

it. Young Dingwall Fordyce represented the entire county with ability and success until his sadly premature death, when it was divided, and McCombie, the greatest cattle breeder in Scotland, and a sturdy Scot of much individualism and integrity, came out as a candidate. Rumour will have it that he first stood as a Tory, had canvassed the farmers in that interest, and had their pledges safely recorded in a "leathern bookie." But the high and mighty lairds kicked so sharply at such a lowering of their social tone that McCombie promptly changed over to the other side, and carried his pledges with him. And in those days it apparently mattered little to the farmers to which camp he belonged as long as he was one of their own class, and prepared with first-hand knowledge to represent them. But now the Liberals made their protest at the degradation, as they considered it, of having a rent-payer instead of a rent-receiver as their mouthpiece, and they came to my father to ask him to stand. I remember in my half-fledged way sympathising with the strikers, and I did my best to persuade him to take action, but he was far too good a Liberal for that, and flatly refused, and McCombie, who was a personal friend of his, and respected him as what he called a "just landlord," walked in, I think, unopposed. But he soon found out his mistake. He never took kindly to the life, and his professional interests suffered so much neglect that if he did not become bankrupt, he came very near it, and he was nothing like the power in the House that he expected, for his somewhat uncouth talk did not catch on, and when, for "greater accuracy," to paraphrase