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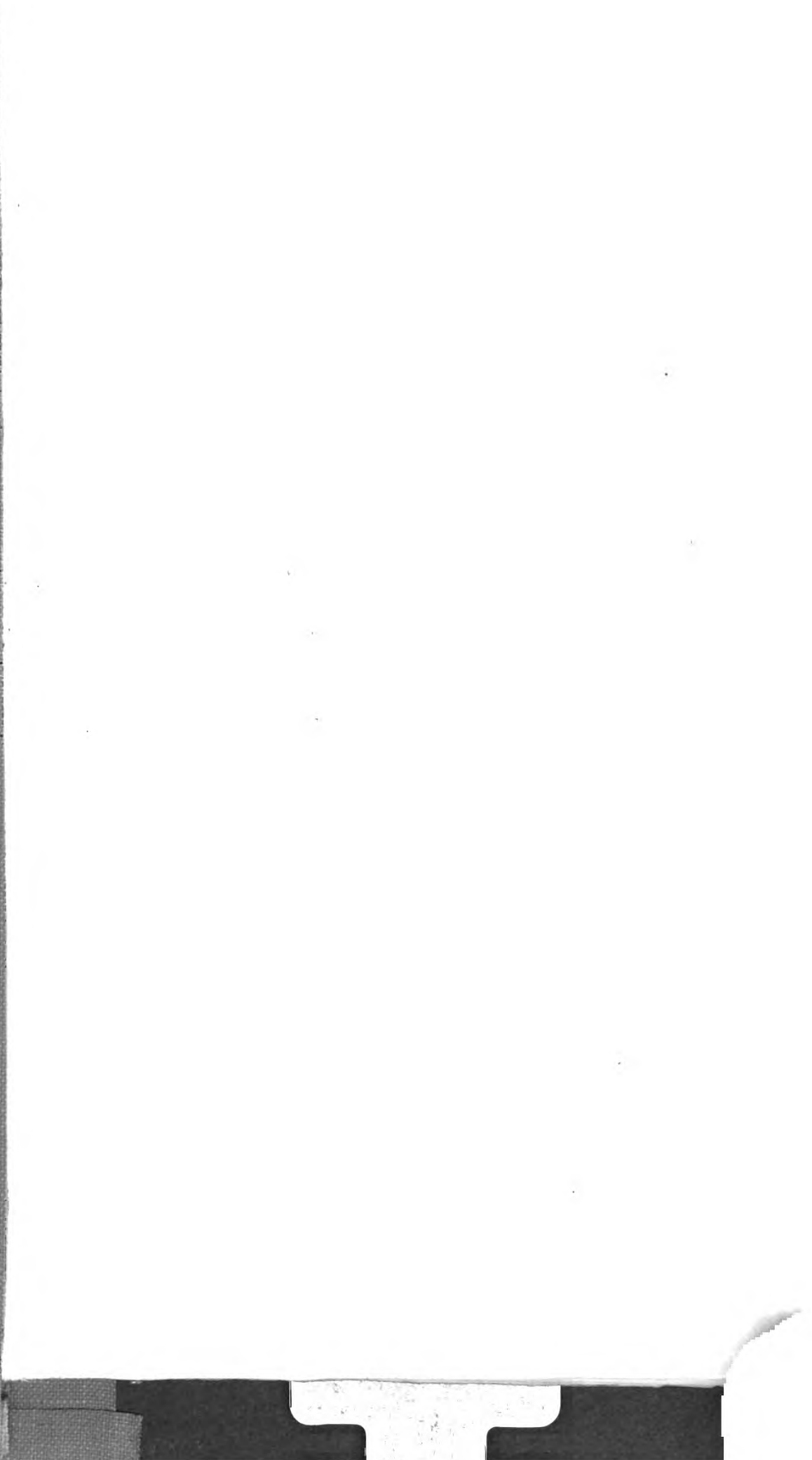
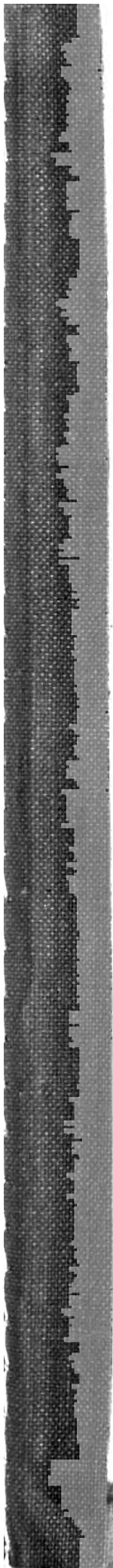
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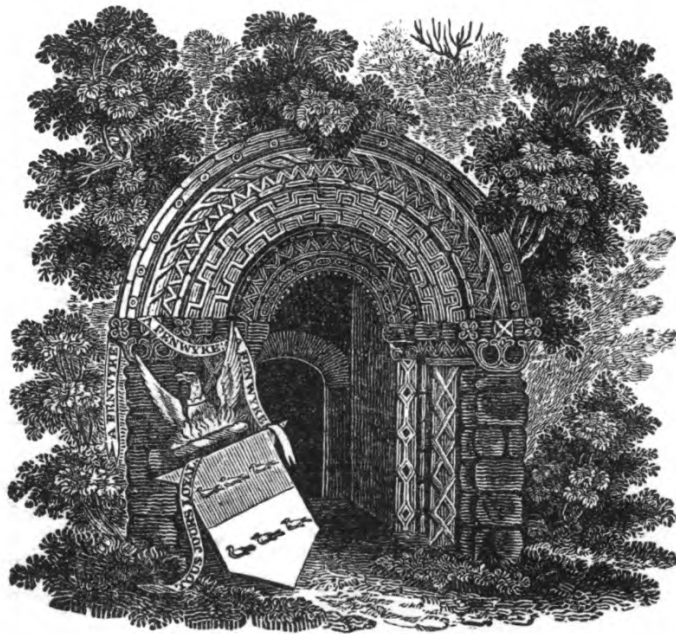
LETTERS

BETWEEN

JAMES ELLIS, ESQ. & WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.

“Remove not the ancient land-mark, which thy fathers have set.”

Prov. xxii. 28



NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE:
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INSCRIBED TO

WILLIAM BELL, ESQ.,

ASSOCIATE FOR THE NORTHERN CIRCUIT,

AND THE HONOURABLE REPRESENTATIVE OF A FAMILY

WITH WHICH MINE HAS ENJOYED A KINDLY

INTERCOURSE FOR THREE

GENERATIONS.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Battle of Otterburn, so famous in Border history, was fought in 1388. I extract Hodgson's account of it from his History of Northumberland. He says—

While Richard the Second was engaged in civil dissensions with his uncle and his parliament, the Scotch suddenly assembled an army of upwards of thirty thousand men, at 'Jedworth,' and dividing them into two bodies, marched the stronger into Cumberland; and the other, consisting of 3,000 or 4,000 spears, and 2,000 stout infantry and archers, all well mounted, and under the earls of Douglas, March, and Murray, passed through Northumberland by bye ways, without attacking castle, town, or house, crossed the Tyne and advanced as far as Brancepath. This they effected with such expedition and silence, that the first notice which the country, not lying immediately in their route, had of the forray, was from the smoke of the towns and villages in the bishopric of Durham, which they were plundering and burning. As they returned home, they sat down for three days, before Newcastle, where all the forces of the neighbouring counties were collecting under sir Henry and sir Ralph Percy, sons of the earl of Northumberland. During their stay there, they had several sharp encounters at the barriers; and Henry Percy, the celebrated Hotspur, having challenged Douglas to single

combat, was unhorsed by his adversary, and lost his spear, which Douglas said, he would carry with him into Scotland. Percy threatened he should never take it out of Northumberland. Froissart says that it was his pennon which Percy lost in an affray at the barriers; and that Douglas said—"I will carry this token of your prowess with me into Scotland, and fix it on the tower of my castle of Dalkeith, that it may be seen from far." Early the next morning, the Scotch struck their camp, and in their way homeward passed the first night at Otterburn; and the following day in an unsuccessful attack upon the castle there; but while some of them were concerting how they should best assault this little fortress in the ensuing morning, others were at supper, and many were gone to sleep, the English, on the evening of the 19th of August, 1388, forced their way into their camp, shouting "Percy! Percy!" but mistaking the huts of the servants for the tents of their masters, they gave time for the enemy's regular troops, under their three leaders, to wheel about the side of a hill, and fall unexpectedly upon their flank. Nothing now was heard but the cry of "Percy!" and "Douglas!" The battle raged; but though the weather was temperate and serene, the moon was sometimes overcast, so that it was difficult to distinguish friend from foe. Douglas, with a battle axe, rushed into the English ranks; and while he was dealing out death on all sides, he was borne down by the spears, wounded in three parts of his body, and fell fighting desperately. When his friends came up with him, they found him stretched on the ground, faint, and dying. Sir Robert Hart, a valiant knight, who had fought all night by his side, was lying near him, covered with fifteen wounds; and his valiant chaplain, who had never forsaken him, stood over him, shielding him with a battle axe. "How fare you, cousin," said sir John Sinclair. "I fare well," was the reply. "I thank God that I die, as most of my ancestors have, in a field of battle, and not in my bed. Revenge my death—raise up my banner—and continue to shout 'Douglas!' but tell neither friend nor foe that I am dead." Buchanan says, they covered his body with a cloak, lest it should be known; and Froissart, that as soon as he fell, his head was cleft with

a battle axe, the spear thrust through his thigh, and the main force of the English marched over him, not supposing him to be their principal enemy. Soon after this, sir Ralph Percy, badly wounded, was taken prisoner. Still, however, the battle was fiercely contended; but when the fallen banner again advanced with the cry of "Douglas! Douglas!" the Scotch rallied, and rushing forward with redoubled ardour, the English, weary with a forced march of 32 miles, and a long and obstinate conflict, at last gave way, were forced beyond the spot where the body of the earl of Douglas lay, and could never rally again. One thousand and forty of them were either taken or left dead in the field, eighteen hundred and forty in the pursuit, and above one thousand wounded. The Scots lost one hundred in slain, and two hundred in prisoners.

The place upon which this bloody encounter is said to have been fought, is, in the notes to the Border Minstrelsy, and to Johnes's Froissart, called *Battle-Crofts*. Dr. Percy calls it *Battle-riggs*. It is on the west side of the Otter, between the public highway and the farm called Greenchester. Armstrong, on his map, 1769, marks the spot with a cross, called "Battle Stone;" and another cross, now erroneously called *Percy's Cross*, was erected by Henry Ellison, upon the spot where Douglas is said to have fallen. John Codling, parish clerk of Whelpington, says, he was employed to put it up; that he got the shaft of it, which is eleven feet long, in Davyshiel Crag; and that he does not recollect to have seen or heard of any cross either there or near that place before it was set up. All around, when the land was ploughed, he has heard the people say, that pieces of swords and spears, and the iron trapping of horses, were turned up. But Froissart expressly says—"I was told by those who were of the victorious party, that this battle was fought *between* Newcastle and Otterburn; and further tells us, that when the Scots first encamped here, "they made huts of trees and branches, and strongly fortified themselves. They placed their baggage and servants at the entrance of the *marsh* on the road to Newcastle, and the cattle they drove into the marsh lands." When the English first "forced their way into the camp, they mistook the huts of the

servants for those of their masters ;" and when the bishop of Durham came up, the day after the battle, they had "formed themselves into a strong body, and had fortified their camp in such a manner, that it could be entered by one pass only." Indeed, the bishop, at "two bow-shots" distance, "examined with surprise, how well they had chosen their encampment, and strengthened it to their advantage." Buchanan says, that the bishop found the earl of Moray's position defended in the rear by *morasses*, and on the right and left with the dead bodies of the former conflict. In Speed's map of Northumberland, the localities of four battles are marked by a tent—that of Hexham, on the Linnels, or Devilswater; that of Flodden, in the defiles between Crookham and Brankston; that of Alnwick, in the spot traditionally assigned to it: these three are all exactly where they should be: and the fourth tent is on the east side of the Otter, near a wood, in the Davyshield district, about ten furlongs from Otterburn, and at a short distance from the antient track-way from Newcastle through Elsdon, by the Broken-moss into Scotland.

Douglas took up his lodgings at Otterburn on a Wednesday.^a—Harding says the battle was fought on St. Oswald's day, which is on the 5th of August, and in that year fell on a Wednesday. This is a strong coincidence of testimony. Froissart, however, makes it happen on the 19th of August; and Buchanan on the 21st of July.

Through the kindness of Mr. ELLIS, of Hexham—*salve magna parens!*—I received a collection of MSS.

a

 He tooke his logying at Oterborne
 Uppon a Wedyns-day:

And ther he pyght hys standerd downyn,

(Antient ballad of *Battle of Otterburne*, printed by bishop Percy.)

J. F.

relating to Northumberland, in the handwriting of his late worthy kinsman, JAMES ELLIS, esq., of Otterburn Castle ; and thinking that the letters which passed between that gentleman and Sir WALTER SCOTT, as to the site of the Battle of Otterburn, and other matters of local interest, should see the light of day, with the permission of Mr. Ellis, of Hexham, I have the pleasure of printing them as a tract of the Typographical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

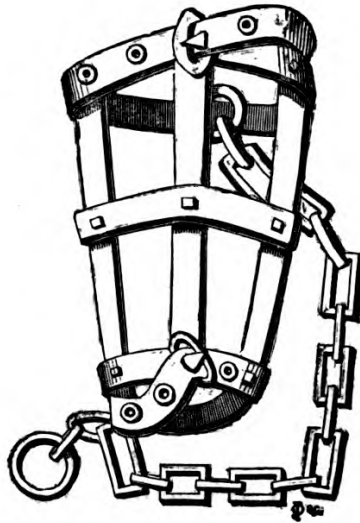
It only remains for me to notice that Mr. Ellis, of Otterburn Castle, was a native of Hexham, and cotemporary with his distinguished townsmen, JOSEPH RICHARDSON, whose Memoirs have for some time been before the public, and JOHN SCOTT, the friend of FOX, SHERIDAN, and ERSKINE, and whose literary and political talents materially assisted the *Courier* newspaper in its career, at a time when the party spirit engendered by the French Revolution of 1792 ran high in the land.^b Mr. Ellis, as well as Richardson and Scott, followed the glorious profession of the law. He served the latter part of his clerkship in the chambers of Messrs. Davidson, Newcastle, with THOS. BEDINGFIELD and GEORGE PICKERING,

^b Mr. Scott ultimately settled in Newcastle, the bare *caput mortuum* of his former self—The late Mr. Joseph Bainbridge conversing with me on poor Scott's condition, exclaimed "What a change ! when I went to London to be admitted [an attorney], I considered it a mark of great distinction to bear an introduction to John Scott."—Mr. Scott died at Kenton, on the 15th June 1833.

whose Memoirs and Poems he gave to the public in 1815. Mr. Ellis practised as an attorney for several years in Newcastle, maintaining an unblemished respectability of character, and afterwards retired to his estate of Otterburn Castle, where he cultivated his literary and antiquarian taste, and closed his honourable career on the 25th March 1830. The notes marked *E*, and the account of Mr. Scott's visit to Otterburn, on the 25th September, 1812, are Mr. Ellis's. I am responsible for the Appendix.

J. F.

11, ELLISON-PLACE, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE,
14th June, 1850.



Fortune le Veit.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

JAMES ELLIS, Esq., AND WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

Otterburne Castle, 22 February, 1812.

SIR,

I received much pleasure from the reading of your *Border Minstrelsy* a few years ago, yet I own a passage in the introduction to 'The Battle of Otterbourne' affected me differently; but not being very tenacious of my rights, nor much inclined to give trouble, I passed it over. I mean the latter part of p. 29, vol. i. 2d edit.^a A recent perusal, however, induces me now to write you.

The place where the Scottish army was encamped, and where the battle commenced, is tolerably well ascertained, not only by entrenchments still remaining, but by the description given by Froissart, as lately translated by Mr. Johnes. It is on the summit of a considerable eminence called Fawdon Hill, belonging to me; but extends

^a Vide appendix.—A.

into the adjoining grounds of Mr. De Lisle, and is distant more than a mile from the place called Battle Croft, belonging to Mr. Davidson. The expression in your ballad, that 'they lighted high on Otterbourne' also perfectly agrees with this situation. The Castle of Otterburn, (which Douglas was beleaguering) with its demesne lands, is not only my property, but my place of residence, and the room in which, at this moment, I am writing, actually comprehends part of the ancient walls. There is another part of my ground which would seem to have some relation to the battle, though I know of no tradition respecting it. It is called 'Earl's Meadows,' and has in it a fine spring of water, called 'Percy's Well!' Perhaps the spot where Hotspur was taken prisoner.

So circumstanced, I hope I may be excused for feeling a little sore, when I see, in your work, my neighbour Mr. Davidson described as '*the Proprietor of Otterbourne.*' It is in fact, so far as the evidence of your book goes, to divest me of my property, and bestow it on another. I have no doubt, however, of your justice in taking an opportunity to correct this involuntary, but to me unpleasant, mis-statement.

Being somewhat fond of Border history, permit me to make a few observations, and to subjoin a copy of some notes made on Dr. Percy's Collection, which, though trifling, are original. Perhaps the date, 1387, and *Cornwall*, both occurring in your introduction to the

⁶ I do not recollect what these notes were —*E.*

Battle of Otterbourne, are merely misprinting for 1388, and *Cornhill*. Your quotation from Godscroft, whose book I never saw, agrees with my notion of 'the Hunting a' the Cheviat,' as you will perceive by a subjoined note on Dr. Percy.^c But it appears by the conclusion of your introduction, that you refer to some other edition of the *Reliques*, than that on which I made some remarks; for in that, there are no notes or account of the Scottish warriors, except for 'the Earl of Mentaye,' 'the Earl of Menteith;' and for 'the Lord of Bowghan,' 'the Lord Buchan;' and respecting sir *James* of Agurstone referring to Richard Hagerstoun, a *Scottish* knight, living in 1249. So that if there is a better edition, my notes are perhaps worse than trifling. I have no doubt of your being right as to 'Edgerston.'

Your remark on 'Johnie Armstrong,' that one of the last Border reivers was of that family, and lived within the last century, is amply confirmed by the confession of John Weir, an accomplice, when under sentence of death in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, a copy of which I have. The number of their depredations, chiefly in horse-stealing, is really astonishing. Their method, generally, was to steal in England, and sell in Scotland, et vice versa, even so far south as London. In 'Hobbie Noble,' you are at a loss about 'the Earl of Whitfield.' Whitfield is a large manorial, and rather wild, district, in the extreme south-west part of Northumberland, the pos-

^c The MS. don't give this note.—*J. F.*

essor of which might naturally enough be called the Lord,' though not 'Earl of Whitfield. Sir Matthew Whitfield of Whitfield Hall, was sheriff of Northumberland in 1433, and the estate remained in that family from the reign of Richard II. till within these fifty years.^d To your remark in the introduction to 'Clerk Saunders,' respecting the invitation to funerals, I would add that a similar custom still prevails in some parts of England, particularly at Hexham, in this county. I remember when little more than a boy, to have heard the bellman there, who was also sexton, deliver the following invitation. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. Anthony Lambert is departed. Your company is desired tomorrow evening at five o'clock, and at six o'clock he is to be *bu-ri-ed*. For him and all faithful people give God most hearty thanks.' This man had hanged himself in a wood, but the doxology never varied; and on this occasion, its absurdity struck me so much, that I have not forgot it. The invitation was at length altered in words, but the mode continues.

I have in my possession, though it is not my property, a copy of a poem called Cheviot, written in the beginning of last century, by a person unknown, whose initials are R. W.^e It has been, at some time, seen by Dr. Percy, as appears by some notes in his handwriting. It is in no wise allied to 'Border Minstrelsy,' being a very heavy,

^d Vide appendix.—B.

^e Vide appendix.—C.

yet desultory, composition of above six hundred verses, and is chiefly valuable for its enumeration of places, and of families of note in *Northumberland*, many of whom are now extinct. Yet as it was never published, I take the liberty of sending you below, an extract from nearly the beginning of it, as rather a favourable specimen. It is somewhat remarkable that this writer appears to have known who was the author of Chevy Chace, (the modern ballad, I presume), for I have never met with even a guess on that head.

I beg you will accept my apologies for troubling you with all this, notwithstanding yourself gave me the first occasion of troubling you at all, and I am,

Sir,

With great respect,

Your very obedient servant,

JAS. ELLIS.

To the preceding letter, Mr. Scott, almost immediately returned the following polite answer :

Edinburgh, 27 February, 1812.

DEAR SIR,

You could not do me a more acceptable pleasure than by favouring me with the particulars concerning the battle of Otterbourne, contained in your favour of the 22nd. It is certainly one of the most interesting incidents of Border history, and from the spirited old ballads to which it has given rise, as well as from a remote con-

nection with some of the heroes of the day, has been always a favourite subject of investigation with me. It is many, many years since I was on the spot, a little boy on a little pony, and with a travelling companion too careful to permit any of the researches which, even then, I had much inclination to make concerning the locality of the battle. When I had determined to commence editor of the old songs in the *Border Minstrelsy*, I was referred to Mr. Davidson to satisfy some enquiries respecting the field of Otterburne, and you have the general result in the book, although the erroneous expression that he was the proprietor of *Otterbourne* could not be his, but must have arisen from my confounding the castle and manor, with the field called Battle Crofts. I conceive in other respects, his information coincides nearly with yours. The Scotch appear to have left their camp and moved in an oblique direction against the flank of the English, who had unawares engaged themselves among the followers of their camp. Such movements, executed by a body of 10,000 or 12,000 men, together with the various changes of position during the vicissitudes of so long and desperate an engagement, must have covered a great space of ground, and the incidents of the battle probably gave name to various places within a mile or two of each other. I have some thoughts of being in the North of England this summer, and will certainly take an opportunity to survey the field of Otterbourne. As you mention Mr. Johnes' translation of

Froissart, I have to apologize to you, as a Border antiquary, for the meagreness of the few notices I have given him upon the names of the warriors of Otterbourne. I had no doubt Mr. Johnes would have taken my communications merely as suggestions, which a little research on his own part might have confirmed or refuted, in place of which, he took the patches out of my letter, without giving me even an opportunity to revise them. I could have added a good deal, and cleared some doubts. *Davy filium*, for example, I am now satisfied was the common Border name of *Davidson*. Depend upon my correcting the passage you complain of in the edition of the *Minstrelsy*, presently in the press. I believe I must do it by a notice at the end, as the sheet is through the press where the blunder occurs. I shall the less regret the error I have been led into, since it has been the means of procuring me so much useful information. I shall proceed, without farther circumlocution, briefly to notice some of your kind communications.

In confirmation of what you say of Weir's dying

∫ To make the correction more effectual, Mr. Scott very handsomely cancelled the fifty-ninth and five following pages, and in order to introduce some of the notes sent him in my letter, printed two additional pages; but owing, I presume, to the hurry of the press, the notes are very incorrect. He also dignifies me with the character of 'an ingenious correspondent, and an excellent antiquary,' to which I conceive I have very little claim. In four additional pages at the end of the volume, he gives several other of my notes. See vol. I. of Walter Scott's Works in 8 vols. published in 1812.—*E.*

speech, you will find a curious account of a circuit held at Newcastle in Roger North's *Life of the Lord Keeper Guilford*, where you will find also a singular description of the Northumbrians who attended the judge within their respective baronies, on his progress from Newcastle to Carlisle. They are described as having long beards, riding small nags, and all great antiquaries in their own bounds. Before setting out on the [*Hiatus in MS.*] the Judge and his attendants were each presented with arms, *i. e.* a dirk, with a knife and fork, by the mayor of Newcastle.^g

In the curious poem you send me an extract from, I doubt whether the author meant any particular known individual by the 'Great Bard' who sung Chevy Chase. I incline to think he apostrophises the unknown author, and merely supposes from the theme he had chosen, that 'he graced the field of Otterbourne with his presence.' I conceive that some minstrel of the House of Northumberland, not feeling the ancient ballad of Otterbourne quite a palatable subject, had used a freedom with the incidents to put it into its more popular, though fabulous, form. Percy's idea is certainly erroneous, from the grounds you have so well pointed out.^h 'To be well logyd,' implied, I suppose in reference to an army merely, to have a convenient spot for encamping, or rather, hutting their soldiers. In the Scotch edition of the ballad, Douglas objects to the probable want of provisions at the place

^g Vide appendix *D.*

^h Vide appendix *E.*

of appointment; I observe that Raymond Delaval was taken in the castle of Pontland (Ponteland) two days before the battle. There may, however, have been another of the same noble name engaged in it. But at present I have only room to subscribe myself,

Your obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

Addressed, Jas. Ellis, esq. Otterbourne Castle.

On the 25th of September, 1812, J. E. had the honour of a visit from Mr. Scott, who, with Mrs. Scott and a charming boy and girl, favoured him with their company all night, being on their way to visit Mr. Morrill at Rokeby. The next morning J. E. accompanied Mr. Scott, to view the remains of the Roman fortification at Risingham, and afterwards, with some difficulty, they found the huge fragment of rock on which the figure of Robin of Risingha, alias Robin of Redesdale, was rudely sculptured, and of which Mr. Scott did not seem to have had any previous knowledge. Though he was then engaged with his Poem of Rokeby, and published it in December following, it could not at that time be far advanced, for he made considerable use of the morning's occurrences, as appears by the Poem itself, and still more by the notes; but the name of his diabolick hero, Bertram Risingham, might have been previously suggested by Border or local history.

Of the letter of J. E. alluded to in the following letter of Mr. Scott, no copy was kept, but the very amusing anecdotes communicated in the latter, highly demand preservation.

MY DEAR SIR,

I had the pleasure of receiving your kind letter some time since and only delayed answering it, until I should have it in my power to send you a copy of Rokeby in which you will find I have availed myself of some of the information which I collected upon Reed-water, and that our friend Robin of Risingham, whom we sought so long has not been utterly forgotten.

Many thanks for your kind notices on Border matters. I have picked up one or two Northumbrian anecdotes which may interest you. In the very curious confession of the horse-stealer, if my memory fails me not, mention is made of *Luck-in-a-Bag* as the cant name of one of the Reedsdale thieves. In Patten's history of the affair in 1715, mention is made of John Hunter a north Tyne-dale man, a bold and adventurous fellow, following partly the profession of a smuggler between England and Scotland, to whom the Earl of Derwentwater gave the command of a troop of horse. Douglas a brother of the laird of Fingland in Tiviotdale had a similar appointment, and as the interest of these new captains lay among the moss-troopers, it is said that an old borderer observed, when the insurgents had marched, that the rebellion had its advant-

ages after all, since he could leave the stable door unlocked and sleep sound now that Luck-in-a-Bag, and the rest had taken up a new vocation. In a note, we are told that Luck-in-a-Bag was the 'nickname of a famous midnight trader among horses'. In the same piece it is also said that there was an old man in Northumberland acting as a setter or spy, among the banditti who had been concerned in breaking into Sir John Clerk's house.

Now of this exploit also I have got a minute account. The rogues entered when the family were at church all excepting the old knight himself who barricaded his own apartment and made the best defence he could, but in searching the house for plunder some of them chanced to light upon the bellfry, and in ascending the winding stair, they naturally enough used the bell-rope for a support, supposing it hung there for that purpose; this had the effect of alarming the neighbouring village and the people in the church, so that the thieves carried off little or no booty. Sir John leaves an account of the whole affair in his own hand-writing. He was a man of talents, and one of the commissioners for the Union.

Rank-rider means, I believe, strong or powerful rider. Rank is applied in Old Scotch, to signify strength of person and strength of sound, as in English it is applied to strong smells. I think the expression usually, but by no means uniformly, conveys something unfavourable, as, a strong wicked man, or a strong harsh voice. These

secondary or oblique meanings of words occur frequently.ⁱ

By the way, Patten the historian aforesaid, who had been chaplain to Forster, but recanted after the failure of the insurrection, and published an account of it adapted to the taste of the victors, gives a curious account of your predecessor, John Hall, of Otterburne; he says he was an excellent farmer and managed his estate to great advantage, but sustained two grievous losses, 1st by an unexpected fire, which consumed the house he lived in and all the offices, farm-yard, and stocking; 2ndly by a

ⁱ Sir Walter is quite right as to the adjective, but the substantive requires attention. 'RIDE, to rob; or rather, to go out on horseback for such a purpose, a border word.' A saying is recorded of a mother to her son (which is become proverbial) *Ride, Rowlie, hough's i' the pot*; that is, the last piece of beef was in the pot, and therefore it was high time for him to go and fetch more.—*Nicholson and Burn's Hist. of Westm. and Cumb.* ii. 466.

'RIDER, a moss-trooper, or robber of the Borders.'—*Brockett's Gloss.* At Hesleyside, the Charlton Family have a spur, which, when the larder was empty, was presented on a dish by my lady—a symbol which was well understood by the chieftain. But we greatly mistake both Scott and Brockett if we associate the idea of a robber with the operations of the Border *clans*. Each clan, as it appears to me, was a sort of sovereign state; the chief, it is true, had not the *kingly name*, but he had much of the *kingly power*, and there was a sort of federal union of the clans on each side of the Border—hence what are called the Border Laws. Scott in his *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, brings the Scottish chieftains within the bosom of the church. He has the mitred abbot of Melrose giving them the sign of the cross, and praying that 'they might be sage in hall, and fortunate in field.'

J. F.

flood, which carried of a plentiful crop just when it should have been led into the barn-yard. These two misfortunes were accounted a judgment on Mr. Hall for not preventing a rencontre (of which he was apprized) between a Mr. Fenwick and Septimus [Ferdinando] Forster, member for the county, in which the former killed the latter, and was afterwards executed for the murder at Newcastle.^k He is said to have been of a fierce and passionate temper, which got him the name of Mad Jack Hall of Otterbourne. 'Fate,' adds the Rev. author, 'pursued him to his untimely death, where he denied his faith, and made a strange exit.' I shall be glad if you find anything in these trifles new or interesting, and am ever, with best compliments to Mrs. Ellis,

Your obliged humble servant,

Edinburgh, 3rd April, 1813.

WALTER SCOTT.

Jas. Ellis, esq., etc.

^k Vide appendix F.

APPENDIX.

A.

The ground on which this memorable engagement took place is now the property of John Davidson, esq., of Newcastle, and still retains the name of Battle Cross. A cross, erroneously termed Percy's Cross, has been erected upon the spot where the gallant earl of Douglas is supposed to have fallen. These particulars were communicated to the editor in the most obliging manner by the present proprietor of Otterbourne.—*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 2nd edition, i. 29.

B.

My friend and client, the late Ralph Spearman, esq., of Eachwick-hall, who was the Monkbarns of THE ANTIQUARY, and a very Donjon Keep of local intelligence, and anecdote, in his MS. notes on the History of Northumberland, says—"The old owners of Whitfield were usually stiled *yearls*" [earls], and that after this line of the family ceased, the title it was conferred upon that of Clargill, whose heiress, who married Dr. Thomas Graham, was styled "Countess of Clargill." He also has a tale about Whitfield of Whitfield killing the last of the wild deer with which the country formerly abounded. He says, it was killed just before the old hall at South Dissington, where the event was recorded in a picture over the parlour chimney-piece, in which the dogs, deer, and hunters, were not the only group, but the family of Delaval were represented issuing from the house, in great form, to salute the sons of Nimrod.

Vide *Hodgson's Northumberland*—Whitfield Parish.

Bishop Percy, writing in 1767, says, 'roe-bucks were to be found upon the wastes not far from Hexham, within these forty years; — Whitfield, esq., of Whitfield, is said to have destroyed the last of them. The original MS. reads *rowe*.'—*Percy's Reliques*, i. 24.

In Northumberland, as I heare say, be no forests except Chivet Hills, where is much brushe wood and some okke; grownde over growne with linge, and some with mosse. I have hearde say Chivet Hills stretchethe xx miles. There is greate plenté of redde dere and roo bukkes.—*Leland's Itin.* vii. 7-56.

C.

Mr. Adamson printed this poem in 1817. He says, the MS. was purchased several years ago at a book sale in London, by the late Mr. Addison Langhorn, of Newcastle, and that it was given by that gentleman to Thomas Davidson, esq., deputy clerk of the peace for the county of Northumberland.

Mr. Adamson states, that while the MS. was Mr. Langhorn's property, it was submitted to the inspection of Dr. Percy, and that it is chiefly from the ideas suggested by that learned antiquary in his notes upon the poem, that the early part of the last century may be assigned as the probable time at which it was written.

Mr. Adamson states, that a gentleman,^a upon whose research and discernment, in matters of this nature, much confidence may be placed, is induced from the passage—

“Lo! said I to my son whom here I brought,”

and from the initials R. W. at the head of the poem, to be of opinion, that the author might have been one of the family of Wharton, of Wooperton, near Wooler. Were the following verses those which were sent to Mr. Scott by Mr. Ellis?—

Oft have we wish'd our Cheviot to survey,
Where once so many bards inspired lay—
Dark was the morn of our approaching day—
A gloomy cloud was wreath'd about his head,
Mists, fringed with light, upon his shoulders spread;
An awful darkness all our paths surround,
And we seem'd to advance on holy ground;
We the thin dews descending gently meet,
And new form'd fogs come tumbling by our feet;
We pass the scarce-to-be-discerned source
Of many a river, many a water course.

^a Qu.—The late Mr. Ellis?—J.F.

D.

From Newcastle, his lordship's route lay to Carlisle. The Northumberland sheriff gave us all arms; that is, a dagger, knife, pen-knife, and fork, all together. And because the hideous road along by the Tyne, for the many and sharp turnings, and perpetual precipices, was for a coach not sustained by main force, impassable, his lordship was forced to take horse, and to ride most part of the way to Hexham. We were shewed where coal mines burnt underground; but could discern nothing of it, besides the deadness of all plants there. We were shewed the Picts' Wall, but it appeared only as a range or bank of stones all overgrown with grass, not unlike the bank of the Devil's Ditch at Newmarket, only without any hollow, and nothing near so big. Here his lordship saw the true image of a Border country. The tenants of the several manors are bound to guard the judges through their precinct; and out of it they would not go, no, not an inch, to save the souls of them. They were a comical sort of people, riding upon negs, as they call their small horses, with long beards, cloaks, and long broad-swords, with basket hilts, hanging in broad belts, that their legs and swords almost touched the ground; and every one in his turn, with his short cloak and other equipage, came up cheek by jowl, and talked with my lord judge. His lordship was very well pleased with their discourse; for they were great antiquarians in their own bounds.

North's Life of Lord Keeper Guilford, [temp. Car. ii.] i. 287.

E.

But that which is commonly sung of the Hunting of Cheviot seemeth indeed poetical, and a mere fiction, perhaps to stir up virtue, yet a fiction whereof there is no mention, either in the Scottish or English Chronicle. Neither are the songs that are made of them both one; for the Scots song made of Otterbourne, telleth the time, about Lammas; and also the occasion, to take preys out of England;

also the dividing armies betwixt the Earls of Fife and Douglas and their several journies, almost as in the authentic history. It beginneth thus :

“It fell about the Lammas tide,
When yeomen win their hay,
The dochtie Douglas 'gan to ride,
In England to take a prey.”

Godscroft, ed. Edin. 1743, i. 195.

Whoever considers the style and orthography of this old poem [Chevy Chace] will not be inclined to place it lower than the time of Henry VI. ; as, on the other hand, the mention of JAMES THE SCOTTISH KING, with one or two anachronisms, forbid us to assign it an earlier date. King James I. who was prisoner in this kingdom at the death of his father, [who died Aug. 5, 1406, in the seventh year of our Henry IV.] did not wear the crown of Scotland till the second year of our Henry VI. [James I. was crowned May 22, 1424, murdered Feb. 21, 1436-7,] but before the end of that long reign, a third James had mounted the throne. [In 1460, Henry VI. was deposed, 1461, restored, and slain in 1471.] A succession of two or three Jameses, and the long detention of one of them in England would render the name familiar to the English, and dispose a poet in those rude times to give it to any Scottish king he happened to mention.

So much for the date of this old ballad : with regard to its subject, altho' it has no countenance from history, there is room to think it had originally some foundation in fact. It was one of the Laws of the Marches frequently renewed between the two nations, that neither party should hunt in the other's borders, without leave from the proprietors or their deputies.^b There had long been a rivalry between the two martial families of Percy and Douglas, which

^b *Item*. . . Concordatum est, quod, . . . NULLUS unius partis vel alterius ingrediatur terras, boschas, forrestas, warrenas, loca, dominia quæcunque alicujus partis alterius subditi, causa venandi, piscandi, aucupandi disportum aut solatium in eisdem, aliave quacunque de causa, ABSQUE LICENTIA ejus . . . ad quem . . . loca . . . pertinent, aut de deputatis suis prius capt. & obtent. *Vid. Bp. Nicholson's Leges Marchiarum*. 1705. 8vo. pag. 27. 51.

heightened by the national quarrel, must have produced frequent challenges and struggles for superiority, petty invasions of their respective domains, and sharp contests for the point of honour; which would not always be recorded in history. Something of this kind we may suppose gave rise to the ancient ballad of the HUNTING A' THE CHEVIAT.^c Percy earl of Northumberland had vowed to hunt for three days in the Scottish border without condescending to ask leave from earl Douglas, who was either lord of the soil, or lord warden of the marches. Douglas would not fail to resent the insult, and endeavour to repel the intruders by force: this would naturally produce a sharp conflict between the two parties: some thing of which, it is probable, did really happen, tho' not attended with the tragical circumstances recorded in the ballad: for these are evidently borrowed from the BATTLE OF OTTERBOURN, a very different event, but which aftertimes would easily confound with it. That battle might be owing to some such previous affront as this of CHEVY CHASE, though it has escaped the notice of historians. Our poet has evidently jumbled the two events together: if indeed the lines in which this mistake is made, are not rather spurious, and the after-insertion of some person who did not distinguish between the two stories.—2nd Ed. *Percy's Reliques*, i. 2-4.

The ballad [Chevy Chace] published in the *Reliques* is avowedly an English production; and the author, with a natural partiality, leans to the side of his countrymen; yet that ballad, or some one similar, modified probably by national prejudice, must have been current in Scotland during the reign of James VI.

Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, in Preface to the
Battle of Otterbourne.

The supposed subject of this ballad [Chevy Chace] being as honourable to the English as the real events of the battle of Otterburne were otherwise, Dr. Percy seems willing to support its authenticity; yet if he gives up its tragical circumstances, what will remain? But his conjecture that that battle might be owing to some previous

^c This was the original title.

affront, like Chevy Chase, involves a contradiction, unless he could get clear of the difficulty by supposing, as he does, with the lines :

O heavy newes, king James did say,
Scotland can witness be,
I have not any Captaine more
Of such account as he.

Lyke tydings to king Henry came
Within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland
Was slain in Chevy Chase.

that the names of the kings Henry IV. of England, and James of Scotland are an interpolation. The battle of Chevy Chase certainly could not precede that of Otterbourne, which was fought in 1388, eleven years before the reign of Henry IV., and there was no king James of Scotland till 1424, being the second year of Henry VI. of England. For though James I. become entitled to the crown in 1405, he was for the succeeding nineteen years, not at 'Edinborrowe,' but a prisoner in England. Indeed, the ballads of Chevy Chase, though dear to English feelings, admired by Sir Philip Sidney, and criticized by Addison, seem to have no foundation in fact, except so far as they coincide with the battle of Otterbourne; both the commencement and result of which were widely different.

Mr. Ellis's MS.

F.

I here copy the account of the fight from Richardson's Table Book, Div. Hist. i. 333.—sub. 22 Aug. 1701.

Mr. John Fenwick, of Rock, in Northumberland, stabbed Ferdinando Forster, esq., one of the representatives in parliament for that county, between the White Cross and a thorn tree, which stood at that time in Newgate-street, in Newcastle. The quarrel arose about some family matters at dinner, at the Black Horse Inn, near the White Cross, which was then the best inn in Newcastle.^d Fenwick

^d Mr. Grainger in his improvements has pulled down this Inn, and thrown its site into Clayton-street-west.—*J. F.*

challenged the other to fight, and as they went out, being behind Forster, he stabbed him in that situation. This happened during the assizes. Fenwick was hanged on the 25th of September following, at the White Cross, and all the gates of the town were shut during the execution, for fear of a rescue from the people of the North, with whom the name of Fenwick was held in great veneration.—*Brand.*

The following is from the late alderman Hornby's MS. notes to Brand.—'The account here given is entirely erroneous, as I think I have sufficient authority to say, from the information of several respectable old persons, who either lived at that time, or soon after, and of course likely to be much better informed of the truth than Mr. Brand *ever had* an opportunity of being. Indeed I make no scruple to add, that his account comes from something of a tradition handed down amongst low, vulgar, and uninformed persons. I shall take for my principal authority, the late Edward Collingwood, esq., recorder of Newcastle, *who informed me* that his father was present when the quarrel happened. The company consisted of the whole or part of the grand jury of Northumberland, and probably, during that state of conviviality which prevailed much on these occasions about that period, Mr. Fenwick came in singing a favourite party song, the burthen of which was "*Sir John Fenwick's the flower among them,*" this brought on some altercation betwixt him and Mr. Forster, but the company interfering, the matter was supposed to be quite settled. The next morning the parties met accidentally near the White Cross, the altercation was renewed, swords were drawn, and Mr. Forster killed. I have been told by other authorities, that Mr. Fenwick was taken in the garden behind Gallowgate or Sidgate, that at his execution the gates of the town were shut for fear of a rescue, and that he was hanged upon a piece of timber fixed betwixt the gaol and the gaoler's house. He was the owner of Kenton, where, and in the neighbourhood, collieries were then wrought, and the apprehension was from the pitmen.









