

THE HOMES OF LORD ROSEBERY.

BY FREDERICK DOLMAN.



DALMENY PARK, LORD ROSEBERY'S SCOTCH RESIDENCE.



It is hard to say to which of Lord Rosebery's various residences precedence should be given. Dalmeny House, in the Lothians, is his ancestral home; Mentmore Towers, near Leighton Buzzard, is endeared to him as the dowry of his late wife; and "The Durdans," at Epsom, has in his eyes the good quality of nearness both to town and to the famous Downs; whilst to the London house in Berkeley Square his lordship has been faithful ever since the beginning of his political career.

Dalmeny might well content Lord Rosebery for a considerable part of the year. Only an hour's drive from Edinburgh, it is beautifully situated on the shores of the Firth of Forth, near the ancient burgh of Queensferry, a name which perpetuates the memory of Queen Margaret, wife of Malcolm Canmore, who was accustomed to cross the water at this point on her pilgrimages to Dunfermline. Travellers for the North nowadays cross here by the stately bridge which engineering skill recently raised, and which has brought Dalmeny within two miles of a railway station that bears its name. It is a

pleasant walk from this railway station to the Rosebery gates, along the wooded banks of the Forth.

Barnbougle Castle is first reached—the old home of the Roseberys. When Dalmeny House was built, about eighty years ago, by John Archibald Primrose, the fourth Earl, this ancient edifice was beginning to fall into ruin, and in 1820 its ruin was accomplished by the agency of gunpowder. But to the present earl the ruin thus artificially produced—picturesque though the crumbling fragments of walls may have appeared to many—was always an eyesore, and some years ago he had it restored as nearly as possible in accordance with its original design. Thus Barnbougle Castle, although of quite recent build, has the characteristics of a baronial mansion of about the time of James the Fourth of Scotland—with massive stone turrets and corbels and gabled walls and porches of solid masonry.

The interior of Barnbougle Castle, as restored by Lord Rosebery, is in keeping with these characteristics of feudal times. Its large entrance-hall has walls and ceilings of panelled oak, and is furnished with heavy chairs and tables of the same wood. The library and reading-room are on the ground floor, and above them is a noble banqueting

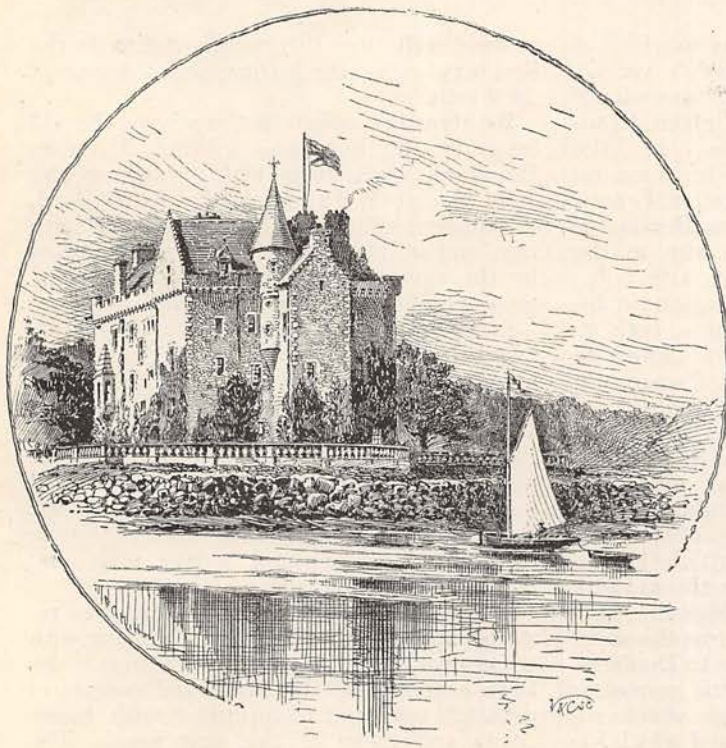
hall, such as would have delighted Sir Walter Scott. In height and breadth it is thirty feet, and double that dimension in length. Oak is again predominant; the ceiling is of this wood, as well as the music-gallery at one end, and a large, finely-carved chimney-piece in the centre. But in this, as in other parts of Barnbougle Castle, there is little that is of much interest in relation to the personality of its distinguished owner.

Dalmeny House—fortunately for the statesman's enjoyment of a period of rest when staying there—is some hundreds of yards away from Barnbougle Castle, almost beyond sound of any but gale-driven breakers. The two buildings are just visible the one from the other through the clusters of trees which almost encircle them both. Their architectural style is not altogether dissimilar, Dalmeny House having a more decorative effect, however, with its tracery work in the stone and ornamental panels containing the arms of the Rosebery family. The new is also considerably larger than the old house. None of its apartments has the proportions of the banqueting-hall at Barnbougle Castle, but dining-room, drawing-room, music-room, and library are equally spacious. They all open into a broad corridor running the whole

length of the house from the Gothic entrance-hall. This corridor is richly lighted by stained-glass windows, and it has another of the finely-carved oak roofs for which Lord Rosebery would seem to have so great an affection.

Lord Rosebery has added little to the contents of the house as he inherited them. Its valuable pictures were nearly all collected by his ancestors; they include several specimens of Murillo and portraits (of Pitt and Napoleon I. respectively) by Lawrence and David. Of the few that Lord Rosebery has purchased, a fine portrait of Prince Bismarck, which hangs in the dining-room, is probably the most important. In the drawing-room and the music-room are many landscapes by Scottish artists, several having their subjects within the Dalmeny demesne. The old oaks in front of the house have been a favourite study for painters, who, when wandering at will about Dalmeny Park, have found, indeed, plenty of employment for their pencils. Mons Hill and Cramond Bridge are exceptionally well-known spots among Edinburgh artists. From Mons Hill the view embraces sixteen counties, and include the Scottish capital, the Bass Rock at the entrance to the Firth of Forth, North Berwick, Stirling Castle, and Ben Lomond. But Lord Rosebery is not content with the scenic beauty of his estate. Dalmeny is now no less celebrated for the cultivation of flowers and fruit, and the gardens near the house have for many years been maintained on a high standard of excellence.

The village of Dalmeny is about three miles from the house. Besides the church and the manse, it consists of merely a few cottages. The church, which was existing in the twelfth century, is exceptionally interesting as a fine example of Norman ecclesiastical architecture. The edifice has, of course, undergone much reparation—the last occasion was in 1816—but its original character has been well preserved. It has sittings for 350, the population of the parish of Dalmeny being about 1,500. For more than two centuries it has been the burying-place of Lord



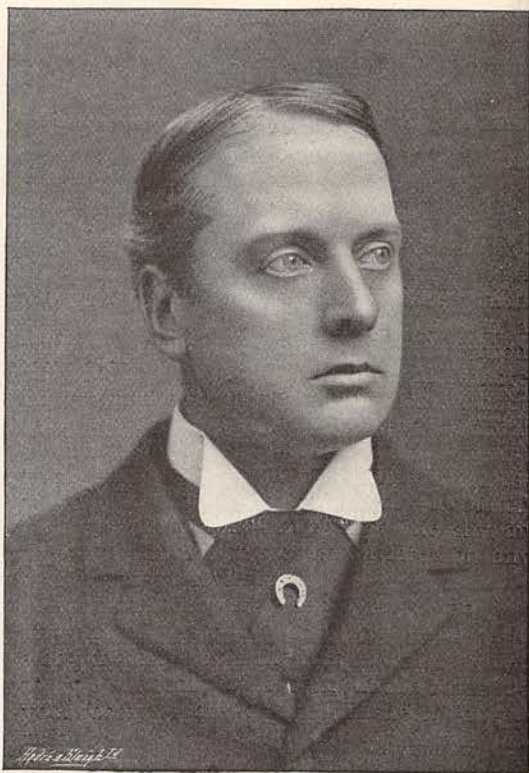
BARNBOUGLE, FROM THE SEA

Rosebery's family, but the mausoleum on the north side of the church is noteworthy only for its simplicity.

In Queensferry, with its population of fisher-folk, now numbering about 2,000, the Rosebery family have always taken much interest. The most important structure, next to the church, in the little town, which stands at about the centre of the one long, rugged street, is an epitome of the friendly relations between them. It is of a curiously composite character. It seems to have started as a drinking-fountain in 1819, and, as an inscription informs us, was erected by the magistrates and Town Council as a mark of respect to the then Earl of Rosebery, who had lately furnished the town with a pier and a "bleaching-green." A clock-tower was added in 1887 in celebration of the Jubilee of the Queen, about whose visit to Dalmeny House, in 1842, several of the oldest inhabitants were then full of reminiscences. A third and most important building was undertaken in 1893, when Lord Rosebery presented the little town with a public hall and recreation rooms as a memorial of his deceased wife. Probably Lady Rosebery's kindly nature and charitable disposition, however, had already endeared her memory among the rough Queensferry people.

Dalmeny first became the home of the Primrose family by the act of Sir Archibald Primrose, a distinguished lawyer of Stuart times, whose memory has been revered by its members above that of all other ancestors. Sir Archibald was Clerk of the Privy Council under Charles the First, but retired into private life in consequence of the success of the Parliament in its struggle with the king. The Restoration brought him into the public service again, as Lord Register of Scotland. Two centuries before, the Primroses had held land at Inverkeithing, in Perthshire, and at a later period they had property near Culross, in Perthshire. But Sir Archibald was landless, and before he died, in 1679, he realised a long-cherished ambition by the purchase of the Dalmeny estate of the Earl of Haddington. What is perhaps more remarkable, although he amassed a considerable fortune, Sir Archibald Primrose lived and died, in an age of political corruption, without a stain upon his name.

Lord Rosebery's Scottish home is, of course, quite eclipsed by the magnificence of "the lordly pleasure house" which the late Baron Meyer Rothschild built about forty years ago. Mr. Stokes, R.A., the architect of Mentmore Towers, was told to take Wollaton for his model, and given a free hand as to cost. The



THE EARL OF ROSEBERY, K.G.

(From a photograph by G. Jerrard, Regent Street, W.)

product of Mr. Stokes's talent and a prodigious expenditure was a building whose beauty is equal to its size, on a site which would seem to have been made for such a palace. About four miles from Leighton Buzzard, and six from Aylesbury, Mentmore Towers stands on an elevation which, without being very considerable, gives the splendid building a singular distinction from the flatness of the surrounding valley and the abruptness of the descent. Its six richly-decorated towers stand out boldly against the sky, an object of admiration for the wayfarer on any of the roads to Aylesbury.

At close quarters the sight is no less impressive. As you walk through the park, along the drive from the village, it is presented to you suddenly by a bend in the road, and your footsteps are arrested in sheer wonderment; such is the contrast between this fine piece of Italian architecture and the characteristic English landscape, simply pastoral, amid which it is set. The raised terraces, ornamented by marble vases and reached by flights of white stone steps, and the beautifully-designed Italian gardens, adorned by numerous pieces of sculpture, are in perfect accord with

the whole design of the building, which, although so massive, gives one an agreeable idea of lightness and brightness. Not a leaf touches the marble and stone walls; and, despite the richly turfed and timbered ground by which it is surrounded, Mentmore Towers, for the moment, produces the illusion that it is some fine civic edifice, and not a country mansion at which you are gazing.

The interior, it need hardly be said, is in artistic keeping with its exterior. In securing art treasures worthy of his splendid home the late Baron Rothschild spared neither trouble nor expense. The dining-room has a mantel-piece from Rubens's house, and the Doge's chandeliers hang in the ball-room. Many of the pictures came from the Manfrini Gallery at Venice, and there are valuable pieces of statuary in almost every room. The house also contains many specimens of the most rare and precious marble, as well as Limoges enamels.

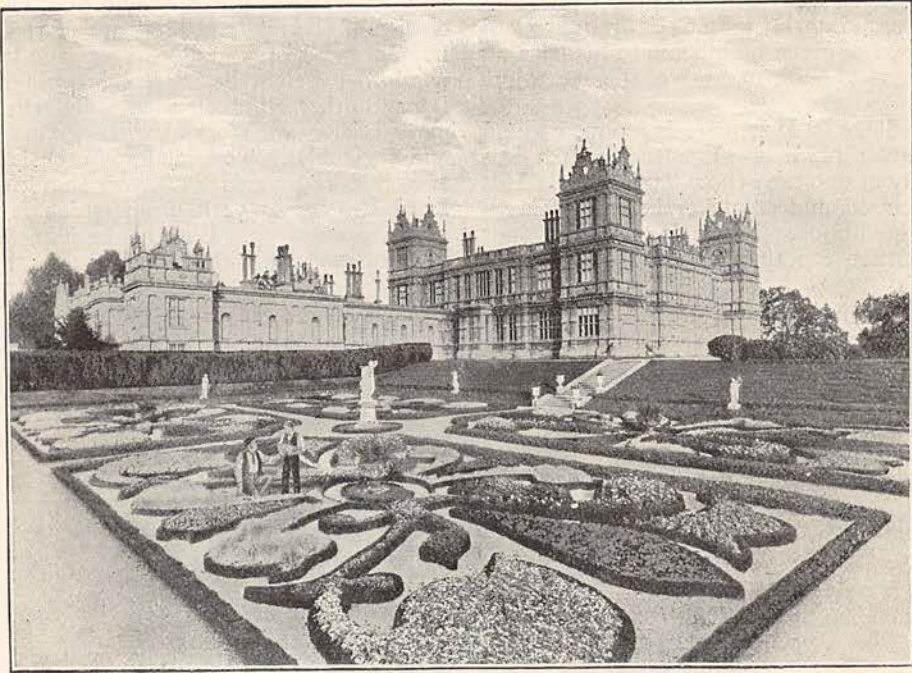
The paddocks and the stables, where several of his famous horses are generally to be found, now form the greatest attraction of Mentmore for Lord Rosebery. They are both at some distance from the house. The stables were built on an extensive scale in the form of a quadrangle by the Baron, whose "love for a good horse" equalled that of the present owner of Mentmore. They are of dark red brick, the inner walls being white terra-cotta,

which has been found excellent for cleanliness, but rather trying to the eyesight of some animals. In the numerous stalls—when "the family" are in residence—the best riding and driving animals in the country are to be seen—such as Lord Rosebery's favourite "hack," a fine docile creature, "Fulham" by name, and the Lady Sybil's little pony, for instance. All four children of the statesman are good riders, but of late the bicycle has temporarily taken the place of the pony in the affections of his two young sons. The meadows of the stud-farm would doubtless have an intense interest for innumerable people, for there such famous animals as Ladas and Bonny Jean, Foxhall and Illuminata, are to be seen taking their morning exercise.

Among horticulturists Mentmore is famous for its glasshouses. There are more than I could keep count of in walking through them—some being filled with flowering plants, others with ferns and palms, and still more devoted to the production of tomatoes, cucumbers, peaches, and similar delicacies for the table. In the centre of this wonderful range of houses is a fine glass dome. The collection of orchids was largely the outcome of Lady Rosebery's interest in the quaintest of flowers, whilst a large number of Indian plants remind one of the visit Lord Rosebery paid to our great Dependency a few years ago. The orchards are hardly less remarkable. In some



MENTMORE VILLAGE.—COTTAGES BUILT BY LADY ROSEBERY.



MENTMORE TOWERS

(From a photograph by W. F. Piggott, Leighton Buzzard.)

seasons more apples and pears to the acre have been grown at Mentmore than anywhere else in the country.

The two favourite spots of Lady Rosebery—the dairy and the aviary—have been kept as they were in her ladyship's lifetime. The latter is pleasantly situated, close to the gardener's old-fashioned house and in the midst of richly-tinted foliage. The rare and the curious in bird-life always had a great fascination for Lady Rosebery, and she gathered here some of the most beautiful and wonderful specimens from all parts of the world. In Lady Rosebery's affections birds had the same place as horses in those of her father and her husband. One of the most curious features, by the way, of the park is a bronze statue of the late Baron's favourite thorough-bred, "King Tom," which stands in the carriage drive quite near the house. The statue, which is life-size, was the work of Sir Edgar Boehm, and cost £1,500. The dairy is a pretty little building of Elizabethan architecture; it has small three-cornered windows, and is protected from the sun by the foliage of some old trees, as well as by a verandah covered with honeysuckle and wild roses. The room in which Lady Rosebery was accustomed to serve fruit and cream to her friends on a summer afternoon is a

delightful surprise. The walls are of terra-cotta mosaic, the floor of tessellated stones partly covered by Oriental rugs, and in the centre there is a marble fountain. On two or three dainty tables there are tea-services of Dresden and other ware, as well as some beautiful vases filled with flowers of delicate scent. A few light easy-chairs and a number of medals and silver cups—prizes won by the produce of the dairy at various exhibitions—complete the furnishing of what ladies visiting Mentmore were accustomed to find a charming retreat from the heat and glare of the day.

The dairy is small compared with the size of the dairy farm at Mentmore, which is one of the largest even in the land of milk and butter about Aylesbury. Practically the whole of the milk of about 120 cows is sent daily to London, Lord Rosebery having a large depot at Notting Hill, from which it is distributed over the West End. Altogether, Lord Rosebery farms about 1,400 acres of his own land at Mentmore, all but 200 acres being pasture. There are about 300 cattle, about a thousand sheep, and several score of horses on this land. The farm and its method of management is an object of great interest to the tenants on the estate, to many of whom it has given valuable hints in agricultural science. The late Baron Rothschild provided the farm

with a water-supply which is practically inexhaustible, and during periods of drought Lord Rosebery has given permission to his farming neighbours to make free use of the Mentmore waterworks.

The village of Mentmore is grouped round a triangular piece of grass-land, which was evidently at one time the village green. It is now enclosed, and at one end there is a well-built school-house; but it is apparently put to no other use than as a playground for

was Miss Hannah Rothschild, and had sole charge of the estate. They are of red brick, having two storeys, gabled roofs, and latticed windows; their walls are largely covered with ivy and other climbing plants, and the large gardens are well stocked with flowers, fruit, and vegetables. The village church is about two hundred yards away, on the fringe of Lord Rosebery's park, from which it has a separate entrance. But this building, which is quite modern, with its bare grey walls and



LORD ROSEBERY'S TOWN HOUSE.

the school children. In one corner of this triangular collection of cottages, which are close to the principal entrance to Mentmore Towers, is the "Stag" Inn, by far the oldest building in the village. This old inn, with its low ceilings, stone floors, and cracked walls, is in marked contrast, indeed, to the comparatively new habitations which the late Lady Rosebery had built for the villagers when she

plain windows, does not make an attractive picture.

At Epsom Lord Rosebery has not the same status as landed proprietor which he enjoys at Mentmore and Dalmeny; his ownership of the soil there is confined to the meadows which surround his house. But personally his lordship is as popular in the little Surrey town as in Bucks or the Lothians; and this



THE DURDANS, EPSOM.

popularity, it need hardly be said, was largely augmented by the double victory of his horse "Ladas," a couple of years ago. Such was the popular feeling, indeed, at the time, that in the enthusiasm of the moment an innkeeper changed the name—"The Fox," I believe it was—which his hostelry had borne for many years in favour of "The Ladas." The ex-Premier, it may be added, showed his appreciation of the feeling which prompted the act by sending to the innkeeper, with his compliments, a photographic copy of Mr. Adams' picture of the distinguished racer.

"The Ladas" Inn is a few hundred yards from "The Durdans," on the road from the town to the Downs. "The Durdans" stands back only 50 yards or so from the road, and across meadows at times beautiful with buttercups and snowdrops is in full view of the passer-by. But, except at race-times, there is little traffic along this narrow, and very often muddy, lane; and, although so close to the town, "The Durdans" has, generally speaking, as much quietude and seclusion as even a tired statesman could desire. The house, with its dull red bricks and plain solidity, is suggestive of the end-of-last-century style. It is just such an old-fashioned country house as may be seen on any day's

drive out of London; and there is nothing about it to attract much attention, unless it be the extraordinary vigour with which the ivy has almost completely covered the walls. There is something distinctive, however, about the high railings and big gates of finely-wrought iron, bearing Lord Rosebery's crest and monogram, which stand between the meadow and the roadway. It was apparently Lord Rosebery's intention at one time to have an entrance-hall and carriage-drive in the front of the house; as it is, the gates open—if they ever open—on to a fine piece of pasture, which a small flock of sheep are occasionally permitted to enjoy, and the visitors to "The Durdans" make their way between two substantial brick pillars to an old-fashioned doorway at the side of the house.

Quite close to the mansion are the quarters for the horses, which give it its chief *raison d'être*, and which occupy about as much ground. There are twelve separate stalls for the animals Lord Rosebery may have in training on the Downs, each forming a separate little building of brick-work and wood, besides a large ivy-covered structure, of a shape rather resembling a chapel, where driving-horses and vehicles are housed.