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ART. I.—*The Earls of Cromartie, their Kindred, Country, and Correspondence.* By WILLIAM FRASER. 2 vols. Edinburgh: 1876.

THE book to which we purpose to direct the attention of our readers is one of several works of a similar character due to the industry and wide knowledge in such studies of Mr. William Fraser, a distinguished official in the General Register House in Edinburgh, who is, perhaps, still better known to the public from the success which has attended his exertions in resuscitating some of the dormant or disputed peerages of Scotland. Queen Victoria cannot make a Scotch peer, but Mr. Fraser has raised several of those noble persons from the dead. Among the families whose history and biographies he has already written, are those of the Nithsdales, the Montgomeries, the Southesks, the Maxwells of Pollock, the Colquhouns, the Stirlings of Keir, the Lennox, with the Cartulary of Cambuskenneth, the Red Book of Grandtully, and others; and we believe that a history of the great house of the Scotts of Buccleuch will soon be forthcoming from the same fertile source. Although these works have as yet passed only into the hands of the private friends of these families, or into some public libraries, and such private collections as have been deemed worthy to receive them, thanks are largely due to the liberality of the owners, who have incurred great expense in these publications, as well as to the gentleman who has so well carried out their intentions; and they supply us with abundant materials of historical and personal interest, not to be obtained elsewhere.

Of the origin of the great and widely spread clan of the Mackenzies, two theories have been advanced, both of which are before us in Mr. Fraser's pages. The one, which deduces its origin from the great house of Fitzgerald in Ireland, is founded chiefly on a fragment of the records of Icolmkill, and on a charter granted in 1266 by King Alexander III. to Colin Fitzgerald (called Colinus Hybernicus) of the lands of Kintail. This theory is supported, among others, by the opinion of the first Earl of Cromartie himself, surely a most competent authority. The other theory is grounded on an allegation, by Mr. Skene, that this charter is a forgery of later times, an opinion supported by arguments to which, as to anything from his pen, respect is due, but which seem to be hardly sufficient to overcome the evidence for the earlier belief. His opinion is based on a genealogical MS. of Highland families, now in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, written in Gaelic about the year 1450. Its anonymous author, believed to be one of the Maclachlan family, deduces the 'genealogy of the 'clan Kenneth' from Colin of the Aird, a progenitor of the Earls of Ross, who must have lived in the tenth century, and who, with his son Colin the younger, are represented to have been the ancestors of the Mackenzies of Kintail, from whom descend the family of Seaforth, and from them that of Cromartie. We will not attempt to decide this question, and, as Mr. Fraser remarks, either theory gives to these houses a sufficiently ancient descent, whether derived from one side of the Irish Channel or from the other. We will, however, from our own knowledge add to the testimony of the first Earl of Cromartie that of the last Lord Seaforth, which was certainly given in a remarkable manner. Lord Seaforth died in 1815, and some few years previously the late amiable Duke of Leinster visited Ross-shire, and was then acknowledged by the Scotch Laird as his superior chief, and as such received his formal homage.

It may be remarked that the armorial bearings of Seaforth give no information on this point; their stag's head, the well-known *Caber Feidh*, forming no part of the arms of the Earls of Ross, any more than of the Fitzgeralds. Those who have visited Brahan Castle will remember West's large picture of the incident to which the Chief of Kintail was indebted, according to highland story, for the stag's head on his shield, and there may be some also who will have smiled as they recalled the lines devoted to the picture by the facetious muse of Peter Pindar in his 'Farewell Odes' for 1786:—

' Behold, *one* fellow lifts his mighty spear,  
 To save the owner of the Scottish crown ;  
 Which, harmless hanging o'er the gaping deer,  
 Seems in no mighty hurry to come down.'

The first Baron and the founder, as he may be called, of the house of Cromartie, was Sir Roderick Mackenzie of Coigeach, Knight, who was the second son of Colin Mackenzie of Kintail, and brother of Kenneth, first Lord Mackenzie of Kintail.\* Sir Roderick was born about the year 1574, and was endowed by his father, as his portion, with the lands of Culteleod, afterwards called Castle Leod, in accordance with a custom not infrequent with the lords of wide lands in those days when these were more ample than their personal wealth. The barony of Coigeach he acquired through his marriage in 1605 with Margaret Macleod, daughter of Torquil Macleod, of the Lewes, and he acquired the lands and barony of Tarbat not long before his death in 1626. He built the picturesque Castle Leod in Strathpeffer, which tourists know and admire, and which bears on its massive walls the initials of Sir Roderick and Margaret Macleod, who strongly impressed her name and lineage on the family into which she married, for when they achieved an earldom they adopted Macleod as one of their minor titles. Sir Roderick, or, as he was popularly called, Sir Rorie, was a man of very great influence, and not more so from his own considerable property and his judicious guardianship of the interests of his nephew, Lord Mackenzie of Kintail, than from his great abilities. We are told 'Sir Rorie is still 'remembered in Ross-shire as a man of great bravery, and 'many anecdotes are told of him.' The following tradition is current in the county :—

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\* The Mackenzies of Kintail, however, flourished, as we have seen, in the preceding century and long before. Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail was buried in the Priory of Beaully in 1491, and an engraving of his tomb is prefixed to the volumes of the Charters of that Priory, published in 1876 by the Grampian Club, and ably edited by Mr. Chisholm Batten. This Sir Kenneth was the first of his family buried at Beaully, as he had married a daughter of Lord Lovat. His predecessors were all buried at Iona. This doughty champion, as Mr. Batten observes, routed the Macdonalds of the Isles at Blairnassare, took the Red Castle from Hugh Rose of Kilravoch (to whom it had been granted in 1482), and expelled him and his allies, the Clan Chattan, from the Black Isle ; thereby establishing the preponderance of the Mackenzies in Ross-shire. Their dominion extended from sea to sea. It is scarcely necessary to add that the present owner of the lands of Kintail has no claim to a descent from these warlike chieftains, and merely holds the property by purchase from its hereditary proprietors.

'The Tutor had occasion to visit Edinburgh in the interest of his ward Seaforth, and, while passing with his retinue through Athole, he was challenged by a band of Athole men for doing so without leave from the lord of the land. The Tutor dismounted, and quietly proceeded to look out for a smooth stone, on which he began to sharpen his claymore. The Athole men kept at a safe distance, and their spokesman interrogated him what he was doing there. "I am going to "make a road," was the ready answer. "You shall make no road here," was the defiant rejoinder. "Oh, I don't seek to do so, but I shall "make it between your master's head and his shoulders if I am thus "hindered from pursuing my lawful business." The Athole men sought no further parley, but retired; and on reaching their lord they recounted what had occurred, when he remarked that they must have encountered one of two personages—the Devil or the Tutor of Kintail. "Let him have a free path by here for ever." The following proverb is also still current:—"There are two things worse than the "Tutor of Kintail: frost in spring, and mist in the dog-days."

Sir Roderick died at Castle Leod in 1626, in the forty-eighth year of his age, and was buried at Dingwall. His successor was his eldest son, Sir John Mackenzie of Tarbat, created a Knight Baronet in 1628 by King Charles I. The memoir of his life tells more of his sayings and doings in the General Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland, in the earlier part of his life, than of aught else. When, however, the disputes of that body with Episcopacy culminated in the greater strife between King and Parliament, Sir John seems to have sought to combine his devotion to the Kirk with loyalty to the Crown; and he took part in the inglorious movement styled the Engagement, shared with the Duke of Hamilton in its failure, and accomplished for himself only an imprisonment under Cromwell. Sir John died at his Castle of Ballone, or Castlehaven, in Easter Ross, on September 10, 1654, and was survived by his wife Dame Margaret Erskine, who made a second marriage, and acquired some fame from her perseverance as a litigant, whereby she induced the Scottish Parliament to reverse a decision of the Court of Session against her in the interpretation of her marriage contract with her second husband. This lady's age is not precisely known, but it would appear she must have seen nearly ninety years; and she is said to have greatly rejoiced in the advancement of her distinguished son. In a letter to him, written shortly before her death, she says:—

'I put no question bot ye have enames, bot give God be your frind ye neid not cair. I have sent you your legasie befor I dy. I wold not have you give this gold away, onles it be at a strat. I got it from your father, and I think I cannot bestow it better than on yourself. This with my blisen.'

Sir John Mackenzie was succeeded by his eldest son, Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat, Baronet, afterwards first Earl of Cromartie, who was born in 1630, at Innertiel, near Kinghorn, in the county of Fife, the residence of his maternal grandfather Lord Innertiel. Here it may be well to notice the strange confusion which has sometimes been made by writers, less perfectly instructed than Mr. Fraser, between this distinguished man and another perhaps more famous lawyer, viz., Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, who was Lord Advocate, with a short interval of resignation, from 1677 to the Revolution in 1688. He was born in Dundee in 1636, died in London in 1692, and was buried in the Greyfriars churchyard in Edinburgh, where, owing to the name of the 'Bluidy Mackenzie,' given to him by the Covenanters, his well-known tomb was long the terror of the children in the neighbourhood, who invented some uncomplimentary rhymes with which to salute it before nightfall. He belonged to the Seaforth family, and was only connected with that of Cromartie by marriage ties. A notable instance of the confusion of persons which we have noticed occurred in the exhibition of national portraits on loan to the South Kensington Museum in April 1866, where a well-known portrait of Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, Lord Advocate, figured on the walls, and still figures in the catalogue (No. 891), as that of the first Earl of Cromartie.

Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat was an infinitely more pronounced loyalist than his father, and during the Commonwealth he forbore any connexion with what he held to be an usurpation. In fact he took up arms at the early age of eighteen, serving in the 'Engagement,' to which we have already alluded, and again at the age of twenty-three took an active part in the Earl of Glencairn's expedition, in 1653, when the royal standard was raised in the West Highlands. He does not appear to have done military duty after the suppression of this rising for the King, and during the Commonwealth his occupation, with frequent attention to those philosophical pursuits to which he was all his life addicted, seems to have been chiefly the study of the law, that 'gloomy labyrinth,' as a great historian has termed it, by means of which he was destined in after life to seek, and to find, high political distinction and a peerage.

The Restoration at once opened a career to Sir George. The Earl of Middleton, who had had experience of his abilities in Glencairn's expedition, when appointed by the King as Commissioner in Scotland, at once selected him as his chief adviser, and included him among the judges of the reconstituted Court of Session, under the official title of Lord Tarbat.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that his life was mainly a judicial one. He was immersed in politics and in political and party strife, his chief rival for the King's confidence and favour being Lauderdale, while his friends were Middleton and Rothes; but in this struggle he was finally worsted, and in 1664 he was dismissed from office and deprived of power.

Lord Tarbat continued in retirement for many years, and a letter printed in the Cromartie papers, from James Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrews, is the first indication of his return to high office, to which he was appointed on Oct. 16, 1678, as Lord Justice-General of Scotland, a position then only second to the Lord Chancellor; and shortly after he was named a Privy Councillor. He was subsequently, in 1681, appointed Lord Clerk Register, in the room of Sir Archibald Primrose, who took the office of Lord Justice-General, and soon after he was again admitted one of the ordinary Lords of Session. Mr. Fraser, than whom no one is better entitled to do so, bears testimony to the efficient manner in which Lord Tarbat discharged the duties of the Register House, an office of the greatest usefulness to Scotland, and for which his acquirements and capacity for business well qualified him. Lord Tarbat continued in power during the remainder of King Charles's reign, and in that of his brother, shortly after whose accession he was created a peer by the titles of Viscount Tarbat, Lord Macleod and Castlehaven.

The Revolution of 1688 and the landing of the Prince of Orange were trying times to many great men in Scotland, and to Lord Tarbat among others; but he had early foreseen the impending catastrophe, and was prepared for it, and ready to cast in his lot with William, whose prudent resolve to treat none as his enemies till he should find it impossible to make them his friends rendered his task easier than it had at first appeared. He succeeded so entirely that he held his office of Lord Clerk Register from 1692, till he resigned it in 1696, on a pension.

Lord Tarbat could hardly expect to escape unfriendly comment on this change of masters, nor did he, and his conduct of affairs generally has been severely handled by opponents. The heaviest of the charges brought against him was that made by Secretary Johnstone of his having falsified the minutes of Parliament on various occasions; but Mr. Fraser adduces reasons for holding these accusations to be unsubstantiated, and quotes the language of the Duke of Queensberry in a letter to Lord Tarbat, of about the year 1701, in which the Duke says:—

‘If his Majesty’s servants there (London) are not sensible of the value of my dear Tarbat for their master’s interest, I am sure that I have an advantage over them in knowing his worth. The small things that were procured to your lordship from the King, I doe assure you, were very readily granted; and he expresses himself on all occasions with great satisfaction in your service, and a personal esteem of you.’

Lord Tarbat’s first wife, to whom he was married for forty-five years, died in 1699, and in six months after that event, and at the ripe age of seventy, he married Margaret, Countess of Wemyss. This lady was the sister uterine of Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, and the marriage was celebrated in April 1700. The duchess writes at this time to Lord Melville:—

‘Tarbat wrott a bantering letter to me, and I writt just such another to him, but my sister did not naim him in her letter to me, so I shall make no serious answer to him till he owns it, for I think it should have bene from herself that I should first have heard of it.’

In another letter from the duchess to the same correspondent she says:—

‘At last I had a letter from my sister Wemyss, dated the 28 of April. The last of it was she believed she should be married to-morrow or next day. A hansom warning for a sister of a thing of that consequence.’

This marriage, which appears to have been a happy one, was also short-lived, the countess having died at Whitehall, London, on March 11, 1705. The death of King William brought no ill results to Lord Tarbat, but rather the reverse. The important office of Secretary of State for Scotland was bestowed on him, to be followed by his elevation in 1703 to the dignity of Earl of Cromartie, Viscount Tarbat, Lord Macleod and Castlehaven.

He seems to have felt very much the death of his countess, and having then attained the age of seventy-five, he resigned the more arduous post of Secretary of State, and resumed that of Lord Justice-General, an office he had formerly held, with the duties of which he was familiar, and in this capacity he did his utmost to promote the long-projected union of the two kingdoms. It is, indeed, impossible to exaggerate the energy of his language in behalf of this measure, or the continued persistence on every occasion, and almost in every letter, public or private, with which he advocated it; and it is only just to his memory to remark, that in an age when views of personal advantage are continually visible in every discussion, and on every

subject, Lord Cromartie merits the eulogy that his sole object in this great matter, even at the risk of unpopularity, was the welding together, to their mutual advantage, of the two kingdoms into one inseparable Britain—and this great consummation he lived to see. In 1710, being then eighty years of age, Lord Cromartie vacated the last offices he had held, and the last four years of his life were passed in complete retirement, followed by his death on August 27, 1714, in his eighty-fourth year, at Milnton, afterwards called New Tarbat, and more lately Tarbat House.

The memoir of Lord Cromartie in the work before us concludes with a summary of his character and an enumeration of his published or written works. We shall content ourselves with saying that he was not only one of the ablest men of his time in Scotland, but one who would certainly have attained distinction among any associates. He was more than ordinarily learned, having little to fear from competition in that field; and he added to his learning a strong intellect and great energy of character and expression, with a ready activity of mind and body. He speaks in his letters of being poor, but he acquired from his long public service a considerable landed property; though it is perhaps the best answer to any criticisms which may be made upon these acquisitions, that, with the high offices he held for so long a period, he certainly did not accumulate any such fortune as to justify accusations of speculation, or even of greed, in a time when such judgments were neither infrequent nor ill-founded. His obtaining for political purposes an Act of Parliament which annexed all his scattered property, wherever situated, to the very small county of Cromartie (so that the sporadic fragments of that county are in reality the Tarbat estates), was a proceeding which would not now be tolerated, and was long the cause of inconvenience and of some failure of justice: but similar motives have not been unknown in very much more recent days, though assuming a more modest shape; and it would be to take a sanguine view of mankind to assert that they will not be discoverable in the future. Lord Cromartie's life affords ample evidence that he had strongly and actively at heart the progress and material interests of his native country when such enlarged views were held by few; and his descendants may without hesitation point to him as one who has shed lustre on their name.

The second Earl of Cromartie was John, who was born in 1656, and died in 1731; but his life hardly calls for remark here beyond this, that with him began those indications of pre-



ference for the exiled Royal family which afterwards cost his own house so dear.

George, third Earl of Cromartie, who was born about 1702, succeeded his father, and married, in 1724, Isabella Gordon, daughter of Sir William Gordon, Baronet, of Invergordon, an alliance from which, coupled with the fact that Robert Dundas of Arniston, afterwards Lord President of the Court of Session, was his brother-in-law, one would have expected the suppression of any Jacobite proclivities. Their happy married life continued uninterrupted till the landing of Charles Edward in Loch-na-nuagh brought them ruin.

The Prince's letter to Lord Cromartie, as we read it by the light of later days, must, one cannot but think, have been a perplexing one to the Earl; and judging from certain letters written by him in September and October of this year, it was so.

'Boradel : August 8, 1745.

'Having been well inform'd of your principles and loyalty, I cannot but expect your assistance at this juncture, that I am come with a firm resolution to restore the king, my father, or perish in the attempt. I know the interest you have among those of your name, and depend upon you to exert it to the utmost of your power. I have some reason not to make any application to the Earl of Seaforth without your advice, which I therefor desire you to give me sincerely. I intend to set up the Royal standard at Glanfinnen on Monday the 19th inst., and shou'd be very glad to see you on that occasion. If time does not allow it, I still depend upon your joyning me with all convenient speed. In the mean time you may be assured of the particular esteem and friendship I have for you.

'CHARLES P. R.

'For the Earl of Cromarty.'

Lord Cromartie and his son Lord Macleod, with four hundred of their clan, joined the Prince's followers at Perth, some three months subsequent to the date of this letter. The events of 1745-46 need not here be retold. Suffice it to say that the Earl and his following remained at Perth or Dundee as their head-quarters till Charles Edward's return from England, but took an active part in the battle of Falkirk in February 1746, thus fully identifying themselves with the rebellion, if such their enterprise was fated to be called. Lord Cromartie's capture at Dunrobin Castle the day before the battle of Culloden, his being carried to London and committed to the Tower, and being afterwards pardoned, when the peers, his partners in misfortune, were executed, are incidents all too familiar to be again narrated.

The family lived in England assisted by a small pension

from the Crown, but the adverse conditions of exile and poverty seem to have been softened to them by mutual affection and resignation. Lord Cromartie died in 1766, and his widow in 1769. The earl had in domestic life the advantage over another Scottish noble long an exile, and we may hope that he passed from life as serenely as did the last Earl Marischal at Potsdam in 1778, when saying to Hugh Elliott two days before he died, 'Je vous ai fait appeler parce que je trouve plaisant qu'un ministre du Roi George reçoive les derniers soupirs d'un vieux Jacobite.' Their eldest son, Lord Macleod, having also received the Royal pardon, and disdaining dependence and idleness, resolved to seek military service abroad, and stated his purpose to his father in the following manly letter:—

Bridport : April 18, 1749.

'My Lord,—You will perhaps be surprised to find by this letter that I am set out for London without having acquainted you with anything of my design; but when I have informed you of my motives for taking this step, I flatter myself you will approve of the principles on which I act, and do justice to the sincerity of my intentions. It cannot but be very disagreeable to me to find that there are some of my relations in Scotland who make it their business to carp at everything I do; and all this because I wou'd not follow the scheme of life which they had laid down for me. They not only disapprove of every visit I make, but my going into any company, however mixed; my being at the most publick places, however indifferently frequented by people of all parties; and my very cloaths are offences of the highest nature. As this fully convinces me that they are resolved to disapprove of every step I can take, I was afraid that, if you was acquainted with my design, they might attribute a part of this other imaginary offence to your share. It is to prevent any bad consequences of this nature that has determined me to act as I have done; and I declare before God that the above reason is my only inducement for so doing. As I have ever made my duty to my parents the inviolable rule of my conduct, so I shall always continue in the same sentiments, and shall with pleasure embrace every opportunity by which I can show it. As idleness is certainly very detrimental to everybody, so it is likewise very shameful for a young man—especially for one in my situation—to loiter away his time when he ought to be pushing his way thro' the world. This has determined me to offer my services to some of the northern powers, where the approaching war offers a favorable opportunity to such as are determined to make a figure in the world, or fall in the attempt. I have as much money as will carry me to town, and if I can get as much there as will carry me over the water, it will do very well. If not, I still think it better even to beg my bread over, and afterwards to carry a musket, than to continue any longer a burden to you. I shall write again from London, where I propose to stay but a few days. I offer my most affectionate duty to my mother,

and my affectionate compliments to my sisters. I am, my Lord, your most affectionate and dutiful son,

‘MACLEOD.

‘To the Right Honourable the Earl of Cromartie.’

Lord Macleod took service with the King of Sweden, having been assisted in his equipment by the Chevalier de Saint George, on the recommendation of Lord George Murray. He continued in it for twenty-seven years, including within that period a campaign with Frederick the Great in the seven years' war of which he has left us an account written in French, and now first printed in this work. He also wrote a most interesting narrative of the rising of 1745, from its commencement to near its conclusion, which, with the Prussian campaign, forms a valuable part of Mr. Fraser's second volume. Lord Macleod's distinguished services abroad procured for him several marks of honour from the sovereign he had served, and were fitly followed by his obtaining military rank and a command from King George III. in 1777, for whom he raised the 73rd Regiment (since numbered the 71st) of 1,100 highlanders, and styled ‘Macleod's Highlanders,’ with whom he proceeded to Madras in 1780. His services in India are well known. He returned to England in 1782, with the rank of Major-General, having been in his absence, in October 1780, elected Member of Parliament for the shire of Ross, amid the tumultuous applause of its whole population; and on August 18, 1784, the Act was passed for restoring the forfeited estates to their former owners or their heirs—a wise and generous measure, carried out by Henry Dundas, afterwards first Viscount Melville, who must have had no small pleasure in placing at the head of the list the name of his gallant relative, Lord Macleod.

Lord Macleod married in 1786 Marjory Forbes, eldest daughter of James, Lord Forbes, and died April 2, 1789, his widow afterwards becoming the wife, in 1794, of John, fourth Duke of Athol. When her Majesty Queen Victoria passed through Dunkeld on September 8, 1842, on her visit to the late Marquis of Breadalbane, she called at the abode of the widowed and aged duchess, and, it is said, looked into the room where her grace, then in her last illness, lay on a sofa asleep and unconscious of the visit of her sovereign. The duchess died in the following month; and should her Majesty enjoy the fulness of years wished for her by every subject of her beneficent reign, she may be able to say that she had seen and visited the widow of one of the rebel lords who pleaded for their lives at the bar of the House of Lords some 150 years previously.

Lord Macleod was succeeded in his estates by his cousin, Kenneth Mackenzie, only son of the Honourable Roderick Mackenzie. He died in 1796, leaving no issue, and was succeeded by Lady Isabella Mackenzie, Dowager Lady Elibank, the eldest sister of Lord Macleod. This lady died December 28, 1801, and was succeeded by her eldest daughter, the Honourable Maria Murray Hay Mackenzie, the wife of Edward Hay of Newhall, brother of George, seventh, and uncle of Field-Marshal George, eighth Marquis of Tweeddale, recently deceased. Mrs. Hay Mackenzie, who lived to a great age, resided much at Tarbat House, and took especial interest in a careful exercise of the large Church patronage which belonged to the family of Cromartie. She witnessed the disruption in 1843, which not a little inconveniently called on her to select ministers to fill the vacant pulpits, but, dying in 1858, she did not live to see the Act which abrogated those rights.

She was succeeded by her only son, John Hay Mackenzie, of Cromartie and Newhall, who married Anne, daughter of Sir James Gibson Craig, Baronet, of Riccarton. He died at Cliefden on July 9, 1849, much mourned, especially by his tenantry, who were greatly attached to him; and his widow continued to reside at Castle Leod, dispensing its kindnesses and charities to all around her, till her death in September 1869. Their only child is Anne Hay Mackenzie, Duchess of Sutherland, created on October 21, 1861, in her own right Countess of Cromartie, Viscountess Tarbat, Baroness Macleod and Castlehaven. Her grace's marriage to the Duke of Sutherland was received in the North as a welcome link between the counties of Ross and Sutherland; and when the honours of her predecessors were revived in her person, it seemed as if a seal had been set to the old ties which, in less peaceful days, had united the noble houses of Sutherland and Cromartie.

We have been unwilling to interrupt this genealogical sketch of the Cromartie family and of its fortunes from the days of the 'Tutor of Kintail' down to the creation of the present earldom, by more than an indirect reference to the mass of correspondence collected in these volumes. Yet upon their compilation Mr. Fraser has expended no little care, and materials existing either at Tarbat House or in the charter chests of Mar and of Athole have given a real interest to this book. These letters contain, along with historical details of some merit, many interesting and amusing sketches of domestic manners. We trace the intermarriages of the great high-

land families, their jealousies and their friendships;—we see how their rentals were gathered, how their children were educated, and the letters from first to last reflect a great deal of public opinion in Scotland from the year 1662 to 1750, and that on many important subjects. We will first take some of those which bear on the state of the Church in the highlands.

In 1665 Episcopacy was still by law established, and James Sharp was Archbishop of St. Andrews. He writes thus to Sir George Mackenzie (Lord Tarbat):—

‘St. Andrews: Sept. 2, 1665.

‘My Lord,—By a letter from the Bishop of Ross, last night, I was so surprysed, that I resolv'd to give you the trouble of this account of it. He wreats that after he had thought that all differences about the dues of his see had been, by your and the Bishop of Murreyes interposing amicably, settled, the Earl of Seaforth, accompanied with yourself and the laird of Cromarty and above a score of gentlemen of note more, came to his howse; and you were pleasit, in your heat, to publickly discharge all friendship, correspondance, or respect to him, alledging that he had wreat a letter to me challenging my Lord Seaforth, yourself, and Cromarty, of disaffection to the Church government. If that be the cause of this strange usage, I must bear testimony to the bishop's innocency. . . . I have been told indeed that it has been observed, that, since my Lord Seaforth his last coming from the Sowth, the bishop has not been used with that kyndness and respect which formerly he had, which is very grevous and discouraging to him, and caused admiration in me, my Lord Seaforth having, when he did me the honour to see me, givin me those assurances of his friendship to the settled order, and assistance to the Bishop of Ross, that I did wreat to London, and caused represent to the King how necessary it would be for the good of his service that the Earl of Seaforth be encouraged and inabled by a special fruit of his royal bounty. By the relation I had from the Archbishop of Glasgow, I cannot say that my humble motion on my Lord Seaforth's behalf was without some effect. But now, my lord, I confess I am at a stand what to think of this odd usage putt so publickly on the bishop, with whose carriage and obliging dealing towards those who hold of his see I have heard you speak with much commendation. This puttis me in mynd of an expression which stuck with me you had in freedom of discourse to me upon a night in my chamber in Edinburgh, about two years ago, that you did prognosticate I would hear complaints from some northern bishops of the contempt and injuries would be cast upon them. I shall not judge what has been the instigation to this, or what is designed by it, or what is at the bottom where such smoak brakes forth, but am sorry that such essayes and shrewd experiments should be first attempted in Ross, whence it was least expected. . . . I leave it to be considered by you how it will be construed that upon a causeless suggestion a bishop, who is commissioned by the King and by the law of God and of the law, and intrusted with the inspection of the clergy and layety in that

precinct, should be, by the chief persons in the diocess, publickly in presence of the most of the gentry contemptuously interdicted from respect, friendship, and correspondence of those whom the law has put under his charge, is a sort of excommunication I know not where or when heard of before in the Christian Church. . . . We are not yet brought to that pass as to brook a precarious authority upon these termes; but as long as the lawes are in force, and our gracious Sovereign in condition to protect us, till a rebellion be commenced of new, we hope it will not be expected that we will be terrifyed from our endeavouring, by lawfull and Christian meanes, that the authority of Christ and the King, with which our office is invested, doe not suffer in our persons, and be thus exposed to such ill-boading beginnings, whatever lott we shall be cast upon therby. I have wretten to the Bishop of Ross that immediately he come south, because we have use for his service in the publick concernes of the Church this winter. . . .

‘J. ST. ANDREWS.’

So much for the autumnal days of Episcopacy in Scotland.

The following letter from the celebrated William Carstairs is noteworthy. It bears the date of 1684, and in it the imprisoned presbyter asks for Lord Tarbat’s good offices. In ten years’ time the tables were to be turned, and there are extant three letters of Lord Tarbat’s, in which he offers to resign his post of Register, and complains of his adversaries. He also asks for Carstairs’ interest with King William, and that at a time when few Scotchmen had access to the Sovereign, and none possessed an influence to be compared with that of ‘Cardinal Carstares.’ This letter from the prisoner of Stirling Castle has been given in facsimile by Mr. Fraser. It runs as follows:—

‘Stirling: Oct. 8, 1684.

‘My Lord,—The scruple made by the Captain of the Castle about the meaning of the letter sent to him for the receiving me prisoner, hath made me presume to give your lordship this trouble, which I doe with the greater confidence, because of the allowance your lordship was pleased to grant me at parting, of troubling you with my concerna. I do not doubt, my lord, but both yourselfe and the other lords, who signed the order for my free prison, did design it might be as free as might be, consistent with restraint; but the commander in this place, not thinking himselfe sufficiently warranted by what was written to him about me, to allow me what libertie I had in the Castle of Edinburgh, and what I am confident was designed for me by your lordship, hath thought fit to restrain me from walking within the castle walls, unless attended by a sergeant, or some of the souldierie of the garrison, by which your lordship’s favour is almost rendered useless, and I in some manner still a close prisoner, being thus deprived of any retirement, having but one room for myself, wife, and maid. I doe therefore humbly beg the favour of your lordship, that by satisfying Captain

Stuart's doubts, I may enjoy the libertie which your lordship thinks I do allreadie share of. I must also, my lord, take the freedom to tell your lordship that the kindnesse I have alreadie mett with from your lordship's selfe and my lord's secretarie, doth make me presume to expect that I shall, thro' the endeavours of your lordships, have in a little time my remission and libertie upon bail, and (if thought necessarie) I promise to appear when called, which favours when granted, it shall be my endeavour to improve, as neither his Majestie may have cause to repent of what he bestowes on me, nor your lordship of your kindnesse to,

'My Lord, your most humble and faithfull

'W. CARSTARES.'

The year 1706 found George, Earl of Cromartie, in Edinburgh, and a new year's letter of greeting from him to the Earl of Mar shows the prominent place that the projected Union had in this statesman's thoughts:—

'Edinburgh: Jan. 1, 1706.

'My dear Lord,—As yet your lordship's letters have avaid little more than herr Majestie's former letters, and that is *nothing* to your servant. But of this too much.

'On this New Year Day, many happy yeares are wished by me (and I am sure by many Scotsmen) to you and your family, and (as that which I think Scotland's cheef politick good) to ane intire vnion with England. I doe not mean without provisions and exceptiones—that were ridiculous for both—but in substantials, that both head and body might be one politick body. Unless we be a part each of the other, the vnion will be as a blood puddin to bind a catt, i.e., till one or the other be hungry, and then the puddin flies! God give all of you prudence, wisdom, and honesty, and Brittiish minds.'

This petition seems to have been breathed by the Earl of Cromartie with reference to the many opponents to the proposed Union. That body included among its number Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, the man of whom it was said that, brave as the sword he wore, he would lose his life readily to serve his country, and would not do a base thing to save it. His aversion to the proposed Union was deeply rooted, and was expressed at great length and with much force in a paper on the state of this controversy. It was his conviction that legislation for the two kingdoms and the two Churches could not be carried on by one Parliament sitting at Westminster, where he said that the Scottish members might turn themselves round and round for evermore 'in a trap of their own making.'

Some such ominous prognostications must have been in Cromartie's mind when he alludes to needful 'provisions and exceptiones;' and certainly the details of the Union must have

been a hard nut for any politician to crack in the disaffected state of the northern kingdom. He goes on to say:—

‘I will not obtrude to say what kind, what mode of union—that I commit to better judgments—if it be in the way of federation (so that be good and sure), or one incorporating (which I think can hardly be bad and unsure) so it effectuate a solid peace, affection, and proportionable advantages, by peace, trade, or in warr, to all parts of the island.’

The strange and pathetic eloquence with which Lord Belhaven argued the other side of this question can never be forgotten, and his words must have sent a thrill of patriotism through many a purely Scottish breast, less prepared than was Lord Cromartie’s to nourish the larger hope. ‘Where,’ Lord Belhaven had asked, ‘are the Douglasses, the Grahams, ‘the Campbells, our peers and chieftains who vindicated by ‘their swords the independence of their country, which their ‘sons are about to forfeit by a single vote?’ The depth of Belhaven’s feeling on the passing of the Act of Union cannot be better illustrated than by recording here the legend on a stone erected by him in his garden at Biel, and apparently marking its date,—‘*Traditionis Scotiæ anno primo, 1707.*’ Lord Cromartie struck a very different note when he wrote to Lord Mar:—

‘May wee be Brittaines, and down goe the old ignominious names of Scotland and of England. Scot or Scotland are words not known in our native language; and England is a dishonorable name, imposed on Brittaines by Jutland pirats and mercenaries. Brittaines is our true, our honorable denomination.’

That denomination became legal throughout the whole island by the Act of Union of 1707; but the passions roused by the long controversy were by no means all appeased by the prevalence of the counsels which Lord Cromartie knew so well how to advance.

The year 1708 saw a naval expedition prepared against England at Dunkirk, and many of the northern nobles—Panmure, Gordon, Athole, and Errol—engaged to take arms in the cause of the Stuart pretender. This attempt at invasion came to nothing, but the prisons of Scotland were immediately crowded with persons of all ranks, among whom Belhaven and Fletcher were included. The principal hope of the Government now lay in the Presbyterian party and in a few such staunch supporters as Lord Cromartie. We can the more easily follow the letter in which Lord Godolphin conveys to him the assurance of the Queen’s trust and esteem:—



‘ June 14, 1709. .

‘ My Lord,—Though I have been long without acknowledging the favour of your lordship’s two last letters, I have, however, taken an opportunity to reade them to the Queen, who, I believe, is very well convinced of the truth of all that is contained in them, especially of those particulars relating to the manner of the Union’s being accomplished in Scotland; and I can assure your lordship she remembers you with the same kindness as when you were nearer to her person. And if the peace were so near as wee thought it a month since, I believe she would yett encourage you to take the trouble of a London journey, to have your assistance in such measures as will then bee proper for settling the future commerce of that part of the kingdome. But during the warr those things may bee thought of, but nothing will bee done to any purpose till a peace comes, which, I hope, may yett be before winter.

‘ I am always with great truth and respect, my Lord,

‘ Your Lordship’s most obedient servant,

‘ GODOLPHIN.’

All the letters in Mr. Fraser’s volumes are not of such a grave complexion as these. They contain many naïve details of family life and domestic manners in the highlands. The following appeal from Lord Duffus is a correct picture of the narrow incomes and the economical habits of the northern gentry, who had often more acres than guineas. Kenneth, third Lord Duffus, writes to George, first Earl of Cromartie :—

‘ Tausday (circa 1710).

‘ My dear Lord,—Nothing but the assurance of a tar cou’d be guilty of this impudenece, and even that could not perswad me, till necessity obligea me, to beg your lordship’s assistance by the loan of 5 guiny’s more, and in a very little time I hope to repay it thankfully. I would not have troubled you, my dear Lord, but that I am not able to use this freedom with any other. And to be plain, it’s to pay my cook, who, without it, will not supply any further. If you can do it by the bearer, my footman, it will oblige him who even blushes to subscribe myself, tho’ with a great dale of sincerity I am, your Lordship’s most affectionate and most dutyfull nephew and humble servant,

‘ DUFFUS.’

Of a much earlier date, but very amusing, is an epistle written to Viscount Tarbat by his wife. She writes from ‘ Castalleoud, the 21 of Juli, 1690 :’—

‘ My dear Love,—I rescued the horses, cowes, and all as you wrot very well. I am told there was a ship of great burdin brok to pices as she entered the Suterres,\* which I wondered much at, lodend with irne, and

\* The Sutors of Cromarty, which guard the entrance to Cromarty Firth, the finest harbour on the north-western coast of Britain.

I know not what els. The men are all safe, and I hear they got very good peniwortas of it; but nather my son nor anyther acquainted me any thing consarning hir; bot so some as John McLeod come from the hilandea, which was the uery day I furst heard of it, I sent him ther to see what truth was in it, and secure the anker and best rop. I hear the Invernes men boght op all at a very shep rate. . . . Our wark goes on bott sloley. You know Mcgumeri is not ouerawift. . . . I am just about to cut turff for laying the grines. I know not but you may be angri, seeing I had no directions where to cut. We know no place but from the side of Moure as we goe to church, or in the wood above the hous. . . . Davet is busi skliting the turettes. I am only now waiting for a little more lyme, which is very ill to be had; for John McLeod nides for Tarbat, who is indeed a very good griue, and becomed a very frugall man. . . . I browed only once since you went from this. You know I had very good aelle in the hous, which I bottled, and it keepes very well. I believe the wine is very good to, for oght I know, for we have not gret use for it. Once we drunk a fiow bottles when my sister Sefort come to dyne with me with her chaplen and brother-in-laue. I am told they fish preti well att Conen just now. . . . You writ me no account of my sones wife. They tell me she is brought to bed of a doghter. I know not if it be so; I get never a letter from any of my doghters, tho' I writ many. . . .

'Your faithfull

'A. TARBAT.'

This is, we believe, a perfectly artless effusion, though it is very certain that when written, and for at least a century later, a wreck was never an unwelcome incident on these northern shores, where we have known sales of wreck and cargo arranged in a way much more generous to the neighbourhood than just to the owners. It is, however, more curious to find the Regent of King's College, Aberdeen (George Fraser), sending to Lord Tarbat a letter in which the condemnation of Fénelon's book, with the particulars of a French persecution of Huguenots, as brought home by merchants, are noticed along with the weather, and with the sufferings of a certain John Mackenzie, of Kildonan, for witchcraft. It seems that the witches had confessed their guilt to Lord Tarbat. His learned correspondent comments on this:—

'Their voluntare confessions, and taking guilt upon them by owning the facts as the causes of maladies and deaths, and desire to be gone to their master, (?) otherways than by burning. I go also alongst with your Lordship's decision as to the poor creatures curioasity that lookt upon their operations, accidentally coming to their elaboratory (a sort of *leger de maine* many could look on), providing she was under no compact or promise with them or him, except secrecy. But I am more stumbled at the litle horse his speaking than any other part of the relation, it being reasonably lookt on as supernatural that brutes whose

organs are not fitted for articulate pronunciation, should in one instant speak distinctly.'

The ague which resulted from the marshy nature of the country, if ever natural drainage failed, plays a more important part in the correspondence of these highland lords and ladies than it could do now. Peruvian bark was already recognised as a remedy, but some of the prescriptions in which their physicians believed are more curious than pleasant. We may congratulate ourselves on the disappearance of them from the modern pharmacopœia, though 'King Charles's drops' must evidently at one time have been a very fashionable medicine. Lord Cromartie's second wife (Countess of Wemyss) writes thus to him after she has been ill:—

'My dearest Love,—I am very sorry you have been so toild with business and satt so late up. I pray God it may not do you hurt. I long alreedy to be with you againe. . . . I resolve if the Lord give me health and strength, to goe from this place to-morrow by eight o'clock in the morning, for I do not care to ly abed when I want my dearest and better parte. I shall be very careful of your Pegie, and if I finde myself weary or not well to-morrow, I will stay till Wednesday, which my sister is very earnest to have me do. It is now near twelve o'clock, so I shall add noe more, but I am unalterably, my dearest life,

'Your oune

'M. W.'

'Your son was very carfull of me, which I took most kindlie on your account.'

It may not be uninteresting to see how a great lady of the close of the seventeenth century educated her son. Lady Breadalbane (*née* Mary Campbell), whose continued use of her former husband's signature has misled Mr. Fraser into calling her 'Countess of Caithness,' writes to consult Lord Tarbat about some legal business, and then goes on:—

'I have got a governor to Colin. Such things are not taught in the scoul where he is boarded; his tutor is to teach him at his lodging. Colin has made a considerable advance in his French, and is now learning the mathamaticks. As for his philosophie and law, his tutor is very capable to teach him these principle; and I doe think he may make as good advances in thes stuys hear (London) as at Oxfoord. . . . I went this last September to Oxfoord and stayed there 2 weeks, and did inform myselfe verie fully of all the ways that such as my son wold be managed in that place; and when I considered the good and ill that is to learnt ther, I concluded that my son's education may be ful as well hear (in London) as in Oxfoord. Being sixteen he shall still be boarded with his French maister, who is a discreet, well-bred man; and when Colin is something advanced in such lessons as are thought fitt for him, there is a very good academie hear. My lord is very free to be at the

charge of every thing that is proper for Colin's education ; and, I thank God, the child is very willing to learn, and I hop in a few years he shal be capable to serv your lordship.

'M. CAITHNES.'

The pains which Lady Breadalbane bestowed on this son were destined to have but a short season for their fruition. Colin died in 1708, and it is left to the superstitious to see a 'judgment' in his early death. He was the only son, by his second marriage, of that Earl of Breadalbane who shared with Lord Stair the stain of the blood of Glencoe.

Much interest attaches to that part of the Cromartie correspondence which relates to George, the third and attained earl. We find many pages which describe the early happy years of his married life, when his business letters, instead of referring to war and the levies of rebel regiments, are full of minute directions for the furnishing of New Tarbat House. He resided generally at Castle Leod, and there, before his 'bonnie Bell Gordon's' troubles began, she had her children about her, and received the visits either of her father, Sir William Gordon, or of her sister Anne, who, with Lord Arniston, came to spend midsummer days with her in the highlands. Then, when the state of the river fords was favourable, the great highland lairds visited each other. Simon, Lord Lovat, writes :—

'Beaufort : May 27, 1740.

'My dear Lord,—I was much pleased with the hopes of having the honour to see your lordship, and my worthy friend Lord Arnistoun and Sir William Gordon, in this little hutt, either Fryday, Saturday, or yesterday. But I am mighty sorry at the account that I got this evening from Braan, that the good Countess of Cromartie was dangerously ill. . . . I would certainly have had the honour to have paid my duty to you and to Lord Arnistoun yesterday, at Castle Leod, but the river of Bewlie has not been so low this year as it has been these few days past.'

This 'river of Bewlie' was not always to be trusted. The Earl of Murray comes to Beaufort, and has many adventures, which his host thus repeats to Lord Cromartie :—

'Not daring to cross the foord in his coach, he took a small fishing coble and crossed in it with the Countess and the ladies that were with her, and sent his coach by the foord, which had almost been drowned, and his horses, for there was above a foot of water in the coach, and the windows open. I wish with all my soul the Earl had been in the coach !'

Not a very hospitable wish, certainly ; but to the Cromarties Lord Lovat is much more flattering, and he 'sincerely protests

‘ that except your own children there is not a Mackenzie alive that has a greater honour and value for your lordship than I have.’ These protestations of regard abound in his letters. One day he prepares a gift for the descendant of the Tutor of Kintail which he believes will be very acceptable at Castle Leod.

‘ Beaufort : July 3, 1739.

‘ I can very freely assure your lordship that nothing but my long and great indisposition, which is not yet quite over, deprived me of the honour of paying my respects to your Lordship before now at Castle Leod, and bringing with me the triumphing sword of your great and worthy ancestor and my great-grand-uncle Sir Rory, Tutor of Kintail. I have it still ready to go along with me. I did design to cause brush it and dress it up; but I was advised by some of your friends and mine to keep it in the old rusty dress it is in till I put it in your lordship’s hands, which I am fully resolved to do as soon as ever I am able to ride that length in any shape; for there is nothing I long for more than to have the honour to see your lordship in your own house. . . .

‘ LOVAT.’

It is to be doubted if Lovat, when furbishing up this archaic sword, pictured to himself how soon by the Frasers and the Mackenzies the sword would be drawn in serious earnest, and Castle Downie and Tarbat receive the visits of the regiments of King George.

It was not till after the successful battle of Prestonpans that the wily Lovat threw in his lot with the party of Charles Edward. Even in the letters which he addresses to Lord Cromartie in 1745 it is curious to note how disingenuous and uncertain are all his utterances. The year that was to be so eventful to the hopes of the Stuart Prince opened with a snowstorm of extraordinary severity.

‘ Beaufort : Feb. 4, 1745.

‘ My dear Earl,—I do not believe that since the deluge there was such a storm of snow upon the Strath of the Aird. It was seldom or ever seen that there was above a foot deep of snow upon the plain Strath, but now it is three and four feet deep, and in some places seven and eight feet. The cattle in this county has suffered a great deal already, and are like to perish: so much as to water they have not got out of their stalls these twelve days past—neither horse, cow, sheep, or goat—but the people are forced to carry the water to them; in short, the situation of this county is so dismal that it cannot be expressed.’

Through many pages Lord Lovat continues to discourse of the weather, of his humble cousins, and of his anxieties for the health of the lovely Countess of Cromartie; and it is only in the postscript that he finds room for the perilous matter of politics:—

'My cousin McLeod writes to me, that tho' he is upon the spot at London, he knows nothing of the politicks. But I find by his letter and the Lyon's that the court is in great confusion.'

On October 17, 1745, he writes :—

'My son has taken a military freak ; he is going, whether I will or not, with all of the name of Fraser that are fit for it, to join the adventuring Prince. You may be sure, my dearest Earl, this must affect me because my son is the hope of my family and the darling of my soul. I pray God Almighty send him safe back, and that neither he nor any that goes with him may do anything that may be dishonourable to themselves or to their family. And I can assure you that my son is fully as fond of your lordship and of my dear Lord McLeod, as I am ; and I hope we shall never differ in politicks, which now divide the world, for I am very sure we both love our King and country ; and I hope we shall see things go on as we could wish.'

Nothing can exceed the caution of these paragraphs, but none the less, ere very long, both Simon, Lord Lovat, and George, Earl of Cromartie, stood at the bar to take their trials for high treason. Lord Cromartie had been taken prisoner, as we have said, at Dunrobin. His wife, then within a few weeks of her confinement, hurried up to London to engage the sympathy and aid of what influential friends she could find—and with what result has been already stated.

After his pardon, Lord Cromartie lived for a time in Devonshire, and in November 1748 we find him writing from Northcote near Honiton to a friend in the North :—

'Sir,—My chief reason for writing to you now is to let you and our other friends know that we are very well, as well as we can be while in this parte of the world. There were so many inconveniences attending our living at Leahill, that I quitted it above six weeks ago. We find this place more agreeable. It is in the heart of a very fine country, and within a short walk of Honiton, a very good market town ; but for all that I would much rather live at the foot of Ben Wyvis, and be better pleased with an oaten cake and the produce of the Strathpeffer or Milntoun bear than with the finest bread, the finest cyder, and all the other necessaries of life which this county is remarkable for beyond any in England.

'I am, your assured and sincere friend,

'CROMARTIE.'

The following letter from Lord Macleod to his father is interesting, and more cheerful, as the beginning of an honourable and distinguished career :—

'Stockholm : January 16, 1750, O.S.

'My Lord,—I left Dantzick the 11th of last month, and as I had but a few hours warning, I had not time to write. I wrote you about a fortnight before I came here, three weeks ago. I was introduced the 8th instant to the King, to the Prince, and to Madame Royale, by his

Excellency Count Tessin, and was very graciously received. All the other Senators, as well as the First Minister, are extremely obliging to me. My affair is already over, and in a few days I will get my commission as captain in the regiment of foot commanded by Major-General Baron Hamilton. Baron Hamilton, the elder brother of my colonel, is my zealous friend; he is High Chancellor of this kingdom. A great number of the Swedish nobility are originally Scots. Besides the Hamiltons, there are the Counts Fersen, who are Macphersons; and the families of Douglas, Stuart, Spens, Macdugal, and several others. I am greatly obliged to Messrs. Jennings and Finlay, two rich English merchants to whom I was recommended from Dantzick. I lodge with them in Mr. Jennings' house. Mr. Jennings' second daughter is the Chancellor's bride; his eldest is likewise soon to be married to the governor of one of the provinces, and the youngest will probably soon follow the example of her sisters, as she has plenty of lovers. The court here is very brilliant; some of the nobility and maids of honor act a play every week, which is followed by a ball, in domino. There's an assembly for dancing and cards every Wednesday at Count Tessin's.

'I offer my affectionate duty to my mother, and I am,

'MACLEOD.'

The estates of the family, of whose fortunes we have now given a summary, have always been valuable, but in the present days, when Scottish landed property has so risen in worth, and when the picturesque scenery is so much more sought for, and the passion for the field sports of the highlands has become more intense and universal, than they were 'sixty years 'since,' these possessions have attained to a vastly higher measure of importance; and few will hesitate to sympathise with the attainted earl in his longings, even in his day, for the scenes from which his devotion to King James had banished him. At Tarbat House the visitor will find himself surrounded by all the elegance and comforts of a lowland residence, among wheat-fields, pheasant coverts, gardens, and forest trees that are the growth of centuries; but it is at Castle Leod, in Strathpeffer, and in Coigeach, that he is likely to have his greatest enjoyment. Castle Leod is a jewel of a castle, with its massive walls, its turnpike stairs, its great hall and greater fireplace, and its appropriate secret chamber; and the great Spanish chestnut tree beside it, which has honourable mention in Sir Thomas Dick Lauder's edition of Gilpin's 'Forest Scenery,' is not unworthy of that distinction. The grouse ranges here stretch from the castle walls to the heights of Ben Wyvis, and he who, returning from the slopes of this local monarch of mountains, halts at the Hare's Well to drink of its spring and count his spoils, will seldom complain of scantily filled panniers.

The wild country of Coigeach, however, will probably now-a-days be more valued by the highland sportsman than either of the two estates just mentioned. The mariner who breasts the waves of the Atlantic in his northerly progress along the west coast of Sutherland, and looks to round the dangerous tides of Cape Wrath, well knows its striking and lofty hills, and he may sometimes be glad to seek safety below them in the friendly shelter of Loch Broom, guarded as it is from westerly gales by the pleasant Summer Islands, an appanage of Coigeach. The whole district is full of lakes and streams from which the salmon and the spotted trout spring to the angler's lure; and upon the loftier hills the silent flight of the ptarmigan deepens, to the fond lover of nature in her wildest forms, his enjoyment of these solitudes.

Mr. Scrope in his 'Art of Deerstalking,' when speaking of the forests and deer haunts of Ross-shire in 1839, has said:—

'To the west of the Freewater forest there remains of Ross, or rather of Cromartyshire, the wild district of Coigeach, a part of the Cromarty estate, and the property of the Honourable Mrs. Hay Mackenzie; and the deerstalker who loves the sport in perfection will be glad to learn that the son of this lady has devoted a considerable part of Coigeach as a forest for the deer, intending to build a lodge there at Rhidoorach, a situation of much natural beauty.'

This promise was fulfilled, and many a noble stag has fallen in the forest of Coigeach. Rhidoorach, too, deserves the character given to it by Scrope. Near to the lodge is a waterfall of singular beauty in a valley carpeted with heath and fern and wild flowers, and thickly studded with the white-stemmed birches of the highlands; while the spectator who gazes from opposite the fall upon 'the sheeted silver's waving column' of water, also sees, or did see, immediately below him, in the branches of an old natural Scots fir, an eagle's nest, which in many years was not without occupants. A noble Earl, an old friend of the house, a lover of nature, one who has laid law many a goodly hart, and who handles deftly at once an artist's pencil and a poet's pen, has not scrupled to say that in his judgment this waterfall, with its accessories, need not fear to be named even when the praise of Terni is on men's lips.

We will only add that the printing, the illustrations, and the binding of Mr. Fraser's splendid volumes will go far to insure for them, apart from their literary merits, an appreciation at least as high as has been accorded to any of their predecessors from the same trustworthy source.