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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for January 11th, 2019

To see what we've added to the Electric Scotland site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/whatsnew.htm>

To see what we've added to the Electric Canadian site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/whatsnew.htm>

For the latest news from Scotland see our ScotNews feed at:

<https://electricscotland.com/scotnews.htm>

Electric Scotland News

I was talking to a couple of local Scots this week and both said they found Brexit to be very confusing and weren't sure what to think given the amount of information provided by both sides of the debate.

To me it is quite simple. do you want to control your own destiny or allow someone else to dictate it for you?

It's like do you want Scotland to be an independent country or do you want the EU to run Scotland for you?

At the end of the day I believe we can run our own country for our benefit. I can of course see how Project Fear is giving people doubts but remember how Project Fear was rife when working on the referendum in 2016? The horrendous projections on what would happen if we voted to leave were all proved wrong and way wrong, so instead of losing some 800,000 jobs we're actually pretty well in full employment now. In fact 2018 was the best year for the UK for a long time.

So one document I found on why a No Deal or Crashing out of the EU on WTO terms is actually the best result for Britain I believe gets around the fear worries and you'd do no better than to read it and it can be found at:
<https://electricscotland.com/independence/sip/GBLL-paper-30-Truths-Final-05.01.19.pdf>

Here is the video introduction to this newsletter...

<https://youtu.be/lvFLsPlomz4>

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

Note that this is a selection and more can be read in our [ScotNews](#) feed on our index page where we list news from the past 1-2 weeks. I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on Google and other search engines. I might also add that in newspapers such as the Guardian, Scotsman, Courier, etc. you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish.

Poll: 57% of Conservative members back no-deal Brexit

Theresa May's bid to get Tory MPs to back her Brexit plan suffered a set-back as a new poll suggested more than half of Conservative Party members prefer a no-deal withdrawal.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/poll-57-of-conservative-members-back-no-deal-brexite-1-4851720>

Arctic explorers retrace footsteps of controversial Orkney hero John Rae

David Reid is heading the four-man 2019 Arctic Return Expedition which will set out in March from Naujaat (Repulse Bay) in the

central Canadian Arctic on a 400-mile journey across the Boothia Peninsula, following the route taken in 1854 by Dr John Rae (1813-1893) and his indigenous companions.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/arctic-explorers-retrace-footsteps-of-controversial-orkney-hero-john-rae-1-4852296>

This year's Celtic Connections to be most diverse and eclectic yet
Scotsman folk critic Jim Gilchrist looks forward to the largest winter festival of its kind

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/music/this-year-s-celtic-connections-to-be-most-diverse-and-eclectic-yet-1-4853131>

Trump administration downgrades EU mission to US

The Trump administration has downgraded the diplomatic status of the European Union's delegation to the United States, an EU official has confirmed to DW. The demotion happened at the end of last year without notice.

Read more at:

<https://www.dw.com/en/trump-administration-downgrades-eu-mission-to-us/a-46990608>

No deal means cashing in, not crashing out
Six out of the EU's top ten trading partners trade under WTO rules

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/no-deal-means-cashing-in-not-crashing-out>

Teaching young people cooking skills will help to beat society's ills

There are still a few home economics teachers who, like me, have spent a long working life struggling with what is meant by home economics.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/prue-leith-teaching-young-people-cooking-skills-will-help-to-beat-society-s-ills-1-4853154>

Should Sturgeon face a vote of no confidence?

IT SMACKS of Yes Minister when the response to a scandal breaking is to order a full and far reaching internal inquiry into an embarrassing matter.

Read more at:

http://www.thinkscotland.org/todays-thinking/articles.html?read_full=13782

No Deal Brexit is the best deal for Britain as we can lead the world without fear

There is so much to be optimistic about we have nothing to fear from a No Deal Brexit, writes Sir Rocco Forte

Read more at:

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8150907/no-deal-brexit-deal-hope-rocco-forte-opinion/>

Trading under WTO rules

There is a lot of confusion and deliberate misinformation about trading under the WTO. Here are some facts that might help.

Read more at:

<http://johnredwoodsdiary.com/2019/01/10/trading-under-wto-rules>

Tory MP Nick Boles is 'facing deselection' over support for softer Brexit deal

The MP said that he had already received death threats over his decision to support an amendment designed to block no-deal Brexit

Read more at:

<https://inews.co.uk/news/brexit/nick-boles-brexit-deselection-conservative-mp-norway-deal/>

Scottish Gin Society unveil amazing Scottish Gin Map and it's free

The Scottish Gin Society have unveiled a new Scottish Gin map that shows every gin distillery in Scotland - and best of all it's free to download.

Read more at:

<https://foodanddrink.scotsman.com/drink/scottish-gin-society-unveil-amazing-scottish-gin-map-and-its-free/>

Justin Trudeau's Laffer Curve lesson

A higher top rate of tax has made the Canadian private sector smaller and the country less competitive

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/justin-trudeaus-laffer-curve-lesson>

John Bercow has abandoned objectivity on Brexit

Generally, respect for speakers grows the longer they are in the chair. Not so with Bercow

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/john-bercow-has-abandoned-objectivity-on-brexit/>

Electric Canadian

Canadian Archive Reports

Added the 1890 report.

You can read this at: https://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/brymner_douglas.htm

The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs

The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs for 1913 which you can read at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/annual/index.htm>

Canadian Fisherman

You can read volume 5 at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/fisherman/index.htm>

The Massacre at the Cedars

By S. E. Dawson (pdf). This shows how misinformation was rife in the war of independence in the US. You can read this account at:

<https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/massacreatcedars.pdf>

Multi-Ethnic Canada

I added additional content and videos to several ethnic groups this week...

Irish at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/irish/index.htm>

Italians at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/italy/index.htm>

Iranians at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/iran.htm>

Ukrainians at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ukraine.htm>

Electric Scotland

Ramblers in the Far North

By R. Menzies Fergusson (second edition) (1884). Added this book to the foot of our Orkney page at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/orkney/>

The Scottish Review

Added volumes 2, 4, 8, 9 - 12. to the page at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/review/index.htm>

Orkney Culture

Updated the videos on our Orkney page as a 3 part one is no longer available so has been removed and a video on Orkney culture has been added.

You can view this at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/orkney/>

Scottish Videos

I have found public archive videos which are now permanently available unlike YouTube where they can vanish.

You can see the wee collection I've selected for you at: <https://electricscotland.com/history/videos/>

A History of the Scottish Borders Militia
Compiled from Authentic Sources by The Rev. Robert W. Weir, M.A. (1877) (pdf)

You can read this at: <https://electricScotland.com/history/scotreg/ahistoryscottishbordersmilitia.pdf>

A new 10 acre farm
How We Built a 10 Acre Homestead in a Year (from scratch)

You can view this at: <http://www.electricScotland.org/showthread.php/5381-A-new-10-acre-farm>

An Account of the Scottish Regiments
From 1808 to March 1861 which you can read at: <https://www.electricScotland.com/books/pdf/benderloch.pdf>

Poems of Ian Myres
Got in three of his poems which you can read at: <https://electricScotland.com/poetry/myres/index.htm>

Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen
The full 9 volume set which was first compiled by Robert Chambers and then brought more up to date by Rev. Thom. Thomson.

You can read this at: <https://electricScotland.com/history/eminentscots.htm>

The Imperial Gazetteer of Scotland
Dictionary of Scottish Topography, compiled from the most recent authorities and forming a complete body of Scottish Geography, Physical, Statistical, and Historical in two volumes edited by The Rev. John Marius Wilson.

You can read this toward the bottom of the page at: <https://electricScotland.com/history/gazetteer/index.htm>

The Story

A SCOTTISH GOVERNING HOUSE
The Arniston Memoirs

AMID the many contributions which one source after another is affording to our knowledge of the past, it is difficult to avoid occasionally commiserating the historian of the future. How will he be able to digest, and compress within reasonable bounds, the vast mass of materials, none of which he can afford to overlook? And what form of historical narrative will he be impelled to adopt? Chronicle has been followed by dissertation; the reigns of monarchs have yielded to periods that denote the fortunes of politicians and the supremacy of parties; dry narrative has been thrown aside for dramatic description. A late tendency has sought to depict the steady swell of national development among the great body of the people that has been ever going on under the surf and curl of Parliamentary political life, and the magnitude of the true historian's task is being more and more appreciated. Yet in this as in other matters there is much truth in the old legal maxim, *Dolus latet in generalibus*. Hasty and superficial generalisation is really the grave danger that besets a democratic body, and is the origin of the anomaly that with the loudest talk about justice, and a widespread generous desire to do justice, there is frequently perpetrated the most aggravated and unblushing injustice. Nothing contributes more to this result, which in the long run brings its own retribution, and decay to the society that permits it, than loose and imperfect, while nominally broad and liberal, views of historical facts. There is a danger in literature and politics, that while emancipating ourselves from vain and hampering 'traditions of the fathers,' we may only do so to abase ourselves beneath the Juggernaut wheels of what are called 'great movements.' The safeguard is to be found in getting behind the movement, and tracing the men who have set it in motion. It is only thus that real progress is to be made towards a philosophy of history, and that history at the same time can retain the picturesque incidents, the elements of individual interest, the light and shade, that have made it the most fascinating of all studies.

In the abundance of biographical details, supplied from sources of unquestionable authority, there may perhaps be found the antidote to the generalised method of writing history. After all, the object of the science is to relate the actions of men rather than to record the operation of forces, and the forces with which it deals are in the main the passions and the opinions of men. It has been described as 'the essence of innumerable biographies,' and 'philosophy teaching by example.' It certainly affords plenty of examples to show how the action of individuals falsifies the forecasts of the wisest philosophy. Action and reaction may be a law of human affairs, but the prevalence of the one or the other often depends on the prospects of a single man. Individual biography may afford the key to national events, and must supplement and correct the error that only takes account of waves of general sentiment and opinion.

But none the less is it true that a nation is a composite whole, and that men are to some extent the creatures of their circumstances and time. And it is especially interesting to trace a well developed type of individual character or social position, that has acted long enough on national affairs to produce important effects, and itself existed long enough, with its main features unchanged, to illustrate

the influence on private life of great public movements. The growth of hereditary opinion is interesting, and the pedigree of parties is a fascinating subject of research. Lord Stanhope's startling but plausible theory of the absolute reversal of position between the Whig and Tory parties at the beginning and end of last century has failed to secure the approval of Mr. Lecky, but there is more to be said for it than the later historian admits. It suggests an enquiry on which much light may be thrown by the increasing additions made to our knowledge of the secret springs of last century's political movements by selections from the documents and narratives of the lives of those who took part in them. Possibly not the least valuable information may be found in a part of the country different in many respects from that in which the originator of the idea found the mass of his materials.

If the question were put to an ordinary Scotsman, as to what family receptacles were likely to contain most illustrating the history of last century, and as to where the most characteristic type of Scottish politician during the same period was to be found, the reply would certainly be 'the house and home from which came Henry Dundas.' The strange tendency which connects all the abuses of a defunct regime with its most prominent and honoured name, still prevents the capacious mind and warm heart of the first Lord Melville from receiving its due deserts in the country to which he was deeply attached. Even yet in the city whose inhabitants once 'thought their streets too vulgar for Lord Melville to walk upon,' an occasional scream of vulgar malignity discharges itself in letters to the newspapers advocating the renaming of spacious streets and crescents, and the metamorphosis of the monument that commemorates the great colleague of Pitt, under whose auspices the energies of Scotsmen found so splendid a sphere in the making of British India. It is a remarkable fact that no biography exists of a statesman who for long was a figure in the House of Commons only lesser than Pitt, and Burke and Fox, and was, without exaggeration, the Dictator of Scotland.

But Henry Dundas was only the most prominent figure of a remarkable race, who left their mark on their country, and bore witness in their own career to special features of its character, and peculiarities of its national life. They not only exhibited but united the characters of enterprising country gentlemen, of good lawyers and of great statesmen. Between these varying lines of life a connection has always existed, but rarely has it been so close as in the Scotland of last century. Wherever Parliamentary Government is found, the Bar secures a large share of political prominence, not always to the advantage of the country, and sometimes undoubtedly a little to the discredit of the long robe. Wherever vast masses of halfeducated men are invested with political power, ready talkers are in request, and eloquence and considerable leisure are too frequently for long the chief results of a life vowed to the worship of Themis. Nor is it always those who stand highest in the respect of their professional brethren, who are most successful in catching the lesser advantages of political life. Wherever there is a great capital with a popular assembly and a large bar, two classes gravitate irresistibly towards politics, and strangely enough they represent the highest excellence and the lower types of the legal profession. For public life requires the best men, and offers the loftiest and purest prizes of professional triumph, while on the other hand it gives a certain purchase in the struggles after mere professional gain. The conjunction produces alike a Lord Cairns or Sir Henry James, and a contrasted type of which the examples are many. But if the experience of the French Revolution, and of later days among ourselves lends some shadow to the common opinion that a lawyer who takes to politics remains a lawyer at heart, and is to be treated by the electors simply as a useful stick with which to beat the other side, it is equally true that even yet there is in the case of the Scottish Advocate a safeguard against purely self-seeking views of public life, that does not exist in that of the London barrister. Five hundred ipiles is a strong guarantee of patriotism. An English banister may practise in the Courts, and sit for a Metropolitan division, may even run down to Scotland, and sit for a Scotch county on the strength of alterations in Scottish Law that simply mean the transfer of one man's property to another, and all the time be merely advancing his purely professional career. A seat in the House is a well understood professional investment But a Scottish advocate must sacrifice his professional gains or his public ambition. For him 'carpetbagging' is unprofitable, and even the acceptance of Crown office, which demands a seat in Parliament, may involve a serious monetary sacrifice. Payment of members would probably considerably alter things in this respect; but as it is, even with the increased facilities of travelling, public life is still to the north of the Tweed associated with a high standard of legal excellence. Only those who have made their position and can rest on their oars, or those who have a position independent of sordid exigencies, can venture to look towards Westminster.

This must have been even more the case in last century. The doors of political preferment were shut to all except a few, while its permanence rendered it prudent for those few to seek it. A great opening was afforded to the men who possessed the necessary qualifications, which comprised 'connection' to secure high place, and 'ability' to preserve it But connection in Scotland meant something more than the same phrase in England. It was a more flexible term than the system of organised co-operation, of which the pure Whig party was the most conspicuous instance. The claims of kinship were always readily recognised in the Northern kingdom, and extended to a degree unknown elsewhere. In no country was the aristocratic spirit more real than in the Scotland of last century, and in none was it freer from the concomitants that arouse envy and ill will. In a different way the gradation of ranks that has been the boast of England was as marked a feature, and a state of society in which the 'bonnet-Laird' or the well-to-do farmer claimed a distant connection with a great peer or haughty chieftain, was not favourable to political adventures founded on broad distinctions between the Poor and the Rich. Indeed, the structure of society in Scotland presented in some respects a state of things halfway between the ancien regime of France, and the circumstances of England, while it possessed peculiar and marked features of its own. The old Scottish cavalier had as much of the French gentilhomme about him as of 'the fine old English gentleman,' and in many ways Edinburgh recalled Paris as much as London. 'Depee, la robe, ou PegUse] wrote La Bruyere, ' il n'y a presque point d'autre vocation; ' and the utterance, sinister as it was in the case of a nation that was driving to other shores her enterprising manufacturers and skilled artisans, might have been applied with considerable truth to the little country whose commerce was but starting on a great career. 'The sword' had for generations taken Scotsmen to serve in Continental armies, and the family of Lord Melville was to supply a General to the Scots Brigade in the service of Holland. The Church had played as important a part in the

national life as that of France, though with results very different. But no body of men in Scotland possessed a more distinctive character than the bar, and none had more successfully asserted their right to share in public events. The Hopes had guided the counsels of the Covenanters, other advocates had on more than one occasion joined the banners of the Cavaliers in the field; but the Whig system established after the Revolution was the parent of the great legal houses who exercised a power scarcely less than that of a great feudal baron of the old time, and not inferior to the influence of any great peer among their contemporaries. At first the influence of men whose rank was that of simple gentlemen of small estate was chafed under; and an old Scottish couplet quaintly expressed the position:

But the latter house never aroused the bitter hostility for long felt for the former. Their lot was cast in quieter times, their supremacy had not the air of novelty, and seemed more in the established order of things than that of their predecessors. Their conduct of affairs did not comprise a massacre of Glencoe, and they had the good fortune to be associated with the wise policy of George III., that ultimately made the children of those who had suffered at Carlisle the most loyal defenders of the throne of the House of Hanover. Indeed the story of the House of Amiston, compared with the fortunes of others that followed their lead during the crisis of the French Revolution, very well illustrates two distinct currents of political thought and action, which contributed to form the great Tory party of Mr. Pitt, and are the proper progenitors of the comprehensive Conservatism of to-day. In Scotland, we look in vain for tangible evidence of a large moderate Tory party definitely attached to the Protestant succession, and free from the taint of Jacobitism, such as existed in England, more especially in the Hanoverian Tories who followed Sir Thomas Hanmer in the later years of Queen Anne. In the troubled career of the Scottish Parliament between the Revolution and the Union, it is difficult to trace anything like formed parties, though some of the Scottish statesmen acted in cooperation with Nottingham and other Tories in England. But if in England the 'practical proscription of every one who did not bear the name of Whig' drove the mass of English Toryism into Jacobitism, how much more must this have been the case in Scotland, where men thought that by 'the weary Union' the country had been * sold to her auld enemies,' and the attachment to the representative of 'a hundred kings' was so much more devoted and intense? If the fear of a Restoration was the best safeguard against Revolution in England, it was the surest guarantee of their position to the Whig statesmen, who leant on the English Ministry for their support. Yet even in Scotland but a short time elapsed after the last Jacobite rising before men began to marshal themselves in the two great party camps, on other lines than had hitherto divided them. The evidence of this is to be traced far away from the capital. For example, in a northern county where Jacobitism had been particularly strong, the Pittites rallied round a noble house, who had been cavaliers in the civil wars, had stood out for King James at the Revolution, had taken the field in the '15, and, though the chief remained quiet, had sent a son as one of Prince Charles' most dashing lieutenants in the '45. The Fox interest found their leaders in another house that had risen to influence on the ruins of the lesser Jacobite gentry, and had been the steady supporters of Whig Ministries. Yet in less than ten years from the rout of Culloden the Tory interest is found sending its summons for aid in a trial of strength to a household that had been conspicuous in adherence to the House of Hanover, when the district was in the hands of the followers of Prince Charles.

But the Hanoverian avenue to the Toryism of Pitt, was more common in the South than in the North of Scotland. It was that trod by the Dundases. They had been Covenanters with the great mass of their neighbours, exiles in Holland previous to the Revolution, and steady Whigs after it. One remarkable exception no doubt there was, but without it a characteristic feature of Scottish family history would have been wanting. It is said that the indiscretion caused the young man to spend the rest of his days a close prisoner in a strong room of the family mansion, but it is probably more correct to treat it as an instance of the native prudence that frequently placed father and son in opposite camps of politics, for the practical purpose of 'keeping the rigs together.' His kinsmen at any rate remained Whigs. But they followed the lead of Pulteney in 'the great Olympian sedition' of the old Whig party, and the strong mind of Henry Dundas only anticipated the action of the second great rift in the Whig ranks, on the occasion of the French Revolution, in taking up the position he assumed when the younger Pitt came upon the scene. From that time until the crash of 1832, the position of the Dundases in Scotland is the most apposite illustration of Lord Beaconsfield's contention that circumstances led to the adoption by the Tories, and their condemnation for, a system built and developed by the Whigs.

In the latter part of the 18th century, the representative of an old East Lothian family married, as his second wife, a lady of considerable force of character. His son, by a former marriage, was to carry on the family line, and become, according to the Scottish parlance that marked the head of a low country house of purest gentility, the Seventeenth Dundas of that ilk. But the second wife, apparently, was determined that her eldest son should start in life on as equal terms as possible with his half-brother, and the lands of Amiston, in Mid-Lothian, were purchased, to provide for him. Tradition, as in the case of the 'Luck of Ederhall,' connects the fortunes of his family with the fate of a wine-glass, that was the property of his mother; and Sir James Dundas of Arniston, who at one time was Governor of Berwick, became the progenitor of a long line of able lawyers and skilled politicians.

The second Laird of Arniston, another James Dundas, was the first who attained a seat on the Scottish bench, taking his judicial title of Lord Arniston, as was then the custom in all cases except that of the head of the Court, from his family estate. But his tenure of legal office was short. His lot was cast in troubled times, and he seems to have been a man of scrupulous integrity. In common with the vast majority of his neighbours in the South of Scotland, he joined in signing the National Covenant of 1638, but as 'the Troubles' unrolled their 'Iliad of woes' for Scotland, he seems to have had serious misgivings as to the dominant policy. It would be as unjust to accuse a man, who had signed the National Covenant, of inconsistency for refusing to take the Solemn League and Covenant, as to make the same accusation against the followers of Lord Hartington, for their actions, before and after the Home Rule policy of Mr. Gladstone was disclosed. As Hyde and Falkland, in England, had severed themselves from the measures that led on from Reform to

Civil War, so Montrose and his special followers in Scotland found themselves leading the Cavaliers to whom they had been opposed. But the Scottish Revolutionaries would take no denial, and were not satisfied with passive obedience. The records of the Presbyteries of those days are full of the pressure, exerted alike upon the 'malignant' cavalier, and the half-hearted adherent of the earlier Covenant, and among others, Sir James Dundas was ultimately persuaded or coerced, though not until a year had passed after the King's head had rolled on the block, to subscribe the Solemn League and Covenant, and to declare the Marquis of Hamilton's expedition to his aid, so disastrously foiled by Cromwell at Preston, an 'unlawful engagement' When Scotland lay crushed under the control of the Ironsides, Sir James Dundas seems to have lived quietly on his estate, but with the revival of the Court of Session on the Restoration, a seat on the bench was conferred upon him. It is to his credit that he was as faithful to the oaths he had taken as he had been reluctant to accept them. A declaration was required from all the judges that the Covenants were 'unlawful oaths and were taken by and imposed upon the subjects of this kingdom, against the fundamental laws and liberties of the same.' Lord Arniston was prepared to make the declaration with a qualifying clause, but conceived that his previous conduct barred him from doing so otherwise, while the king insisted on an unqualified renunciation. In November 1663 he ceased to sit, and soon placed his resignation in the hands of Government

Sir James died in 1679, and his son Robert, like many other Scottish gentlemen, spent the years immediately prior to the Revolution in exile in Holland. Returning with William of Orange, the following year saw him elected as one of the members of Parliament for Mid Lothian, a position which he held till the Union, and also elevated to the Scottish bench as the Second Lord Arniston. For long the Scottish judges continued to advise the Ministers and to take an active part in the less public executive functions of Government, but the bench must have afforded a remarkable contrast to the stormy scenes which the old Parliament House witnessed when stirred by the fiery eloquence of Fletcher of Salton. Lord Arniston had brought from Holland a taste for planting and gardening, and would sit in his old age reading Italian books beneath a favourite tree. In later years his son, when head of the Court, was on one occasion entertaining the magistrates of Edinburgh, when an unlucky municipal magnate, a carpenter by trade, expressed his admiration for the tree, estimated the number of feet of timber it contained, and offered a handsome figure for it The chief of the Law turned sharply on him and replied : 11 would rather see you hang from its topmost branch'

Lord Arniston's eldest son predeceased him. Like all his race he was an advocate, but, unlike the others, of strong Jacobite leanings, and he had perilled 'the interest' in course of construction, by moving at a meeting of the Faculty of Advocates the acceptance of the famous model in honour of the Pretender, which had been sent by the Duchess of Gordon. He did so in a very uncompromising speech, and was one of the deputation despatched to thank the Duchess. But the Government threatened a prosecution, the Faculty thought it wiser to rescind their acceptance, and James Dundas's marriage was soon followed by his death. The old judge died in 1726, but before he passed away had witnessed a remarkable instance of forensic success on the part of his younger son Robert, who was appointed Solicitor General in 1717, only eight years after his call to the bar, became Lord Advocate in 1720, and was elected Dean of Faculty—the blue ribbon of the Scottish bar— in the following year. For a century more there was scarcely a time when one of the house did not hold high office under the Crown.

The career of Robert Dundas illustrates the political condition of the country, the state of society, and the large amount of liberty which subordinate officers of Government then allowed themselves in opposing the measures of their chief. A notorious bon vivant, Dundas is described as 4 naturally averse to study and application/ but he proved himself an active politician and a lawyer of no mean calibre. The Secretary for Scotland, the Duke of Roxburghe, seems to have consulted him in preference to the Lord Advocate when he held the post of Solicitor General, and wrote him at length in 1718, on a proposal for substituting another system, more just to the claims of Scotland, for the election of the sixteen representative Peers, who in practice were chosen from a leet sent down by Ministers, to the scandal of the order and the advantage of the Jacobite intriguers. It is amusing to find the Duke conclude with a truly Whig argument: 41 shall only add one thing more, which is, that if this business is not done now, we are sure the Tories, whenever there happens to be a Tory administration, will not again risk its being done by the Whigs, and what the consequences of its being done by the Tories may be I leave you to judge/ In 1722, Lord Advocate Dundas became Member for Midlothian, but, in spite of his office, he joined the malcontent Scottish Members in opposition to the Malt Tax which had excited great popular discontent north of the Border, and Walpole dismissed him from office in 1725. Before long the same measure was taken with his friend, the Duke of Roxburghe, who had secretly favoured the agitation, and the opposition collapsed. Their fate was soon shared by many of their colleagues, when Walpole bowed to the storm and surrendered his Excise scheme, but punished the authors of its defeat

Dundas now became the animating soul of the Whig dissentients in Scotland, where Walpole was represented by the Earl of Islay and the great Argyll interest His letters show that he anticipated serious evils to the country, from the system which he described as 'corruption and oppression/ although he refrains from dwelling on political affairs, because 4 there is no such thing as writing news unless we have a mind that what we write should be read at the post-office.' 41 never/ he says, in words which many a modern legislator can heartily sympathise with, 4 was so harassed with close attendance at the House of Commons to no other purpose than, so far as we can, to prevent other folks doing mischief.' 4 Our proceedings in Parliament,' he writes again, 4 will certainly alarm every country either with joy or surprise ; our last resolution surely shows more confidence or more submission than ever King William could obtain or King Charles adventured to ask.' In the midst of political turmoil and intrigue a heavy blow fell upon him. A series of letters record the loss by smallpox, in the course of a few weeks, of two sons, two daughters, and 4 an incomparable wife.' Three years later he took his seat on the bench as an ordinary Lord of Session, by the title borne by his father and grandfather, and on the fall of Walpole's administration, was frequently consulted by the Marquis of Tweedd?de, who held the Scotch Secretaryship in that of Lord Wilmington. 4 A dissolution of Parliament,' wrote Lord Tweeddale, 'would ruin the Whig interest, since it is certain a new Parliament

would be a Tory one.' In the close of 1747 the death of Forbes of Culloden vacated the President's chair, and it remained unfilled for nine months, so delicate was the task of selection. Lord Marchmont has preserved an amusing account, from the lips of Lord Chesterfield, of the ministerial deliberations over it on one occasion. After various names had been canvassed, 4 then the Lord Chancellor (Hardwicke) weighed what had been said in his Chancery scales of equity, and seemed to be of opinion they should name Arniston. But nothing was decided at this meeting.' Arniston was ultimately named; Mr. Pelham wrote him a frank and manly letter on the relations it was hoped he would maintain to the Ministers and other office-holders in Scotland; and Lord Hardwicke gracefully described his promotion 4 as a proof that extraordinary merit in your profession and strict impartiality in the administration of justice, attended with real affection and attachment to his Majesty and his Government, are allowed their due weight.' He presided over the Court of Session to his death in 1753, and had already seen much more than the promise of the great abilities which, displayed by his son, were to outshine his own fame in the same place.

Robert Dundas, the second, was noted for his 'quick apprehension and natural genius,' and after less than five years at the bar was appointed Solicitor General in 1742, when not yet thirty years of age. Such early promotion was calculated to spoil a young man's manners, and Lord President Forbes, in acknowledging the respectful terms in which he had intimated it to him, thought it well to suggest a caution in language that could give no offence.

* Insolence/ writes the old lawyer and statesman, ' is so incident to office that it is become proverbial, and a young man of all others ought to be the most on his guard against it. But then it has been ever observed that it most commonly possesses low men, raised by some accident or jerk of fortune to employments above their merits, if not their hopes: it seldom lays hold of men whose abilities and rank in the world makes them equal to the office to which they are invited, and gives them reason to consider it as no elevation, though it be a preferment.'

Young though he was, Dundas came upon the official stage in difficult and stirring times. The Lord Justice-Clerk Fletcher of Milton was a close ally of the Duke of Argyll, and an able political intriguer in an interest hostile to that of the Dundases; Lord Advocate Craigie was an honest lawyer, of whom his more brilliant subordinate had occasion to write: ' I hope a little more practice, not in the law but among men, will make him more cautious.' These diverse interests had, with the aid of the commander-in-chief, to control and guide Scotland, when civil war came like a thunderbolt in a clear sky. For though there were rumours of Jacobite activity, and orders to be on the watch for suspected persons, those who held the reins laughed at the idea of an attempt, such as Prince Charles Edward improved upon the rumours by carrying out Soon the anxiety equalled the incredulity, and Lord Tweeddale could plume himself on having 'suspected so dead a calm.' Owing largely to the rivalries in official circles, the Government in Edinburgh failed to act with energy, and the Jacobites were soon going about with ' the strong blaze of Restoration in their faces.' The Lord Advocate and Solicitor General were in Sir John Cope's camp the night before the battle of Preston-pans, and slept in the house of a county friend some little distance off. In the morning they heard the sound of the guns, and soon learnt of the defeat. From his stepmother Dundas received an account of affairs in Edinburgh, and the old lady consoled herself with the reflection that present plunder was not to be looked for, as ' the forfeitures of estates are to be given to defray the loss of what their friends may suffer.' One precaution she did take, telling the factor ' to put the hounds all out to the tenants.' But the Highland army scrupulously respected the houses of those who were most prominent on the side of the Government.

The divisions in the Cabinet led to the resignation of Dundas's friend, Lord Tweeddale, who was an ally of Lord Granville, and the Solicitor General, worried as he was by the strained relations with the Lord Justice-Clerk, in spite of the exhortations of his father, of Lord President Forbes, who wished that, ' in our present situation, he had tugged a little longer at the oar,' and of other friends, determined to follow his example. It was, perhaps, none the worse for the future influence of his family in Scotland that he was dissociated from all Government employment, when Civil War had given place to Treason trials and the headsman's axe.

For eight years he devoted himself to professional work and the improvement and embellishment of his estate. But in 1754 he entered Parliament, of course as member for MidLothian, and the occasion was a fortunate one. The Duke of Newcastle had just become Prime Minister, and the Lord-Advocate been promoted to the bench. The vacant office was given to Dundas. For some time his attention, like that of his modern successors, had largely to be given to the lawless state of the Highlands, and constant reports were sent to him by military officers as to their condition. On two occasions he acted a part unworthy of a man of such eminence, for he opposed the election of David Hume as librarian of the Faculty of Advocates, and he joined in the illiberal and fanatical attacks that were made upon John Home in connection with his tragedy of Douglas. His first legal appointment had followed on the fall of Walpole; his last was reached in the last year of George II., for in 1760 he took his seat at the head of the Scottish Judicial system as the Second Lord-President Dundas. For twenty-seven years he presided over the Court with lustre and dignity, reforming its business and enhancing its character, while his younger half-brother, Henry, soon filled the Parliamentary position he had quitted, and took rank as an Imperial rather than a Scottish statesman.

Henry Dundas was called to the bar three years after his brother's promotion to the bench; in three more, at the age of twenty-four, he became Solicitor General; and Lord Mansfield prophesied, ' Your brother will certainly go as far as his career can carry him.' He became member for Mid-Lothian in 1774, and in the following year was made Lord Advocate under Lord North. Great as were his prospects in Parliament, his attachment to the Scots bar made him reluctant to sever his connection with it; and even after ceasing to be Lord Advocate, he sought to hold, for some time longer, the honour of Dean of Faculty, which his brethren had conferred upon

him. In 1781 an old uncle writes of him with pride: 'He is plagueing Charles Fox and the faction.' His growing success and influence soon met the difficulty which the Lord-President had felt when pressed by the Duke of Newcastle to take in his hands the affairs of Scotland, of the incompatibility of high judicial office with the active exercise of political power and patronage.

High legal office had come to be considered so inalienable an appanage of the House of Arniston, that when Henry Dundas sought a wider sphere, it seemed but befitting that his nephew should, as soon as possible, take over the functions he had left. Robert Dundas, the son of the Lord-President, was not of equal vigour with his father and uncle; but in spite of his kinsman, political foe, and personal antagonist, Lord Cockburn's statement to the contrary, he had a fair share of the ordinary work of the profession, and would certainly have passed a qualifying, if not a competitive, examination for the positions to which he was advanced. Perhaps the most striking tribute to the influence of his kinsmen, as well as the ability of the greatest, was the manner, remarkable even in an age of confused and changing parties in which Henry Dundas had kept his place while ministries rose and fell. North, Rockingham, and Shelburne came and went, but he seemed destined to be Lord Advocate for ever. The Coalition however indicated that the time had come to choose sides once for all, and Dundas, perhaps partly from personal, but more from patriotic motives, and in conformity with the idea of supereminent duty to the king amid all changes of his servants, which his father had formerly impressed on his brother, threw in his lot with Mr. Pitt. In the fierce battle with Fox and the faction ' he did yeoman's service, and his aid was recognised by the appointment of his nephew Robert as Solicitor General in 1784. Robert Dundas was then twenty-five, and had been five years at the bar. His uncle had great confidence in his judgment and discretion, and had told his brother to show all his confidential letters to 4 your son Robert' This confidence was fully justified by young Dundas's conduct of affairs during a most critical and anxious time. The relations between the relatives were rendered closer by the Solicitor General's marriage to a daughter of the future Lord Melville, and in 1789 he succeeded Islay Campbell as Lord Advocate. At the General Election of 1790, Henry Dundas exchanged the county of Mid-Lothian for the city of Edinburgh, and again Robert Dundas stepped into his shoes and the seat that had been filled by so many of their house. He entered Parliament with a moderate estimate of his own abilities, and a deep veneration for Mr. Pitt, and the account of their relations which he sent to his wife is honourable to both. He had mentioned going down to a Committee on the Corn Bill, and continues:—

41 wrote you in very bad spirits and in worse humour with myself for having risen on Friday last to give my opinion about that business. It seems however that I was mistaken as Pitt was much pleased, and said what I had stated was in point of matter and manner more to the purpose than anything he had heard on the subject In short he thinks I shall do him good; and in proof of it I was admitted by his own desire, to the previous meeting at his house yesterday, of 8 or 10 of his friends, to consider what was to be stated in answer to the expected attack on the bill for appropriating the unclaimed dividends. He says he never wants me to make a set speech, but wishes me to make myself previously master of the business to come on, and not to rise and speak on it unless I feel inclined, and anything occurs which I think myself able to answer. If I do ultimately turn out of use to him in any way I shall be abundantly satisfied.'

It is difficult to realise that Dundas was Pitt's senior by a year, but how perfect is the tone from a Master of the House of Commons to a zealous but diffident subordinate!

Dundas's tenure of office as Lord Advocate coincided with the duration of Mr. Pitt's long administration, and when the great minister resigned in 1801, he preferred on the score of health to accept the comparatively light duties of the Court of Exchequer, rather than wait for the office that his father and grandfather had held, as his zealous friends desired. The period during which he had directed the operations of the Scottish Crown office, had been one round which controversy long raged, and even now it is difficult to obtain an unprejudiced judgment on the conduct of its public men. There was much room for reform, there was great danger of revolution. Mr. Pitt was certainly not a statesman hostile to the first whenever he considered it compatible at the moment with the safety of the State, and it is curious that though Henry Dundas frankly declared his opposition to Municipal Reform, his nephew the Lord Advocate, seconded a motion in favour of reform of 'the election law for the return of members to Parliament,' at a meeting in Edinburgh in July 1792. But the action of those who aimed at Revolution while clamouring for Reform, soon made it necessary for statesmen to postpone the overhauling of the constitutional tackle to the paramount necessity of steering the ship safely through the breakers. The strong practical sense of the Dundases would probably, had events held on their natural course, have reconciled them to guiding an inevitable change to a successful issue, but it was not in human nature that they should be eager to disturb the system with which, under Whigs and Tories alike, the fortunes of the House of Arniston had been identified. But with thrones falling abroad, and sedition rising up at home, statesmen of even broader grasp than the Lord Advocate felt that to tinker then with the constitution was out of the question. Perhaps the most fatal result of the mistaken policy of Fox, was the manner in which the action of his friends made it impossible for Government to relax the bonds of the past by a hair breadth, and thrust back for a generation changes that were needed, and should have come as healthy developments rather than as surgical operations. To a very great degree the conduct of Fox has been in our time repeated by Mr. Gladstone, and the parallel is painfully complete. There has been the same unblushing coalition with bitter opponents described by every term of parliamentary opprobrium, the same playing upon Separatist chords in Ireland, the same sympathy and encomiums on those whose interests are opposed to those of Britain, even to the extent of being in arms against her, the same pseudohumanitarianism in politics, appealing to lofty sentiments, but shutting its eyes to real tragedies. There has been a similar revolt of the most honoured section of a historical party, and a like miscalculation as to the powers and principle of public men. There has been a similar staking of reputation on a gamblers throw to regain power, and the same desperation after defeat. For the Conservatives the parallel has its encouragement and its warning. In the beginning of the century political justice inflicted on the Whigs a long exclusion from power, and the Tories justly reaped more splendid honours than have

ever fallen to the lot of a political party for saving the constitution and the Empire. But, as justly, they ultimately paid the forfeit for failing to utilize for all great ends the powers that had fallen to them, for assuming that the temporary must last for ever, and for neglecting some pressing interests of the people. If, now as then, sedition must be met with an unyielding front, the experience of the past should guard against a repetition of the mistake that resistance to rapine and revolution involves a stolid perpetuation of the status quo ante.

The private correspondence of the time even between men far removed from official life bears witness to the critical state of the country, and Lord Advocate Dundas was justified in acting with promptitude and energy. It is conceded even by those who attenuate the danger, that in the trials in which the harsh homilies of some of the Judges, and the imperfections of the Scotch jury system, brought discredit on the Government, the Lord Advocate fulfilled his duty with moderation and courtesy. The letters that passed between him and his uncle show that their policy was to act in time when they believed they had a good case, to avoid giving occasions for theatrical demonstrations, and not to flinch from the natural consequences of the action of the legal tribunals.

'In the representation,' wrote Lord Melville, after the conviction of Muir and Palmer, * presented to me by Messrs. Lauderdale, Grey, and Sheridan, they state their intention to bring the business before Parliament. It is not, however, my intention to gratify them in that respect, for if the Judges' report expresses no doubt upon the subject, I will carry the sentence immediately into execution, and meet their clamour in Parliament without any kind of dismay. There is no foundation for the report you have heard of any particular severity to Muir and Palmer.'

'You get great credit here,' he wrote again, 'for your attack on the Convention,' referring to Dundas's arrest of the ringleaders at a Convention which discussed armed rebellion. 'Wild as we have been in this country,' the Lord Advocate was able to reply, 'our senses are beginning to return, and even reformers are not ripe for equality and a Convention modelled on that of France.' But the strain of feeling—not to be wondered at when we remember all that was at stake— showed itself in the opposition of the Faculty of Advocates to the re-election of their Dean Henry Erskine, who in his political action had been unmindful of his position as the head of that ancient body, and he was replaced by Dundas. The honour that would probably have come to him in due course was dimmed by its receipt on political grounds, but if such was to be, he probably would not have wished to change the occasion. If the time had its perplexities, and painful duties, it had also its moments of patriotic joy, and one of these must have come when the Lord Advocate's brother-in-law, Admiral Duncan, wrote him the glorious news of Camperdown.

'In short,' he said, after giving some particulars of the action, 'I feel perfectly satisfied. All was done that could be done. None have any fault to find. I have now in my possession three Admirals Dutch—an Admiral De Winter, Vice-Admiral Reuter, Rear-Admiral Meame. The Admiral is on board with me, and a most agreeable man he is. He speaks English well, and seems much pleased with his treatment I have assured him, and with justice nothing could exceed his gallantry. He says nothing hurts him but that he is the first Dutch Admiral ever surrendered. So much more credit to me. He tells the troops that were embarked in the summer were 25,000 Dutch, destined for Ireland, but after August that expedition was given up.'

After taking his seat as the head of the Court of Exchequer, Lord Chief Baron Dundas had to spend much of his time in foreign travel for the sake of his health, and on one occasion his services were called in on one of His Majesty's frigates to declare a betrothed couple, who had failed for four years to find a clergyman, man and wife according to the Law of Scotland. In 1805 came the famous tenth report, and the resolution carried by the casting vote of the Speaker that cost Mr. Pitt 'a deep and bitter pang.' The misfortune of his old colleague, as well as Ulm and Austerlitz hastened his end, and it was with mingled feelings that his followers hailed the ultimate acquittal of Lord Melville. But in Scotland the exaltation was great, and all the more unrestrained on account of the spiteful conduct of the Whig Solicitor General, who warned the Magistrates of Edinburgh against allowing an illumination of the city. Six years later Lord Melville came to Edinburgh for the funeral of his old friend Robert Blair of Avontoun, the Lord President, who had died very suddenly. To his nephew he wrote 'the circumstances which occurred in January 1806 have a strong and striking resemblance to what has recently happened.' Little did either of them think how sadly that resemblance was to be emphasized. In the simple words of the daughter of the one and wife of the other, Lord Melville 'dined and spent the evening with the Chief Baron, cheerful and well, went to bed where he was found by his servant lifeless next morning the 28th. He died almost upon the birthday of his great private and political friend Mr. Pitt' The Lord Chief Baron was destined to see the triumphant conclusion of the great struggle, in which his political chief and able kinsman had so long borne the burden and heat of the day, for he survived Waterloo, dying in 1819.

Robert Dundas, eldest son of the Lord Chief Baron and seventh Laird of Amiston, was called to the Scots bar in 1820. He had chosen his profession with the special view of following a political career such as had been pursued by so many of his race. Indeed he came within an ace of being appointed Solicitor-General, but on the passing of the Scottish Reform Bill, he personally accepted the result which he seems to have foreseen and foreswore public life, devoting himself to agricultural improvement and the development of the mineral wealth of his estate. But although those who looked ahead had seen the shadow of the impending change,—a change far greater in Scotland than England, because the old system had stood in much greater need of reform, and the reformers had been more violent,— while George IV. lived, the ascendancy of the Dundases had been externally as imposing as ever. The second Lord Melville had succeeded his father as 'manager' for Scotland, and the tenure by the family of the City of Edinburgh representation only expired when the new system came into force. Other relatives were in Parliament, and Arniston was a centre of political consultation. But a foretaste of the coming shock was experienced when Lord Melville found the Government

proposals as to the currency attacked, so far as they affected Scotland, by Sir Walter Scott, in the Malachi Malagrowth letters, and the result was a temporary 'quarrel, in all its forms,' between the two old friends. A more serious blow was dealt by the schism in the Tory ranks, consequent on Lord Liverpool's death. Lord Melville, who was one of the seceding ministers, and his friends deeply distrusted Mr. Canning, and looked with suspicion on his Whig allies. Honest as both sections were in their views of what was best for the country, the event was one from which the Tory party never recovered, and its effects were peculiarly deleterious to their interests in Scotland. Scotch business was handed over to the Home Office, presided over by Lord Lansdowne, and thus Canning made his Whig allies a present of the northern kingdom. Although Lord Melville returned to office with the Duke of Wellington, and Lady Melville wrote to her nephew, 'They say there is a general amnesty for Rats/ the solidarity of the Tory party, both in Parliament and in the country, had been rudely shaken, and the resignation of Mr. Huskisson over the East Retford Franchise Bill, showed an open rift. A statement in a letter from Sir William Rae, the Lord-Advocate, to Mr. Dundas, illustrates how slight are the circumstances on which important events may hinge.

'Huskinson walked home with Plants, who said that Huskisson should resign, and accordingly he wrote a letter to the Duke of Wellington, dated at two in the morning, resigning. ... It seems strange that a man of the age of Huskisson should not have chosen to sleep upon a matter of such grave importance. If he had waited till morning, and spoke to the Duke, all would have been well, as they have all along been on good terms. Lord Palmerston, it seems, said something to the Duke about resigning, which his Grace hardly deigned to notice : he afterwards observed he was not going to take a cannon to kill a butterfly. All this, mind, is for your private ear.'

With Huskisson went the other Canningites; and it is curious to notice Henry Dundas's opinion of a future Whig premier, Lord Melbourne:

'I am sorry he has resigned : altho' a Whig, he is a very good one, a decided anti-reformer, and has, I believe, given great satisfaction in Ireland. Taken all in all, he is a good man, and very sound in his opinions.'

Though the Government came out well in the debates upon the Huskisson secession, the passing over Sir William Rae's claims to the post of Lord Chief Baron, in favour of the Whig Abercromby—a remarkable instance of the 'conciliation' which, as Lord Beaconsfield said, 'conducted us to a revolution'—disheartened some of their best friends, and the Catholic Emancipation Act was peculiarly distasteful to the rank and file of their supporters in Scotland. At the election of 1830, William Dundas, brother of the Lord Chief Baron, was again returned for Edinburgh; Henry, Lord Melville's son, for Winchilsea; and Robert Adam Dundas, cousin of the Laird of Arniston, for Ipswich But with April 1831 came the last of the old elections, in which Robert Adam succeeded his uncle at Edinburgh, and the windows of his cousin's town house were again shattered by the savage Edinburgh mob, as his father's had been in the days of the revolutionary riots. At the first election after the Reform Bill, the Scottish counties returned nine Tories out of thirty members, while but one solitary member appeared to represent the Conservatism of the burghs. The days of the Dundases as a great governing house were over.

Mr. Robert Adam Dundas continued to live a Parliamentary life, and became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in Lord Derby's administration of 1852; but both Lord Melville and Mr. Dundas of Arniston withdrew from prominent political life, although they retained their interest in public affairs, and gallantly aided in the reorganisation of the Tory party in their locality on a basis suited to the new system. In 1834, they had the satisfaction of regaining the county seat; and although it was again lost in 1837, the number of Scottish Tory members had risen from nine to twenty. Mr. Dundas died in 1838, and Lord Melville, who had acted as chairman of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Poor-Law in Sir Robert Peel's time, followed him to the grave in 1851.

For 130 years, from the accession of William III. almost to the death of George III., with the solitary exception of the period from 1726 to 1737, there had not been a moment when high legal office was not held by some member of the Arniston family; and if we add to their legal eminence, the political position in Parliament of the first Lord President, and of the first and second Lord Melville, we may well question whether any other family, originally simple country gentlemen, can show so deep an impression on the fortunes and history of their country. It was the evil fortune of the Dundases to be specially associated with the obstinate defence of a system that demanded renovation; but even in the case of those who were born wedded to it, the services to the nation far outweighed the blame that attaches to a restricted view of the needs of the time. 'The retirement of Lord Melville (the younger),' wrote Lord Cockburn, 'from the government of Scotland was not an event for which in itself any candid Scotch Whig could rejoice; because no man, individually, could have conducted the affairs of the country with greater good sense and fairness, or with less of party prejudice or bitterness.' And amid all the rancour of political controversy and revolutionary bitterness, the commanding figure of his father, the Pharos of Scotland,' was revered by all Scotsmen, and not a few of his active opponents were ready to acknowledge the magnanimity and good qualities of 'Hal Dundas.' This unique position the Dundases owed to a combination of qualities and circumstances. The high ability of the stock was sustained on a level most remarkable in so many generations, and their correspondence bears witness to the solid sagacity that in the most brilliant underlay their more conspicuous gifts. Professional influence they had, but the profession in which each won his spurs, though one in which influence goes as far as anywhere, is yet one in which it most stringently demands the co-operation of personal merit It is very well to say that So-and-so has very good backing, but the heights of forensic success are only won when the man has proved himself better than his backing. Their political influence was strengthened by a long connection with official life, but it owed almost more to a series of alliances that gave them kinsmen in many counties of Scotland, but most of all in those south of the Forth. Their own natural position in Scottish society as a family of established reputation, interested in everything affecting the welfare of the land, gave them wider interests, and broader and sounder views on general social questions, than if they

had read them up as purely professional men on quitting Edinburgh for Westminster. They were essentially practical men, and they had a solid grip of the various interests that made up Scottish life, not to be obtained by any amount of theoretical disquisition. The closing years of their ascendancy showed that they had acquired the errors as well as the virtues of practical men, and that they shared the mistakes common to many followers of Mr. Pitt. The great War had unavoidably postponed the great minister's schemes of internal reform, but with the Peace of 1815 came the opportunity and duty of turning attention to internal problems. To a large extent it was done, but because it was not done in the questions that produce the popular spectacles of politics, the statesmen of the time have for long lost the credit of doing it at all Lord Beaconsfield once observed that there ought to have been a change of Government in 1819, and there is no doubt that the long tenure of unchallenged power enervated the political energies of the Tory party. Mr. Gladstone, when proposing his recent changes was profuse in making allowances for the apprehensions of the Tories of the Georgian era, and the children of Lord Melville may be pardoned for a too implicit faith in altering circumstances in the precise order of things, that under his firm hand had successfully stood the strain of a terrible crisis.

A curious dispensation of fortune has assigned the task of editing the Arniston Memoirs and estimating the character of Lord Melville to a gentleman whose historical school is that of Lord Cockburn, and whose political career comprises an assault upon a Liberal Unionist seat in the interests of the advanced Parnellism of Mr. Gladstone's later days. A less biased treatment of the career of the Dundases may be thus secured, and it may be a guarantee to the public that the judgment will not err on the side of eulogy as far as the more recent generations are concerned. Mr. Omond deserves, not compliment, but the due recognition of sincere approval, for the manner in which, on the whole, he has discharged a difficult enterprise. It is not easy to draw the line between the domestic and the national, it is much harder to judge correctly the actions of those whose conduct in a great crisis ran counter to the writer's sympathies and sentiments. But those who care to examine the social condition of the past, and to reconstruct the face of their own country, will be aided by not a little valuable information as to the farming, the arboriculture, and the general manners of the past, which these Memoirs contain; while the historical student will not find much to quarrel with in the groundwork of the narrative as far as it trenches on politics. But we must add, that in our view, to give the true tone and colour of the events in which our ancestors acted as the eighteenth passed into the nineteenth century, and to do the men themselves full justice, the annalist must be in some sympathy with their convictions, and must realise their responsibilities, fighting for the existence of their country, with the most terrible of foreign enemies, with traitors at home, and with, it must also be said, 'superior' young men of generous instincts, and considerable conceit, who were driven by the hard logic of events into the paradox of denying the existence of the one and becoming the catspaws of the other. To do justice to Pitt and Dundas, the truth must be spoken about Fox; and unpleasant as it is to dwell on the shortcomings of one who holds so honoured a place in the country's history, the hard facts of the situation with which statesmen had to grapple should receive their due prominence. It must not be forgotten that Pitt, who was no alarmist, believed that 'if he were to resign, his head would be off in six months'; that the French archives show that ministers, and not their critics, were right at the time of the 'invasion panic'; that to a storm on one occasion, and nervousness in an Admiral on another, Ireland and England owed their escape from an inundation of the hosts that swept over the Continent of Europe; and that during the campaigns in Portugal, the great soul of Wellington was lashed into indignation, and the dispositions of Napoleon materially aided by the manner in which important information was communicated through the proceedings of a reckless Opposition in Parliament. The errors of the Tories may have been many, and the contributions of the Whigs to the welfare and comfort of the country have been great, but let us remember that successful resistance to Napoleon was the basis of all subsequent prosperity, and without 'the pilot who weathered the storm,' and his colleagues, we should have had no constitution to reform, and very possibly no great industries and but a comparatively scanty population to ameliorate.

'If peerless yet our common wealth sublime,
Views its calm image in the glass of Time;
Honour to him as to the saving star,
He was, and therefore are we what we are.'

You can read the complete book at: <https://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/arniston.htm>

And that's it for this week and hope you all have a great weekend

Alastair