

**HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS
COMMISSION. REPORT ON THE
MANUSCRIPTS OF COLONEL
DAVID MILNE HOME OF
WEDDERBURN CASTLE, N.B.**

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REPORT

ON THE

MANUSCRIPTS

OF

COLONEL DAVID MILNE HOME

OF

WEDDERBURN CASTLE, N.B.

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

Bound with its Report on the MSS. of Lady Isabella Home.



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THE MANUSCRIPTS
OF
COL. DAVID MILNE HOME OF WEDDERBURN.

THE muniments of the family of Home of Wedderburn are very numerous and relate to lands in almost every part of Berwickshire, though a few affect lands in the county of Haddington. Some of them date from the time of King William the Lion. They chiefly illustrate the history and vicissitudes of the family of which Colonel Milne Home is now the lineal representative; but they are also full of interest as throwing light on the fortunes of many old families in the Merse, as well as other branches of the name and race of Home. The collection from which the following selection has been made is preserved partly at Paxton House, partly at Caldera, and partly at the chambers of the law-agents of the family in Edinburgh; and every facility and assistance have been afforded for making the inspection thorough and complete.

For convenience of dealing with the Manuscripts here reported upon it has been judged expedient to classify them as follows:—

- I. Charters and other documents relating to the family of Home of Wedderburn.
- II. Writs affecting lands originally belonging to the Priory of Coldingham.
- III. Writs relating to various lands and families.
- IV. Miscellaneous Writs and Manuscripts.

Even this classification, however, does not strictly hold, for most of the papers and documents in the three last sections relate to the family of Home of Wedderburn also. But some such arrangement is necessary even though it relegates several of the most interesting discoveries, as the early Lamberton Charters (Nos. 495-500), to a somewhat remote part of this report.

To ensure a better grasp of the documents reported upon in Section I, those more particularly relating to the family of Home of Wedderburn, it may be permissible here to give a brief sketch of the history of the family itself; and therewithall for convenience of reference to subdivide the section into periods corresponding to the duration of the successive Lairdships.

For centuries the Homes of Wedderburn were one of the most predominant families of the Merse. Scions of a warlike house and posted on the Borders as if for the very purpose of guarding the "in country" against the incursions of the "auld inimeis of England" (which were so frequent that, as will be seen from some of the charters recorded, the payment of rent was a conditional matter affected by them), they were ever ready to adventure their lives in the fray, and indeed they had their full share of the fights and forays of the Border strife of old. Few of the older Lairds are known to have had any other deathbed than the battlefield, and their first funereal shroud was generally the banner under which they led their retainers to the fight, and which has come down to their descendants stained with their blood.

The family of Home is supposed to have sprung from the old Saxon Earls of Dunbar and Northumbria. One of the Earls of Dunbar had a son to whom for some deed of prowess he gave the lands of Home in Berwickshire, and he with his descendants were known as "De Home," and adopted the surname. Home Castle is one of the most conspicuous of the fortalices in the Merse. This ancient stronghold, erected on an eminence which overlooks all the surrounding country, kept its eye, as it were, not only over the neighbouring lands but also on the sea-coast and across the Tweed into England for a long distance, and seemed to indicate that it was sentinal for interests far wider than its own. Here for long was the residence of the main line of the Home family, which early rose to eminence in the political life of Scotland, being enobled as Lords, and afterwards Earls, of Home; and it is still represented in the male line by the present Earl of Home.

The Homes of Wedderburn are the oldest cadets of the family of Home. They may also be said to be the most prolific, more so even than the parent stem, both in offshoots and honours. Though the Lairds of Wedderburn themselves never attained higher than knightly rank, yet among their descendants are to be enumerated the Humes of Polwarth, enobled first as Lords Polwarth in 1690 and as Earls of Marchmont in 1697; the Homes of Manderston also, of whom a younger son, George Home of Spot, sometime Treasurer of Scotland, was enobled as Lord of Berwick, and afterwards as Earl of Dunbar; while of his two daughters and heiresses, the elder, Anne, was mother of the third Earl of Home, and the younger, Elizabeth, was wife of Theophilus Howard, Lord Walden, afterwards second Earl of Suffolk. From Wedderburn also descended the Homes of Blackadder, baronets of Nova Scotia, from whom Sir David Home, Lord Crossrig is derived; also Sir John Home of Renton, Lord Justice Clerk in the reign of King Charles the Second; the Homes of Castle Hume in Ireland, and other families and personages of distinction and note.

The History of the House of Wedderburn written in Latin in 1611 by a son of the family, as he calls himself, David Hume of Godscroft, the brother of Sir George Home of Wedderburn, Comptroller to King James the Sixth, traces the fortunes of the family

to the date mentioned. David Hume is better known by his monumental *History of the House of Douglas and Angus*, with which powerful family the Homes of Wedderburn were connected, both through Alison Douglas, the grandmother of David Hume, who was a sister of the Earl of Angus, and through earlier inter-matrimonial relationships, and service. His history of his own family was printed, as it was written, in Latin, for the Abbotsford Club in 1839, the manuscript in the possession of the family being lent for that purpose. There are several translations of it known to exist in manuscript, but no English edition of this work has yet been given to the world.

The first of the Homes of Wedderburn was David de Hum who in 1413 obtained the lands of Wedderburn from Archibald, fourth Earl of Douglas. They formed part of the estates of the Earl of March which on that Earl's forfeiture had been conferred on Douglas, to whom David de Hum had proved himself a faithful and devoted follower. The lands of Wedderburn were given to him in recognition of this, and so were also the lands of Bayardslands or Bardslands (*see* Nos. 1 and 2). When George Dunbar, Earl of March, was restored, he seems very willingly to have acquiesced in and confirmed these grants (No. 4). David de Hum was younger brother of Alexander Home of that Ilk, and the mutual attachment between them and the Earl of Douglas is illustrated by a story related by Godscroft. In 1424 when Douglas, who had been created Duke of Touraine in France, was about to sail for France with his retainers, among whom was David Home of Wedderburn, Alexander Home came to see him away. Douglas could not restrain his sorrow at parting and, embracing Home, said he had not thought that anything would have parted them. "Well, then," said Home, reciprocating the like emotion, "nothing ever shall." He then sent back his brother David, lest in the event of a reverse both should fall, and no competent person be left to look after the affairs of their families; and himself accompanied Douglas to France, where at the battle of Verneuil both Douglas and he were slain. There does not appear to be any direct statement in charter evidence that Alexander Home of that Ilk and David Home of Wedderburn were brothers, but there seems no reason to doubt the fact, especially as in a crown charter by King James the Second in 1452 of the lands and barony of Home, in form of entail, David Home of Wedderburn is called to the succession immediately after the main line. The charter is granted to Alexander Home, son and heir apparent of Sir Alexander Home of that Ilk, with remainder to George, Patrick and Nicolas, the other sons of Sir Alexander, failing them to Thomas and George, brothers german of the said Sir Alexander, and their heirs male successively, failing them to David Home of Wedderburn and his heirs male, and finally to Patrick Home of Rethburn and his heirs. Sir David Home of Wedderburn is said to have tended carefully the interests of his brother who took his place in the French expedition; but he had a dispute with his son about the bailiary of Coldingham (No. 3). This office, however, the Laird of Wedderburn retained, with evident appreciation of his services

therein (No. 7). He married Alice . . . , and had two sons, (1) David, who predeceased his father before 1450, but, having married Elizabeth Carmichael, who survived until 1495, had by her two sons George and Patrick; (2) Alexander, who by a crown charter, dated 16th May, 1460, is called to the succession of Wedderburn in the event of the failure of his brother's two sons.

George Home, the elder son of David Home the younger, succeeded his grandfather, as second Laird of Wedderburn. His brother Patrick became progenitor of the Humes of Polwarth. They married sisters, George choosing Mariota, and Patrick, Margaret, the two daughters of John Sinclair of Herdmanston by Catherine Home, sister of Alexander, Lord Home, who were also heiresses of their grandfather, John Sinclair of Herdmanston, in the lands of Polwarth and Kimmerghame. It is related that the uncle of the maidens, as heir male of the family and guardian to them, wishing to prevent these lands from being carried out of the family by their marriage, carried the maidens off from Polwarth to his castle of Herdmanston on the other side of the Lammernuir Hills. The young ladies, however, succeeded in conveying tidings of their whereabouts to their lovers, who lost no time in summoning their retainers and riding across the hills to their rescue. Investing the castle of Herdmanston they demanded their lady loves, who after some parley on the part of their uncle, were surrendered, and with no unwillingness on their part were carried back to Polwarth, where the brothers married them, and divided their lands between them. This Laird of Wedderburn was killed in an encounter with the English in 1497. He had two sons, David, his successor, and Mr. John Home.

David, afterwards Sir David Home of Wedderburn, married Isabella Hoppringle, and had, it is said, eight sons, of whom seven were old enough to accompany him to the ill-fated field of Flodden, in 1513, where he and his eldest son, George, were slain. Sir Walter Scott in his "Lay of the Last Minstrel" calls them the Seven Spears of Wedderburn. Part of the old banner which is said to have waved over the Wedderburn contingent of the Scottish army on this occasion was discovered, in a tattered and fragmentary and bloodstained condition in an old strong chest at Wedderburn Castle in 1822. It is said to have been wrapped round the bodies of the Lairds of Wedderburn, elder and younger, when their surviving retainers bore them home from the field of battle for burial; and not improbably, as tradition goes, it was similarly employed when the like catastrophe again overtook the house of Wedderburn at the Drove of Dunbar on 3rd September, 1650, when again father and son, in this case an only son, and curiously bearing the same names of Sir David and George fell on the battlefield. It is matter of satisfaction that the present Laird of Wedderburn has taken steps to preserve what remains of the old banner by having it stretched out upon fresh silk and framed and placed among other trophies and emblems of the military life of the family upon the walls of one of their ancestral homes. Of the other sons of this Sir David, the second, David,

succeeded as Laird of Wedderburn; the third, Alexander, founded the house of Home of Manderston, and was father of George, Earl of Dunbar; the fourth and fifth, John and Robert, married the two daughters and heiresses of Blackadder of that Ilk (whose mother their brother David married, *see* No. 580), divided the lands between them and founded the house of Home of Blackadder; the sixth, Patrick, was progenitor of the Homes of Broomhouse; the seventh, Andrew, became a churchman: and the eighth, Bartholomew, is said to have been ancestor of the Homes of Simprin.

David Home of Wedderburn, the second son, who succeeded, had, in a short, a somewhat stirring career. Besides frequent encounters with the English and feuds with neighbours, he was involved with Archibald, sixth Earl of Angus, in his efforts to retain possession of the young King James the Fifth. He had married this Earl's sister, Alison Douglas,¹ the widow of Robert Blackadder, younger of that Ilk, who had been slain at Flodden. On Angus being worsted and forced to take refuge in England much trouble ensued to the Homes, and great turmoil in the Merse. Lord Home was decoyed to Edinburgh and executed for treason, and his younger brother, William, prior of Coldingham, was assassinated by the Hepburns. In revenge Wedderburn slew De la Bastie, the Frenchman whom the Regent Albany had installed at Home Castle as governor of the district and warden of the Eastern Marches, and placed his head on the top of the castle. He also slew Robert Blackadder, the new prior of Coldingham. For these deeds and others he was indicted for treason and forfeited. He, however, managed to make his peace with Albany; and from him in 1517 he obtained a grant of half of the lands of Manderston, which had belonged to his chief, Lord Home. These he probably gave to his brother Alexander. He assisted the Regent, it is said, at the siege of Wark, and so signally distinguished himself in this affair that King James the Fifth presented him with a gold chain from off his own person, and granted him permission to carry as his family crest a unicorn's head gorged with an imperial crown, as part of the royal armorial bearings, with the word REMEMBER as a motto. It must here be observed, however, that the oldest preserved seal of the Wedderburn family, which appears at a document of 1444 (*see* No. 8) bears what appears to be a unicorn's head as a crest. This Laird of Wedderburn was killed in an encounter with the English in 1524. He left three sons and three daughters.

George, the eldest son, being but nine years of age when his father died, Alexander Home of Manderston, his uncle, acted as Tutor of Wedderburn for a time. When he became of age this Laird of Wedderburn is said to have been warded in Blackness Castle for some years for the purpose solely of securing the peace of the Merse, and while there that he had one or more children

¹ By their connection with the Douglasses the Homes of Wedderburn claim touch with the Royal family of Scotland. It may also be incidentally noted that the present Lady of Wedderburn traces her lineage from King Edward the First of England.

by the daughter of the Captain of the castle. At all events there are two of his natural sons, David and George, legitimated on 22nd April, 1543 (*Registrum Magni Sigilli*). He married Joan Hepburn, of the family of Waughton, and by her had a son John, who predeceased him, and two daughters who also died young. George Home of Wedderburn was slain at the battle of Pinkie in 1547.

David Home, next brother of George, succeeded as Laird of Wedderburn, but having been taken by the English at the surrender of Dalkeith, had to endure two years' captivity in England. In the troublous times of Queen Mary's reign he gave his allegiance at first to her and supported Bothwell; but after her abdication he loyally adhered to the administration in support of the young King James the Sixth. He married, first, Mariota Johnstone, daughter of the Laird of Elphinstone, by whom he had four sons and four daughters, and she dying in 1564, he married, secondly, Margaret Ker, daughter of the Laird of Linton, and widow of Pringle of Whitebank. His sons were (1) George, his successor; (2) Mr. David Hume of Godscroft, the historian of the family and of the Houses of Douglas and Angus, who was also distinguished in other branches of literature. He married Barbara Johnstone, also of the Elphinstone family, widow of Mr. John Haldane of Gleneagles, by whom he had several children. A number of papers particularly relating to him are collected in a section of this Report (Nos. 173-192). (3) Mr. James Home, who was parson of Hilton, and (4) Mr. John Home, who also applied himself to literature, but died young from the effects of overstudy. Of the daughters, the eldest Isobel, married Mr. John Haldane of Gleneagles; the second, Margaret, married David Home of the Law; the third, Julian, married Sir John Ker of the Hirsell; and the fourth, Janet, married William Cockburn of Langton. Besides these children this Laird of Wedderburn had a natural son, Patrick. He died in 1574 in his bed, and is reputed to have been the first Laird of Wedderburn who had that privilege.

George, afterwards Sir George Home of Wedderburn, who succeeded, was born at Elphinstone, and it is said was so weak and sickly a child that he had to be wrapped in black wool. After his childhood, however, he grew so rapidly that when he was twelve years of age he was shown to the Queen Dowager as a prodigy. At sixteen years of age he ceased to grow, having attained his full stature and then his beard grew just as if he had attained to manhood. He was as phenomenally distinct in his career. He was much at Court, where sometimes he was in favour and sometimes not. For a time he was Warden of the Eastern Marches, and later he was Collector, and Comptroller of the Household to both King James and his Queen. Portions of his account books in this last mentioned office are still preserved, and are chiefly valuable for the glimpses they yield of the movements of the King and Queen from day to day. They tell of visits made from time to time by the King to Dumfries, Stirling, Falkland, Dundee,