

## BIRTH.

Francis Jeffrey, the greatest of British critics, was born in Edinburgh on the 23rd of October 1773. There are very few persons the precise spot of whose nativity it is worth while taking much pains to fix. But as almost all the accounts of Jeffrey do specify a place, and a wrong one, it may be as well to mention that he certainly was not born in either of the three houses, in Fisher's Land, or Paterson's Court, or Buchanan's Court, all in Lawnmarket Street, where the family afterwards lived; but in one of the flats or floors of what is now marked No. 7 on the west side of Charles Street, George Square. Besides other unquestionable evidences, he himself pointed this out as his birth-place to his friend, Mr Adam Black, bookseller.

## EDUCATION.

Francis learned his mere letters at home; and John Cockburn, who had a school in the abyss of Hallie Fyfe's Close, taught him to put them together. He was the finest possible child, but dark and vigorous, and galled some reputation there while still in petticoats. One Sealey had the honour of giving him his whole dancing education, which was over before his ninth year began. It is to be hoped, for Mr. Sealey's sake, that this pupil was not the best specimen of his skill; for certainly neither dancing, nor any muscular accomplishment, except walking, at which he was always excellent, were within his triumphs. The more serious part of his education commenced in October 1781; when, at the age of eight, he was sent to the High School of Edinburgh, where he continued for the next six years. In 1787, when in his fourteenth year, he entered Glasgow College, where he remained for two sessions. Principal Macfarlane of Glasgow, and Principal Haldane of Glasgow being fellow-students, and who have both communicated their reminiscences to Lork Cockburn. They agree that his mental activity developed itself at this early period, his favourite subjects being criticism and metaphysics. Principal Macfarlane narrates that in the second session, "he broke upon us very brilliantly," and Principal Haldane gives evidence as to his critical powers, his own essay having fallen into Jeffrey's hands and being most unmercifully dealt with, though the strictures gave early promise of that critical acumen, which was afterwards to exercise such a sway in the Republic of Letters. He also showed the element of resistance to power if he fancied it's exercise overbearing, by opposing the election of Adam Smith as Lord Rector, apparently for no other reason than that the professors desired it. Returning from Glasgow, he spent two years in Edinburgh attending the law classes and in a laborious but disperse course of study. Thirty-one essays are enumerated; including discourses on "Beauty," "Slavery," "Fortitude," "Indolence," "Novel Reading," and an endless variety of subjects undertaken for his mental improvement, and in which he acted as his own censor. This period of his life affords a remarkable example of that intellectual perseverance and activity, which continued to the end of his life, and in which thus early may be traced the dawning of that excellence, which, under severe mental culture, in the end gave him his ascendancy both in literature and in his forensic career. In 1791 Jeffrey was sent to Oxford, but before he left Edinburgh he had an opportunity of doing a piece of good service to one whose literary fame, in one sense, it would be ludicrous to name in the same breath with his own, but who has left a name scarcely less known in British literature. The anecdote is characteristic and the association so odd, now that it has come properly to light, so far as we know, for the first time, that we give it in the biographer's own words, "It was about this time (1790 or 1791) that Jeffrey had the honor of assisting to carry the biographer of Johnson, in a state of great intoxication, to bed. For this he was rewarded next morning by Mr. Boswell, who had learned who his bearers had been, clapping his head and

telling him that he was a very promising lad, and that 'if you go on as you've begun, you may live to be a Boswy yourself yet.' On reaching Oxford, whether he was accompanied by his father, brother, and Mr. George Napier, W.S., who afterwards became his brother-in-law, he was consigned to his solitary apartment, "surrounded by chapels, and libraries, and halls," and here, on the first serious sequestration from his home and friends, he experienced that shock that most young men, and especially of a contemplative bias, do once at least encounter in their life—that sense of loneliness and desolation, the active suspense of the journey over, and that quiet succeeding with "a quick bosom" which Curran so well describes when first he was let fall in the wilderness of London, and which Jeffrey no less significantly conveys in a letter to his sister. 'Why must I always dream that I am in Edinburgh. The unpacking of my trunk rendered me nearly mad. I cannot yet bear to look into any of my writings. I have not now one glimpse of my accustomed genius nor fancy. O! my dear, retired, adored little window," alluding to his Lawnmarket garret, as his biographer tells us, pent up in which he had dreamed o'er the sages and produced those multitudinous essays to which we have alluded. He spent a season at Oxford, when he gladly took leave of its venerable walls with a smart Latin rejoinder to the formal certificate of his academical attendance in the same language. His idea of his progress, as far as the University, may be gathered from the following passage in a letter. "Except praying and drinking, I see nothing else that it is possible to acquire in this place." We may add that his friend Cranston, who attended the same University a few years previously, was much of the same opinion, for he afterwards used to say that the only benefit he derived within its venerable halls was in the vacation, when he chanced to be left there to his own study and incubations. Jeffrey returned to Edinburgh in the summer of 1792, and resumed his legal and other studies with a view to the Bar. But, like many others who have attained the highest rank in that profession, he had periods of overwhelming distrust in his own capacity or aptitude for the task. It is curious that this diffidence more frequently assails those who ascend into the highest sphere than others who, having given evidences of quickness and sagacity in a subordinate but eminently practical and useful province (viz., the Attorney's office), assume the gown with every confidence, and generally not misplaced, though less rarely than in the first instance—that of Jeffrey and others, who have pursued a more varied, profound and speculative course of study—conducting them to a commanding elevation. Jeffrey did not think of the mercantile profession at this time any more than when at an after period, and, in a letter to Horner, he carelessly talked of abandoning fame and everything else, if he could only conjure up a nice little cottage and £300 a year. These wayward feelings arise in moments of temporary pressure and despondency, when mankind are often tempted to say with the Psalmist, "Oh that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away and be at rest." Jeffrey had these overcomings, notwithstanding the general elasticity of his spirit, but he never seriously harboured the thought of abandoning an active conflict with the world, whether law or literature should eventually enlist him. As it was, he was a loyal subject to both. He was called to the Bar on 16th December 1794, and Lord Cockburn gives the following comprehensive sketch of the political state of Scotland at that date.

Scotland did not maintain a single opposition newspaper, or magazine, or periodical publication. The nomination of the jury by the presiding judge was controlled by no check whatever provided his Lordship avoided minors, the deaf, lunatics, and others absolutely incapable. Peremptory challenge was unknown. Meetings of the adherents of Government for party purposes, and for such things as victories and charities, were common enough. But, with ample materials for opposition meetings, they were in total

disuse. I doubt if there was one held in Edinburgh between the year 1795 and the year 1830. Attendance was understood to be fatal. The very banks were outlawed, and conferred their favours with a very different hand to the adherents of the two parties. Those who remember the year 1810 can scarcely have forgotten the political spite that assailed the rise of the Commercial Bank, because it proposed, by knowing no distinction of party in its mercantile dealing, to liberate the public, but especially the citizens of Edinburgh. Thus, politically, Scotland was dead. It was not unlike a village at a great man's gate. Without a single free institution or habit, opposition was rebellion, submission probable success. There were many with whom horror of French principles, to the extent to which it was carried, was a patty pretext. But there were also many with whom it was a sincere feeling, and who, in their fright, saw in every Whig a person who was already a Republican, and not unwilling to become a regicide. In these circumstances, zeal, upon the right side, was at a high premium, while there was no virtue so hated as moderation.

## MARRIAGE.

The marriage took place on the 1st of November, 1801. It had all the recommendation of poverty. His father, who was in humble circumstances, assisted them a very little; but Miss Wilson had no fortune, and Jeffrey had told his brother, only six months before, that "my profession has never yet brought me £100 a year. Yet have I determined to venture upon this new state. It shows a reliance upon Providence, scarcely to be equalled in this degenerate age, and indicates such resolutions of economy as would identify any less magnanimous adventurer." His brother Loring asked him to describe his wife; he did so, as I think, with great accuracy. "You ask me to describe my Catharine to you; but I have no talent of description, and put but little faith in full-drawn characters; besides, the original is now so much a part of myself that it would not be decent to enlarge very much, either upon her excellences or her imperfections. It is proper, however, to tell you, in sober earnest, that she is not a showy or remarkable girl, either in person or character. She has good sense, good manners, good temper, and good hands, and, above all I am perfectly sure that she has a good heart, and that it is mine without reluctance or division." She soon secured the respect and esteem of all his friends, and made her house and its society very agreeable. Their first home was in Buccleuch Place, one of the new parts of the old town; not in either the eighth or the ninth stories, neither of which ever existed, but in the third story of what is now No. 18 of the street. His domestic arrangements were set about with that honorable economy which always enabled him to practice great generosity. There is a sheet of paper containing an inventory, in his own writing, of every article of furniture that he went to the length of getting, with the price. His own study was only made comfortable at the cost of £718s.; the banquetting hall rose to £138s., and the drawing-room actually rose to £2219s.

## Arts and Manufactures.

## NEW MAP OF UPPER CANADA.

Mr. Scobie has just issued a map of the Western half of Upper Canada, which will undoubtedly receive that amount of patronage, which so important an addition to the geographical department of our provincial acquisitions demands. It is two feet three inches long by three feet deep, and will form an excellent school map. In fact we have hung it up along side one of Varty's imitable School Maps, and to say that it seems not at all ill fitted to become a school-mate with the Englishman is no measured praise. The divisions are taken from the latest and most reliable sources; and the counties are marked according to the recent Counties' Bill. The map is