the same time, had a magnificent funeral, carried out with almost mediæval pomp; the details are preserved at Fettercairn and include trumpeters, standard bearers, etc., and a list of relatives and retainers who attended.

There is also the "Inventar of the goods of my first Lord's Lady at the time of her decease," and the will of the 1st Lord.

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X. Alexander, 2nd Lord Pitsligo, married Mary, daughter of James, Earl of Buchan, by whom he had one son, Alexander. During the minority of the 3rd Lord, his affairs were conducted by his father's second cousin, Alexander Forbes of Boyndlie, the "Tutor of Pitsligo."¹ (See p. 353.) He attended Parliament from 1661 to 1689, when he was excused further attendance.

The 2nd Lord died after June 7, 1690, and was succeeded by his son,

XI. Alexander, 3rd Lord Pitsligo, had married in 1676, Sophia, third daughter of John, Earl of Mar, and aunt of "Bobbing John" of the '15, who was thus first cousin to Sophia's son (1) Alexander, born May 24th, 1678, who succeeded his father.

She had besides, three other children, (2) Charles and (3) Jean, who died young, and (4) Mary, who married, firstly, John Forbes, younger of Monymusk, and had issue, William, 5th Bart. of Monymusk (see p. 303), and, secondly, James, 16th Lord Forbes, by whom she had four children. (See p. 251.)

The 3rd Lord Pitsligo survived his father by only one year and dying in 1691 (*some* records say December, 1690, in which case he had only survived him 6 months) left a very embarrassed estate to his only surviving son, then a child of 13, who became the well-known Lord Pitsligo of both Jacobite Risings. Owing to financial difficulties which haunted him all his life, the young Lord Pitsligo was sent to carry on his education on the Continent. Here he became acquainted with Fénelon, Bishop of Cambrai, and the famous Madame Guyon, and adopted to some extent the tenets of the sect known as Quietists. On attaining his majority he returned to Scotland and took his seat in the Scottish Parliament of May, 1700. In 1705 he protested against the proposed Union with England, which, in common with many of his countrymen, he looked upon as a disaster, and did not attend the Session in which that measure was passed. He then retired to his ancestral Mansion of Pitsligo Castle, *now* unfortunately a ruin, but then one of the most remarkable fifteenth-century buildings in the country. The original Castle had 9 foot walls and was 214 feet high, containing three storeys, the lowest was the kitchen and servants' quarters 12 feet in height, the second or great hall was 20 feet high and the lofty third floor contained accommodation for twenty-four beds. By the eighteenth century, considerable alterations and additions had been made, but the 4th Lord had little money to

¹ A curious note at Fettercairn shows the 2nd Lord in want of money. William Forbes, bailie to Lord Pitsligo, was appointed to collect subscriptions.

"Edinburgh, 24th Feb. 1680.

"It being represented by Alexr. 2nd Lord Pitsligo, that he had begun to make a harbour at Roshartie for the safety and convenience of ships passing along the Buchan coast, which is an undertaking of great cost, though advantageous to all merchants trading on that coast, and so craving a voluntary contribution, the Lords grant warrant for such a contribution throughout the whole kingdom and they appoint William Forbes, bailie to Lord Pitsligo, collector, he having found caution to apply the same to the above."



ALEXANDER, 4TH LORD FORBES OF PITSLIGO.

(From portrait at Fettercairn, by permission of Lord Clinton.)

spend. His father's debts still hampered him. In fact, in 1729, when in France after the Rising and on his return from Rome he wrote of the possibility of making a little money as some of his countrymen did, by means of the Mississippi Schemes of John Law, to get rid of those debts "which had hung about him since his youth." Needless to say he was both too honest and too guileless to succeed in business. He had indeed been very badly served by his guardians and relations in his youth. His cousin of Tolquhon advanced money in consideration of some titles, but Sir Samuel Forbes of Foveran, who managed the transaction, got some of the money and some of the titles entered in his own name, and it was not till Lord Pitsligo's return from France in 1720 that he was able to settle matters finally with Sir Alexander of Foveran, Samuel's son. One delightful petition made by Lord Pitsligo appears among the forfeited estate papers of date March 7th, 1715: "The Lord Pitsligo is denounced rebell for non payment of one penny of Gold yearly—estimat at £10. 13. 0 in name of blanch farme for the Barronie of Pitsligo from Whitsunday 1695—' I humbly represent to yr Lops that whatever my creditors or their factor did in my Minority, through mistake by their not being master of my papers, cannot be any foundation for any servitude upon me, except in so far as I am bound by my Chartors from the Crown and it is clear that by a charter in favours of my great grandfather dated Anno 1618 that there is one penny *usuall money of this Kingdome* payable out of the said lands if the samen be asked, so that it is clear that I ame only lyable in payment of the sd peney Scots money.' " This representation was allowed.

The Jacobite activities of the last Lord Pitsligo are well known. He joined Lord Mar in September, 1715, and was present at the indecisive battle of Sheriffmuir, after which he went into hiding, first in his own country, then curiously enough in London; he says he "was there some months privately." Thence he went to Holland and to Vienna, finally being drawn to Rome where all the most ardent Jacobites who could manage to get so far, congregated round the unfortunate James Stuart; those who had no money for the journey remained in France. In the end of 1719, after some disputes with James Murray, afterwards Lord Dunbar, in the course of which Pitsligo, with the best intentions, managed to offend the exiled King, he returned to Paris, and not being attainted, regained his native land, where he lived very quietly on his own estate for twenty-five years, during the course of which he published a volume, *Essays Moral and Philosophical on Several Subjects*. He married twice, and both his wives were English; the first he no doubt met when hiding in London in 1716. She was Rebecca, daughter of John Norton, a merchant of the City of London, by whom he had one son, John, Master of Pitsligo. She died in 1731 and he shortly afterwards married Elizabeth Allen, said to have been companion to the first wife. She died in 1759 without issue.

In 1745 when Prince Charles Edward made his romantic landing at Loch Nan-uamh, Lord Pitsligo, though then 67 years of age, felt that loyalty compelled him to "come out" again, and he joined the Prince in Edinburgh with a band of mounted followers. That he had no great hopes of the success of the cause is shown by the following information given long afterwards by his daughter-in-law to Home, the historian.

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Extract from a letter now at Fettercairn, annotated as being "written to John Home when about to write the history of the '45, communicated by a friend of the wife of the late Master of Pitsligo :—

"Mrs. Forbes informs me that so far from Lord Pitsligo having brought to the Highland army such a body of men as you had been told, he was merely attended by from 20 to 30 gentlemen of the neighbourhood on horseback, many of whom did not even bring servants with them and neither his Lordship nor any of the gentlemen who accompanied him attempted to raise their tenants or country neighbours, finding the general disposition of the lower ranks in Buchan to be averse to the party. Lord Pitsligo was withheld by conscientious motives from drawing his dependants into a contest which he could not but consider to be of too doubtful an issue to allow him to persuade others to embark in."

A letter from Charles Smith, Jacobite Agent at Boulogne, among the Stuart papers at Windsor of date March 12th, 1740, to James Edgar, bears witness to the character of Lord Pitsligo :—

"As to the report of the Peer you mention being qualified (i.e. taken the oaths to Government) it was talked of pretty much some time ago, but I really do not believe it, because he is a man does not at all concern himself with public affairs nor enters into any active part, but lives retired without minding anything of the public. But there is a Person I would as little have expected to done such thing which is *Lord Forbes*¹—its, you know, *he*, was out in the Fifteen and this time two years offered to come over to obey Mr. Brown's orders to deliver a Commission in the country and to my certain knowledge is qualified and voted in the Earl of Morton's election—there can be no good excuse for such a step but his affairs were very low. And he got £200 a year pension. I doe assure you the vertue of that honourable body the Peerage is in as low a state as you can imagine—but I am sure there is one never will change, your old friend Pitsligo."

Pitsligo was present at Prestonpans, and took part in the march into England, but his advanced years prevented his being distinguished as a leader. After Falkirk, he was appointed Jacobite Governor of Elgin, and after Culloden he again went into hiding and led a hunted life in his own country for many years, all his friends and neighbours combining to shield and conceal him. His wife remained on at Pitsligo and his son, by this time married to Rebecca Ogilvie of Auchiries, another Jacobite family, was able sometimes to give him shelter. He was once very nearly caught in the house of Auchiries, and only eluded capture by being concealed in a secret hiding place behind a bed, where his asthmatic breathing nearly betrayed him. After this Rising, he had been with other prominent Jacobites attainted, under the title of Lord Pitsligo, and his estate confiscated. A plea that, his proper designation being Lord Forbes of Pitsligo, this description did not apply to him, though allowed by the Court of Session in Edinburgh, was rejected by the House of Lords and the estates were sold by order of the Commissioners for the forfeited estates. John, Master of Pitsligo, bought a small portion, which afterwards passed, with the representation of the

¹ James, 16th Lord. (See p. 251.)

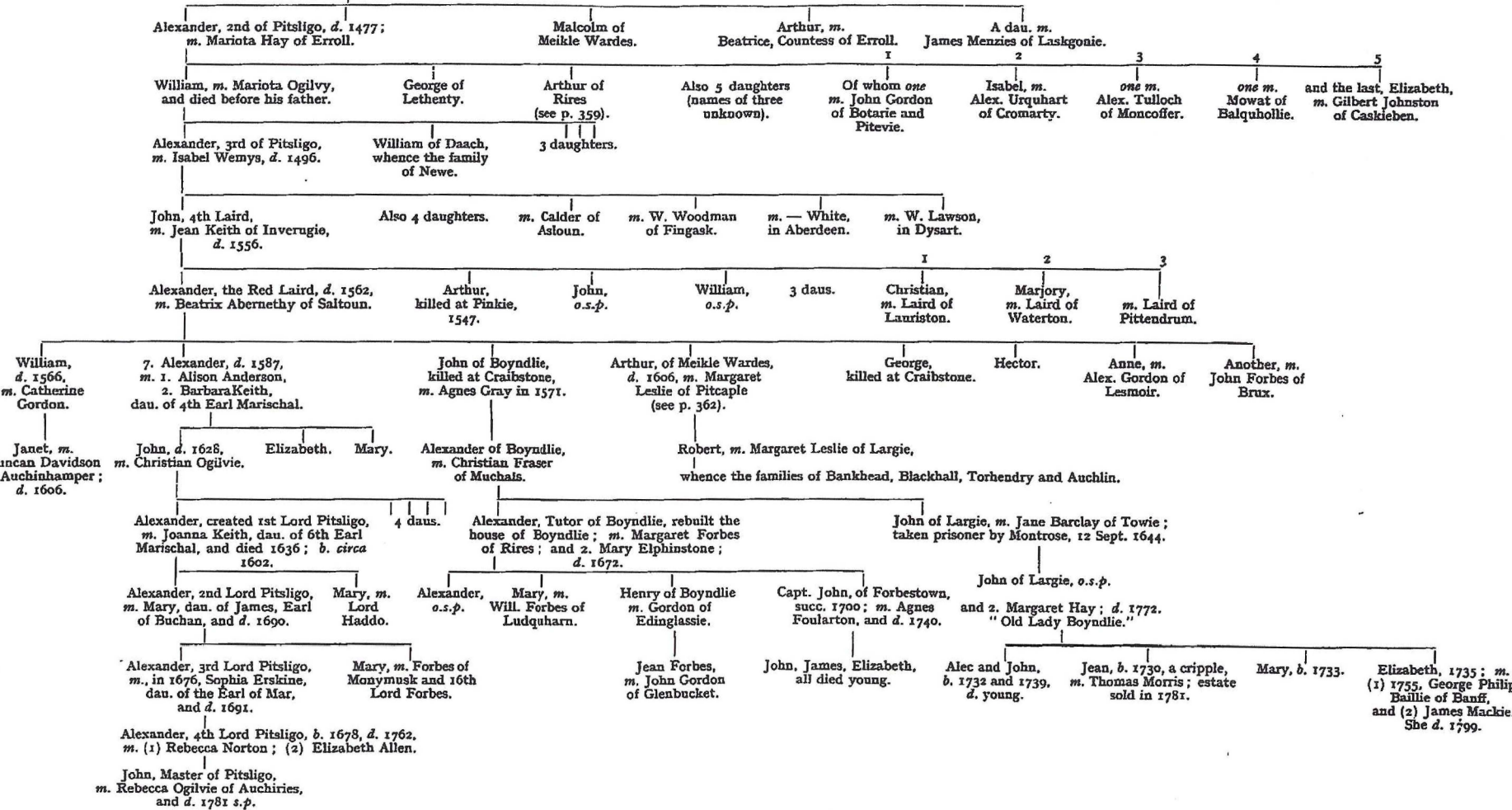
FAMILY TREE

No. 14

FAMILY OF PITSLIGO

Laird.

Sir William Forbes of Kinaldy, Kt.,
second son of Sir John Forbes of the Black Lip,
m., in 1423, Agnes Fraser of Philorth,
killed at the battle of Arbroath, 1446.



For family of Forbes of Upper Boyndlie, see page 304.

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family, to the son of Lord Pitsligo's sister, Sir William Forbes of Monymusk. (See p. 305.)

In his seclusion at Auchiries, Lord Pitsligo wrote several other religious and philosophical works, and there he died December 21st, 1762, at the age of 84. He was buried in the family vault in Pitsligo Parish Church.

The Master of Pitsligo himself died, without issue, at Auchiries, January 30th, 1781. His death ended the line of the elder and ennobled branch of the Pitsligo family in the male line. In later years Sir Charles Forbes, 1st Baronet of Newe, established his right to represent the line of William of Dauch, younger brother of the 4th Laird of Pitsligo. Thus his line had come off from the parent stock five generations before the title was conferred, and though he was undoubted "heir male" of the original family, the point whether he could claim the attained title was found to be too doubtful to be worth bringing to law. The "heir of line" of the Lords Pitsligo is the 21st Lord Clinton, descended from Sir William Forbes, as seen by the accompanying tree. (See also p. 376.)

The estate of Pitsligo which was seized by the Crown in 1748, continued in the hands of Government under the factorship of Thomas Innes of Muiryfold till 1758, when it was put up for sale and part of it was purchased by Alexander Gordon of Aberdour, according to papers at Fettercairn, and part by John, Master of Pitsligo, who soon after sold the part of the Barony in the parish of Pitsligo to Alexander Garden of Troup, 20th February, 1760, and two months later Garden had the Castle dismantled, for what reason is not known. This Alexander Garden was a prominent Whig who had been of great assistance to Cumberland during his march from Aberdeen to Culloden, by keeping up a communication with the Government ships carrying stores, etc., round the coast.

In August, 1746, he suffered retribution at the hands of Jacobites still in hiding, being kidnapped by John Gordon of Avochie and others and all his money and papers taken from him before he was released.

Garden had bought up several confiscated estates. Pitsligo passed (with the estates of Troup and Delgaty) at the death of Alexander Garden, M.P., in 1785, to his brother, Francis, Lord Gardenstone, died 1793, and then to the son of the third brother, Peter Garden, and Katharine Balneaves, heiress of Campbell of Glenlyon. This son, Colonel Garden Campbell of Troup, sold Johnston and Thornton, the Kincardine Estates, and advertised the whole estate of Pitsligo for sale in 1795, but there were no offers. (Sir William Forbes, the Banker, had bought the Castle and 70 acres in 1770.) John Dingwall of Brucklay bought the rest of the estate in 1817 for £142,000; this included the whole barony of Roseheartly. Sir William Forbes also bought the estate of Pitullie and dismantled that Castle which had been built by Ogilvie of Boyne in 1631 and sold by Ogilvie to George Cumine. These are still in the possession of Lord Clinton.