V.

NOTICE OF THE TESTAMENT DATIVE OF SIR PETER YOUNG, KNT. OF SEATON, DATED 1628; WITH SOME REMARKS ON THE STATE OF SCOTTISH AGRICULTURE AT THAT PERIOD. BY HUGH W. YOUNG, F.S.A. Scot.

While searching for information regarding Sir Peter Young of Seaton, tutor to King James the Sixth of Scotland, I met with the Testament Dative and Inventory of his "guides geir and dettis," a document which throws a flood of light upon the value of agricultural subjects early in the seventeenth century. Sir Peter Young had at his death a considerable amount of land in his own hands, and farmed pretty extensively, considering the size of his estate. His Testament Dative (of which a copy is annexed to this paper), besides showing the value of wheat and oats, bear and peas, horses and cattle, &c., also gives the wages of the servants he employed, male and female, in the year 1628. The prices and payments are all in Scots money, but by valuing one pound Scots then as equal to one pound sterling of our present money, we will come pretty near the true relative values.

Accepting this as a guide, it will appear that the value of agricultural produce has not undergone much change. Young oxen fit for the plough are valued at twenty-two pounds, old oxen at thirteen pounds, and "three year auld stottis and quoyes" at twelve pounds each. Horses, again, are very high priced, and there are not many tenants or proprietors nowadays who use horses of a similar relative value. The four coach horses are valued at two hundred pounds each; one young mare at sixty-six pounds; and "ane meir with ane foill" at one hundred and thirty-three pounds. The farm horses are put down at the average price of twenty-six pounds each. The sheep stock are valued at a sum very similar to what is the present price of fairly good sheep. The yeld sheep, that is the wethers and gimmers, are put down at forty shillings each; while the hogs, or lambs of the previous year, are valued at twenty shillings a head.

The prices put upon the grain appear to be very high, and unless the

year 1627-8 was a very bad or late year, of which the estimates give no indication, the prices, especially of wheat, point to a state of great prosperity in Scotland at that time. The oats are valued at 66 shillings per boll, the wheat at 133 shillings per boll, the bear at 96 shillings per boll, and the peas at 94 shillings per boll. These prices of course include the fodder and straw; but still they are very high, and show that agriculture was then in a most flourishing state. It does not appear how these prices were struck, as there were no regular Fiars Courts held at that time. Our present Fiars Courts are regulated by an Act of Sederunt dated 1723. It is said, however, that flars prices were struck in the county of Haddington as early as 1627, and in some of the other Scottish counties in the end of the sixteenth century. Some sort of Fiars Court was probably held in Forfarshire at this period, to regulate prices of grain, and the above figures may be safely taken as true value.

One statement in the Inventory also shows the returns of the wheat crop to be about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  that of the seed sown, from which it would appear that Sir Peter must have farmed in advance of his time; three returns being often considered a fair crop for good land.

Ten bolls of wheat sown are estimated to produce 42 bolls of crop, but these estimates were usually under the mark, and it will be pretty safe to make the crop 45 bolls, or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  returns.

The lands of Easter Seaton are of good quality, and the exposure is to the south-east, full in the face of the sun and the sea, and the lands are still considered to be above the average of arable land in Scotland. The situation, as regards climate and soil, is not unlike the lands about Banff; and in 1683 we find the Laird of Troup writing as follows:—
"In our best outfields if we reap the fourth or fifth corn we are satisfied. Yea, the third is very well thought of." He adds, "the only universal grains of this countrie are bear and oats; any other are of little use with us." From this it appears that the best outfields near Banff would only average four returns of the seed sown for the easily raised crops of bear and oats; no doubt, the exposure is colder, and to the north, but to get a yield of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  returns of wheat would require farming and manuring of a higher order than ordinary in these times.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Scotch boll was 6 bushels.

In 1618, a few years before the date of Sir Peter Young's death, I find that Taylor, the water poet, says in his *Penniless Pilgrimage*, that Scotland was full of cattle and corn, and that the farming was equal to English farming,

"In great abundance plenty—'Twixt it and England little odds I see."

Taylor also says, that he was credibly informed that in that year (1618) the grain shipped from the port of Leith for foreign parts, amounted to no less than 80,000 bolls of wheat, oats, and barley, of four English bushels to the boll, and adds, "which makes me wonder that a kingdom so populous should nevertheless sell so much bread corn beyond the seas, and yet to have more than sufficient for themselves." This is an enormous quantity of home-grown grain to be shipped from Leith alone, but Taylor is an honest and trustworthy authority, who always did his best to be accurate.

That the farming at Easter Seaton was of a high order is proved also by the fact that Sir Peter Young used harrows made of *iron*. Iron harrows before the end of last century were, I should think, almost unknown in Scotland, and yet we find in the Inventory, "Item sevin pair of irone harrowis, five cairts and waines, &c., price forty pounds." It is probable that Sir Peter, who had been much abroad in Italy, Denmark, and Germany, had introduced many of the improvements he had seen in foreign agriculture, and that the "irone harrowis" were of these.

The next point of interest in connection with the farming of this period is the wages paid to the servants. The sums due to them are mentioned, but not the length of time for which service was to be paid. There is little doubt, however, that the wages due were in most cases for one year's service, from Whitsunday to Whitsunday; but a few of the smaller sums would likely be for outworkers, paid by the day or month. It appears that the highest paid man (likely the overseer or grieve) had sixty pounds, besides which he would be allowed meal, fuel, and milk, or a piece of land. The next two men had forty pounds, and, of course, their food or perquisites; this was invariably given to

farm or body servants at that time, and is so still. For the rest of the wages due it is difficult to fix the length of time served, as the sums owing are so irregular. It is likely, however, that the sums of twenty pounds are due to the female servants for one year's wages, and that the smaller amounts are for various shorter periods. It is evident from the exact division of the money, that "David Dalgettie" received the wages, for half the time served by "Gilbert Paterson," whatever period that was.

There is a sum of money owing to the creelman, which shows that the fuel used at that time was peats; the creels being used for carrying the peats out of the moss. A considerable sum is also due to the candlemaker, and a sum of thirty-six pounds for "schone," the master having to find the servants in shoes.

The rents of the farms belonging to Sir Peter Young were all paid in grain. Grain rents were general in Scotland at that period, and down to a recent date; but how the value of the crop was fixed, or what the proportion paid to the laird was, does not appear.

It is probable, as I have suggested elsewhere, that some kind of a Fiars Court was then in existence.

In concluding these few remarks, one can only wish that the information given in this Inventory was more full and complete. What strikes one most on reading this document, is the great prosperity which Scottish agriculture experienced at this period, and with agriculture certainly the whole country prospered. Scotland was, it is evident, fast recovering from the throes of the Reformation, and progressing even then to a great future, when the civil wars of Montrose and Cromwell struck her down; and the later persecutions of the Stewarts brought the whole land to the verge of ruin.

It is doubtful if Scotland was ever again in as healthy and flourishing a state as it was in 1628, until long after the battle of Culloden, in fact till the very end of the eighteenth century.

The Testament Dative and Inventurie of the guidis geir and dettis of vmquhill ane honorabill man Sir Piter Zoung of Seattoun Knicht Lord elimosinar to his Majestie the tyme of his deceis quha deceissit in the plaice of Seattoun within the parochine of Sanct Vigiane and Schirreffdome of Forfare vpon the sevint day of Januar the yeir of God jmvjc tuentie aucht yeires ffaithfullie maid and given vpe be Michaell Anna and Marjorie Zoungis lawfull bairnes executoris datives decernit to their said vmquhill father be decreit of my lord commissar of Sanct Androis the xxiiij day of October the yeir of God jmvjc tuentie aucht yeires

In the ffirst the said defunct the tyme of his deceis foirsaid had the guidis and geir following of the pryces and valoris efter specefeit viz vpone the landis and maines of Seattoun tuelffe young plewche oxin pryce of the peice overhead xxiilib Summa ijelxiiijlib Item sax auld oxin pryce of the peice overhead xiijlib vjs viijd Summa lxxxlib Item four cotch hors pryce of the peice overhead ije lib Summa viije lib Item ane gray beld cuirser naig pryce lib Item ane young meir pryce lxvjlib xiijs iiijd Item ane meir with ane foill pryce jexxxiijlib vjs viijd Item sawin vpone the saidis landis of Seattoun ten bollis tua firlottis quhyte estimat to the feird curne extending to xlij bollis quhyte pryce of the boll corne and fodder vjlib xiijs iiijd Summa ijclxxxlib Item in the barne and barne yaird of Seattoun xxxj bollis tua firlottis quhyte pryce of the boll vjlib xiijs iiijd Summa ijcxlib Item mair thair xiij bollis tua firlottis peis pryce of the boll come and fodder iiijlib xiijs iiijd Summa lxiijlib Item lxix bollis beir pryce of the boll iiijlib xiijs iiijd Summa ijcxxijlib Item thretten scor ten bollis aittis pryce of the boll iijlib vjs viijd Summa ixclib Item ane cotche pryce iiijc lib Item sevin pair of irone harrowis fyve cairtis and waines and thrie plewis with thair ganging geir pryce of the haill xllib Item sawin in the law thrie bollis halffe boll quhyte estimat to the feird curne extending to xiiij bollis quhyte pryce of the boll corne and fodder vjlib xiijs iiijd Summa lxxxxiijlib vjs viijd Item standing in the barne and barne vaird of the law ten bollis halffe boll quhyte pryce of the boll vilib xiijs iiijd Summa lxxlib Item mair threttie sex bollis beir pryce of the boll corne and fodder iiijlib xiijs iiijd Summa jelxviijlib Item of peis and benis nyne bollis pryce of the boll iiijlib xiijs iiijd Summa xllib Item of aittis sevin scor threttein bollis pryce of the boll iijlib vis viijd Summa vcxlib Item vpone the landis and maines of Arbeikie threttie twa young pleuch oxin pryce of the peice xxijlib Summa vjeiijlib Item thair ellevin auld oxin pryce of the peice xiiijlib vjs viijd Summa jexlvjiib xiijs iiijd Item sex ky with calffis pryce of the peice overhead xxlib Summa jexxlib Item thrie thrie yeir auld stottis and quoyes pryce of the peice xijlib Summa xxxvjlib Item tua tua yeir auld stottis pryce of the peice xlib Summa xxlib Item ane quoy of tua yeir auld pryce xlib Item four

yeirling stottis and quoyes pryce of the peice vjlib xiijs iiijd Summa xxvjlib xiijs iiijd Item ane bull pryce xxlib Item four scor seventein yeld scheip pryce of the peice xl<sup>8</sup> Summa j<sup>c</sup>lxxxxiiijlib Item threttie hoggis pryce of the peice xx<sup>8</sup> Summa xxx<sup>lib</sup> Item sax hors and mearis pryce of the peice overhead xxvjlib xiijs iiijd Summa jelxlib Item mair in the barne and barne vaird of Arbeikie tuentie four bollis quhyte pryce of the boll vilib xiijs iiijd. Summa jclxlib Item mair in the barne and barne yaird nyne bollis peis pryce of the boll iiilib xiijs iiijd Summa xlijlib Item thair tuentie scor bollis aittis pryce of the boll iijlib vjs viijd Summa jmiijcxxxiijlib vjs viijd Item mair four scor sextein bollis beir pryce of the boll corne and fodder iiijlib xiiis iiijd Summa iiij°xlviijlib Item four pair of harrowis twa cairts and thrie gangand plewis pryce xxxlib Item ane rubie ring ane aggat breslet sum golden hornes and pearlis all estimat to lxvjlib xiijs iiijd Item of jewells and goldsmyth wark tuelffe medallis of gold quhairof thair is ane sett with stanes estimat to iiijclxvjlib xiijs iiid Item ane vther sett with stanes estimat to ijexxxiijlib vjs viijd Item the vther ten weyand ane vnce and ane halffe vnce wecht of gold ilk peice pryce of the vnce xllib Summa lxlib ilk peice and in haill vje lib Item sextein pund wecht of silverwark pairtlie gilt and pairtlie partiall gilt pryce of the vnce iijlib Summa vijclxviijlib Item ane pair of gold breislettis pryce xllib Item ane great gold ring sett with threttein diamonds pryce thairof viclxvilib xiiis iiiid Item the defunctes haill buikis by and attour his majesteis buikis estimat to ijm lib Item of purs penes tuellffe portingall duicattis pryce of the peice lib Summa vic lib Item in the defunctis purs tua dubill angellis at xxvjlib xiijs iiijd Tua sextein mark peices is xxjlib vjs viijd twa vngaris dewcattis estimat baith to ixlib vjs viijd fyve fyve mark pices estimat to xvjlib xiijs iiijd Ane seall ring worth xiijlib vjs viijd Item ane silver key with ane silver stampt weyand ane vnce wecht estimat to iiilib Item of money intromittit with Marjorie Nairne relict of the defunct lxvilib xiijs iiijd Item ane mwntar pryce lxvjlib xiijs iiijd Item in vtenceill and domeceill with the abuilzement of the defunctis bodie estimat to jmiiicxxxiiilib vis viijd

Summa of the Inventarie xiij $^m$ vij $^c$ lxxj $^{lib}$  vj $^s$  viij $^d$ 

## Dettis awand to the deid.

In the ffirst be James Hepburne in the law of ferme maill crope 1627 yeires sextein bollis pryce of the boll vlib Summa lxxxlib Item be John and David Chrysteis in Aberbrothok sextein bollis beir pryce of the boll vlib vjs vijjd Summa lxxxvlib vjs viijd Item be Andro Arnott in Halkhill crope 1627 sex chalder wictuall thairof four bollis quhyte and the rest tua pairt maill and third pairt beir pryce of the boll quhyte vjlib xiijs iiijd pryce of the boll meill and beir overhead vlib vjs viijd Summa iiijclxxxxiijlib vjs viijd Item be James Young in Newtoun in the barne of Lwnan for his fermes crope 1627 sex chalder wictuall thairof four bollis quhyte and the rest tua pairt meill and

third pairt beir pryces respective foirsaidis Summa iiijelxxxxiijlib vjs viijd Item be Johnne Dureis in Dunbarnet for his fermes crope foirsaid thrie chalderis wictuall tua pairt maill and third pairt beir pryces respective foirsaidis Summa ijelvjiib Item be my lord of Garleis and his cautioneris im lib money principall with tua yeires annwell thairof preciding the defunts deceis extending to ijelib Item be Sir Walter Stewart of Minto Knicht and his cautioneris jmiije xxxiijlib vjs viijd Item be . . . . Durhame of Duntarvie je lib Item be my lord of Marre of bygaine few dewteis of the lordschip of Torphichen iijeilib Item be Walter Arnott in Scottistoun iijevilib xiijs iiijd Item be my lord Carnegie for the few dewtie of Glaster and Carnegie crope 1626 and 1627 yeires yeirlie lxxviijlib Summa jelvjlib Item be Johnne Smyth in Methie auchtein bollis wictuall crope 1627 tua pairt meill and thrie pairt beir pryces respective foirsaidis Summa lxxxxvilib Item be David Mitchelsone for his fermes crope foirsaid threttie four bollis wictuall tua pairt maill and third pairt beir pryces respective foirsaidis Summa jelxxxilib vjs viijd Item be Thomas Fowlar thair threttie four bollis wictuall tua pairt maill and third pairt beir for his fermes the said crope pryces respective foirsaidis Summa iclxxxilib vjs viijd Item mair be him of bygones tuelffe bollis wictuall yeirlie crope 1625 and 1626 yeires pryces foirsaidis Summa lyiiijlid.

Summa of the saidis dettis . v<sup>m</sup>iiij<sup>c</sup>xxvj<sup>lib</sup> xiij<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup> Summa of the Inventarie and dettis xxj<sup>m</sup>ij<sup>c</sup>lxxxxviiij<sup>lib</sup>

## Dettis awand be the dead.

In the ffirst to Alexander Petrie serveand of fie lxlib. Item to William Hodgstoun xlib Item to Henrie Petrie of fie xlib Item to James Clark of fie xiiilib vis viijd Item to Gilbert Patersone of fie xiiilib vis viijd Item to David Dalgetie of fie vjlib xiijs iiijd Item to Matild Cant of fie xxlib Item to Helene Durward of fie xxlib Item to Agnes Bowman vlib vjs viijd Item to Beigis Robertsone of fie vilib Item to Euphame Lindesay of fie vilib xiijs iiijd Item to Issobell Myln of fie xxjlib vjs viijd Item for fyve zewckis fies xxiijlib vis viiid Item to the chamberlane of Aberbrothok for the few dewteis of the Law crope 1627 lxxxvjlib vjs viijd Item to Issobell Blair serveand of fie xllib Item to Alexander Lyndesay of fie xlib Item to Maister Silvester Lambie minister at Glames of teind the said yeir vlib vjs viijd Item to Maister James Rait minister at Maines of teynd vlib vjs viijd Item to the aires and executouris of vmquhill Doctor Henrie Philpe minister at Aberbrothok xxxvijlik vis viijd of teynd Item to Maister James Philpe minister Lwnan furth of the teindis of Arbeikie the said yeir for his stipend twelffe bollis maill and sex bollis beir pryce of the boll overhead vlib vjs viijd Summa lxxxxvjlib Item to him of small teynd viijlib Item to Alexander Watson merchand burges of Dundie for merchandise velxxviijlib xviijs vjd Item to William Buchane merchand burges of Aberbrothok vexlib vis ijd Item to Alexander

Sinyth merchand burges of Dundie ij°xliijlib Item to Marione Guidlad lxxxlib Item to . . . . . and Robert Murray hir spous j°xxlib Item to Williame Saidlar xvjlib Item to . . . . . spous to Williame Galloway xxxlib Item to Marione Fyffe xxxlib vjs viijd Item to Johne Rany cordiner in Aberbrothok j°xlvjlib xiijs iiijd Item mair to him for schoone xxxiijlib Item to . . . . . spous to Maister Patrik Carnegie xxjlib Item to Andro Wood xxxlib Item to David Symsone alias Scho candlemaker xviijlib xiijs iiijd Item to James Litiljohn vjlib xiijs iiijd Item to Johnne Ogilvie in Montrois xxxiijlib vjs viijd Item to Alexander Scott in Vlischheawin xiiijlib xiijs iiijd Item to Margaret Wallintyne vlib xiijs iiijd Item to Robert Stremar in Montrois xiiijlib xiijs iiijd Item to James Scott creilman vijlib vjs viijd.

This present Inventarie and Testament befoire wreattin togidder with the executoris thairin aboue constituite is confirmit vpone the tuentie sext day of November the yeir of God j<sup>m</sup>vj<sup>c</sup>xxviij yeires. The said Michaell Young ane of the executoris aboue wreattin for himseffe maid faith etc. As also the said Anna Young ane vther of the saidis executoris for hir selffe and in name of Marjorie Young and hir sister ane vther of the executoris being minor siclyke maid faith etc. And David Lyndesay of Kynnetles and Maister Thomas Lyoun of Cossinnes be thair band produceit ar becume cawtioneris conjunctlie for the said Michaell Young ane of the saidis executoris and James Maister of Calwill and David Boisuall appeirand of Balmwtto ar becume cawtioneris conjunctlie for the saidis Anna and Marjorie Youngis the vther tua executoris. That the haill guidis and geir contenit in this aboue wreattin testament salbe saiff and furth cumand to all perteis havand interest thairto as law will.