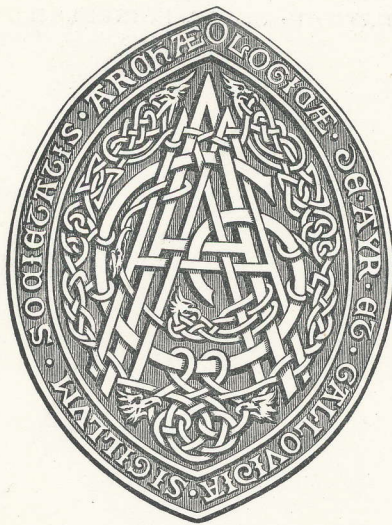


ARCHÆOLOGICAL
AND
HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS
RELATING TO
AYRSHIRE & GALLOWAY

VOL. VI.



EDINBURGH
PRINTED FOR THE AYRSHIRE AND GALLOWAY ARCHÆOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

MDCCCLXXXIX

1889

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NOTE

THE Plates to illustrate Mr. DOBIE'S paper on "The Skelmorlie Aisle and Monuments at Largs" (No. VII.), viz., '*Exterior View of Skelmorlie Aisle*,' '*Details of Monument*,' '*Monument of the Boyles of Kelburn and the Brisbane Vault*,' will be given in a future Volume, as the artist has unfortunately been unable to finish them in time for the present issue.

July 9th, 1889.

VII.

THE SKELMORLIE AISLE AND MONUMENTS AT LARGS.¹

THE Skelmorlie Aisle is the only relic, except the fragment to be hereafter mentioned, now remaining of the old church of Largs. It was erected in 1636 by Sir Robert Montgomerie of Skelmorlie, first baronet, to contain the burial-place and monument of himself and his wife Dame Margaret Douglas. The style of the monument, and the painted ornaments of the aisle, as presenting rare and valuable specimens of monumental architecture and the ornamental style of the early part of the seventeenth century, are subjects of no common interest to those conversant with these departments of the arts; yet, so far as we are aware, the only previous notices of them are the brief account given by Robertson,² and that in the old *Statistical Account* from which it is chiefly taken.³ It will therefore, we trust, be gratifying to all who take interest in such subjects that a description of them should be placed on record before they sustain even graver injuries than they have already suffered from the "deliberate malice" of time.

As the adornments of the aisle and monument include, in several places, the armorials indicating the respective descents of Sir Robert and his lady, it will be well to premise briefly the following genealogical particulars. Sir Robert was the son of Robert Montgomerie of Skelmorlie, a descendant of Alexander, first Lord Montgomerie, the ancestor of the Earls of Eglinton, by his wife Dorothea, daughter of Robert, third Lord Semple. Dame Margaret his wife was daughter of Sir William Douglas of Drumlanrig,

¹ From *The Parish Churches and Burying-Grounds of Ayrshire*: by William Dobie: Glasgow, 1847 (only 50 copies printed). The volume contains the accounts of Ardrossan and Largs

only; and the publication extended no further.

² *Description of Cuninghame*, p. 79; and *Ayrshire Families*, ii. 329.

³ Sinclair's *Statistical Account*, vol. xvii. p. 513.

ancestor of the Marquesses of Queensberry, who was descended from James Earl of Douglas and Mar, slain at the battle of Otterburn in 1388. Sir William's mother was Christian Montgomerie, sister of Hugh, third Earl of Eglinton; and his wife, Dame Margaret's mother, was Margaret, daughter of Sir James Gordon of Lochinvar, ancestor of the Viscounts of Kenmure.

The aisle stands north and south, having been united to the body of the church at its southern end.¹ It is built both outside and inside of chiselled freestone, and measures over the walls 34 feet 10 inches by 22 feet. It is covered by a deep roof; the south gable being surmounted by a thistle, and the other by a fleur-de-lis.² The interior is lighted, in the north gable, by a large equilateral arched window, divided by a strong mullion into two trefoil-headed lights, with a small circular aperture between the heads; in each of the side walls, by two windows of ordinary form; and, since the removal of the church, by another in the south gable. The entrance door, the moderate height of which, measuring about 5 feet 3 inches, is characteristic of the architecture of the country at the period of its construction, is in the west side of the building.³ It is ornamented with a moulded architrave, and finished with an ogee arch, ensigned with a fleur-de-lis. Above the door, on a panel enclosed with mouldings, are, very neatly insculped and but little injured by the weather, the quartered armorials of Montgomerie and Eglinton, impaled with Douglas and Mar. The shield is timbred with helmet and mantlings, and beneath the latter are bunches of fruit, pendant. For crest, an anchor; and on an escroll is the motto "The Lord is only my support."⁴ On an ornamental compartment underneath the shield are the words "Only to God be laud and gloir,"⁵ with the initials and date R. M. S. D. 1636. M. D.

The aisle within is lofty, the roof, embowed or vaulted semicircularly with boarding, rising to a height of nearly 20 feet. The ceiling is thrown by painted Gothic arches, mouldings, and panels, into forty-one compartments, of various forms and dimensions, each of which is adorned by the pencil with a religious, moral, emblematical, fanciful, or heraldic subject.⁶ It is divided longitudinally into four main portions, or strips, by means of

¹ *Ayle*. An inclosed and covered burial-place, adjoining to a church, though not forming part of it.—Jamieson, *Scottish Dictionary*.

² Plate VIII. Fig. 1. ³ Plate VIII. Fig. 2.

⁴ Psalm xxiii. 1. Old version.

⁵ This line occurs in Lyndesay's *Monarchie*, l. 4322.

⁶ Plate IX.

painted mouldings extending along the entire length of the building. The central moulding is interrupted by three panels placed along it at equal intervals, that in the centre being hexagonal, the others of a diamond form. The central panel is occupied with the emblazoned coats of Montgomerie and Douglas, quartered and impaled as over the door, and ornamented *secundum artem* with all the exterior accompaniments of the shield. The family motto "Garde bien" is here resumed, and on a compartment is inscribed, in gilt letters on a blue ground, "Sir Robert Montgomerie;" "Dam. Margaret Douglas." Appended to the achievement is a small cartouche bearing in gilt characters the date "Año 1638," now scarcely legible. In the northern panel are four shields bearing, as is intimated in gilt letters beneath them, the heraldic honours of "*The House of Eglintoune*," "*The House of Dumlandrig*," "*The House of Lochinvar*," and "*The House of Sempill*." These symbols of family distinction are garnished with helmets, crests, and mantlings, but without their mottoes, and are placed opposite each other in the order in which they are here written. The southern panel contains only one shield, blank or argent, but ensigned with an open helmet, full-faced and ornamented with mantlings. The remaining space in the two upper portions of the ceiling is distributed into eight compartments of somewhat irregular form and unequal dimensions, each of the four adjoining the end walls being equal to the half of one of those which intervene between them. These compartments are richly decorated with singularly fanciful compositions, a general account of which is all that can here be attempted, with the observation, that in character they much resemble the head-pieces with which books of the period were commonly ornamented, and may probably have been copied from such a pattern.¹ In the southern large compartment on the west side is represented the Fall of Man. The Tree of Knowledge appears in the centre, in full bearing, with the serpent entwined round the stem, and on either side Adam and Eve hastening to the tree, and eagerly reaching towards the forbidden fruit. Behind Adam is a turkey-cock, and behind Eve a peacock; the tails displayed. In the corresponding compartment on the east side, now much obliterated, are two figures seated opposite each other, and joining hands over a three-legged vessel which stands between them. One of these has dark hair and beard, and a dog on the seat beside it; the other is fair and beardless, and on the seat behind it is a sheep. In the lower corners

¹ See, for example, the head-piece at the beginning of Holland's *Pliny*, 1601.

of the compartment are a dark-haired huntsman with horn and spear, and two dogs, chasing a stag, and a fair husbandman ploughing with a yoke of oxen. It has been supposed that this composition refers to the history of Jacob and Esau. The same design is repeated in the two half-compartments adjoining the north wall, being divided between them in a very awkward manner, one half on either side. In the northern large compartment on the west side the middle portion is occupied by a panel or frame, on either side of which is a man in a contemplative posture below, and a youthful figure above. Within the frame is an oval medallion containing the figure of Fortitude, depicted as a female bearing on her shoulder a column. In the left foreground may be made out the artist's signature, "*Stalker fecit.*" Beneath is a tablet inscribed with the following couplet, in italic characters:

*Fortis in adversis animosaque pe[ctora] gestans
Infractis animis ardua queque f[ero].¹*

In the corresponding compartment on the eastern side the composition is similar, but the figure in the medallion is that of Justice, bearing in her right hand the sword and in her left the scales. The couplet beneath, when entire, probably ran as follows:—

*C[uique] su]um justo pensans libramine reddo,
[Con]cilioque homines concilioque Deos.¹*

In the two compartments ending the ceiling to the south, the same general design as in those last described is again repeated, but is divided, as at the north end, between the two sides, one half of a medallion appearing in each. That on the west side, however, is so completely effaced that no trace remains of what it contained; that opposite bears a hand carrying a sword erect. The following patriotic couplet beneath is likewise halved between the opposite compartments:—on the west side:—

[FOR] W[ARR]E OR WORKE WE
THIS HANDE SHOULD ARME.²

and on the east side:—

THAT TO DEFENDE [OUR]
COUNTRIE DEARE FRO[M HARME].³

¹ The portions of the inscriptions within brackets are now effaced, and are here restored by conjecture.

² Forty years ago these inscriptions were almost entire.

³ So in the description of the Winchester *Trusty Servant*:—

Loaded his left hand apt to labour saith;
Girt with his sword, his shield upon his arm,
Himself and master he'll protect from harm.

The lower portions of the ceiling on either side are divided each into three oblong compartments, within each of which is delineated a large pointed arch. In the spandrils of the arches are depicted the signs of the Zodiac in order, beginning at the south-west corner. Within the arches are six large landscapes, of which those adjoining the corners of the building are inscribed, in order as above, "Ver," "Aestas," "Autumnus," and "Hyems," and represent scenes suitable to the several seasons, *e.g.* fishing, hunting, and ploughing, sheep-washing and mowing, reaping, and skating. "Aestas" contains a castle with a large square tower, surmounted by four pinnacles, with flags flying, the whole surrounded by an enclosing wall; also a representation of the old church of Largs, with the Skelmorlie aisle very faithfully rendered. There is however no attempt to reproduce the natural features of the locality. The middle arch on the west side contains a sea and coast view, with a city, a jetty on piles, and shipping flying the Scottish flag. In the foreground is a lady richly apparelled, with a crescent above her head-dress, kneeling on the shore, and holding in her right hand a vessel containing burning perfumes; fishes and sea-monsters are sporting near her. The opposite arch on the east side presents a landscape with a Scottish mansion-house, and in the foreground a lady in an attitude of surprise, looking at a horse without saddle or bridle which gallops past her. Below the horse appears the name of the artist, "*I. Stalker*;" the word "*fecit*," and date "1638," formerly visible below the name, being now almost illegible. These two paintings are doubtless intended as allegorical compositions.¹

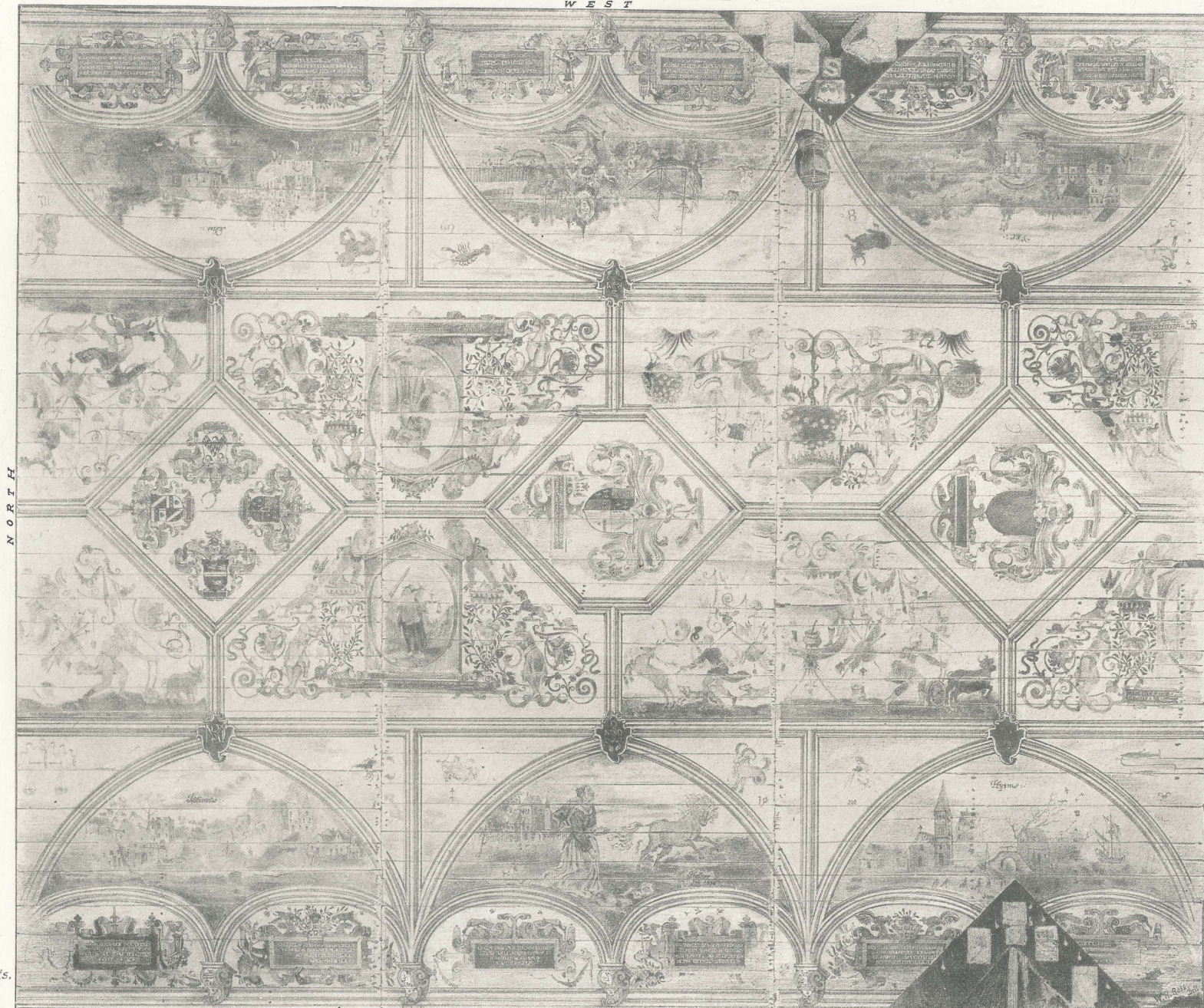
Along the lower extremity or spring of the vault, below the landscapes above described, are twelve flat-arched compartments, two within each of the large arches. They contain twelve oblong tablets, surrounded with wreaths of foliage, scroll-work, and drapery of varied designs, garlands of flowers, corbeils of fruit, birds, butterflies, etc., in their natural tints.

¹ In the old *Statistical Account of Scotland* (vol. xvii. p. 513) it is said that the paintings on the roof include "several views of the house of Skelmorly, with the premature death of a lady of the family, who was killed by the kick of a horse." The tradition of such an event probably arose from a mistaken interpretation of the picture last described. There would appear to be now no sufficient means of verifying the

statement as to Skelmorlie Castle. Robertson, in his *Description of Cunninghame*, published in 1820, says (p. 76) "It is set down on the brink of the steep bank, . . . and is half hid with its turrets amid the plantations with which it is surrounded. It was built in 1502, and had an addition made to it in 1636," *i.e.* at the time of the erection of the aisle.

SKELMORLIE
WEST AISLE

Plate K.



Enlargement of
Shields on Brackets,
east side.

Enlargement of
Shields on Brackets,
west side.

DEVELOPED PLAN OF CEILING
AYR & GALLOWAY, ARCHT ASSOC^Y 1889.

Photogravure by Auman & Sons, Glasgow.

On each of these tablets a "holy text" is inscribed in golden characters on an azure ground. Beginning, as before, from the south-west corner, they are as follow :—

"Blessed are they that movrne, for they shall be comforted." Matth. 5. 4.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thiefe in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a noise." 2 Peter [3]. 10.

"He that hideth his sinns shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shal have mercie." Prover. 28. 13.

"Be thou faithfull unto the death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Rev. 2. 10.

"Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord God is strength for evermore." Isai. 26. 4.

"Blessed are the children that enlargeth the kingdom of heaven, and cursed are the children that enlargeth the kingdom of hell."

"The first man Adam was made a living soule, and the last Adam was made a quickning spirit." 1 Corin. 15. 45.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Psal. 116. 15.

"I am sure that my redeemer liveth, and he shall stand the last on the earth." Job 19. 25.

"Take heed to thy foot; when thou entrest into the house of God, & be more neere to heere then to give the sacrifice of fooles." Eccl. 4. 17.

"Come unto mee all yee that are weary and laden, and I will ease you." Math. 11. 28.

"I am God [almighty], walk before mee, and be thow upright." Gen. 17. 1.

These texts are from the Geneva Bible, which was that most generally in favour until gradually superseded by the translation of King James; and they are interesting as furnishing one of the latest examples of the use of the older version.¹ It appears strange that there is introduced amongst them one sentence which is not from Scripture. We have not been able to discover the source (if any) from which it is derived.

It remains to notice the highly finished painted brackets, or consoles, placed along the margin of each side of the vault,—the feigned supports of the series of arched compartments. On the faces of these are limned ten

¹ See Burton's *History of Scotland*, vol. vi. p. 396.

small escutcheons, or cartouches, bearing armorial devices.¹ The grounds, or fields, of these miniature shields being all argent, and the charges consisting of single figures in their natural colours, they have at first sight the appearance of inventions of decorative caprice, rather than of regular heraldic ensigns. They are however not due to the fancy of the artist, being the reputed shields of the Tribes of Israel, as set down, on the alleged authority of "the Hebrew Rabbines," by sundry writers on heraldry. The shields are given, almost exactly as in the aisle, in Speed's *Scripture Genealogies*, first published in 1592,² and also on the woodcut title-pages of many of the editions of the Bible printed by Robert Barker during the earlier part of the seventeenth century,³ most of them with the "Genealogies" inserted as part of the preliminary matter.⁴ There can be little doubt that the artist took the shields from one of these Bibles.⁵

The devices are founded on the Prophecy of Jacob, in Genesis xlix: supplemented, for Levi and Joseph, by the Blessing of Moses in Deuteronomy xxxiii.⁶ The artist, however, having positions for only ten shields,

¹ Plate IX.

² "The Genealogies recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, according to every Family and Tribe, with the line of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, observed from Adam to the Blessed Virgin Mary. By J. S." [John Speed the historian. See Fuller's *Worthies*, i. 190. Edition 1811.] These Genealogies were reprinted in Dublin, in 1837, as "by John Payne Morris Esq.," without any intimation of their previous existence, the ornamental cuts, including the shields, being reproduced as lithographs, in a modern style.

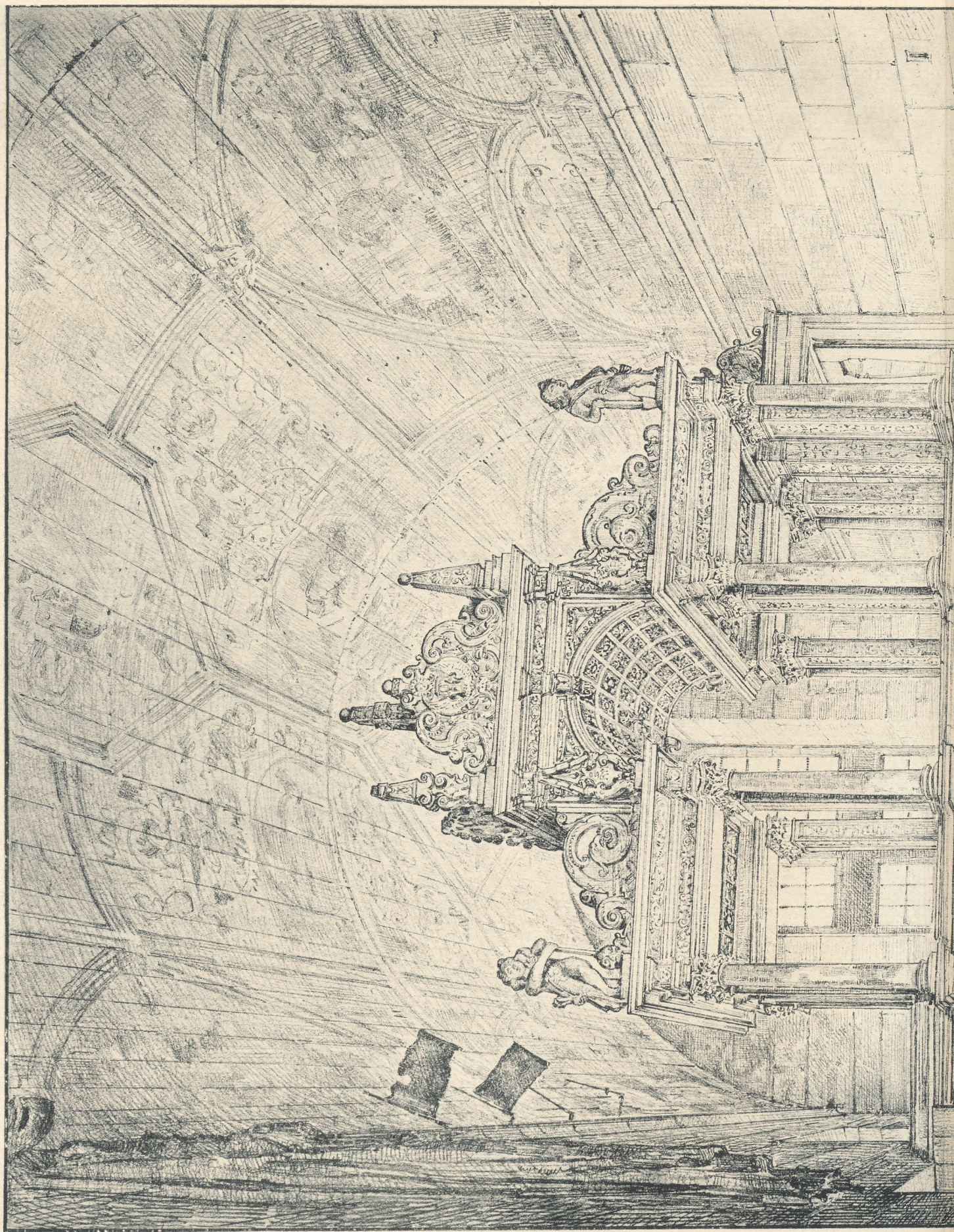
³ *E. g.* 1599, 4to (Geneva Version): 1601, 4to (Gen.): 1602, 4to (Gen.): 1602 fol. (Bishops': some copies have a different title-page): 1603, 4to (Gen.): 1606, 4to (Gen.): 1610, 4to (Gen.): 1611, fol. (Authorised Version, 1st edition, 2d issue): 1615, 4to (Gen.): 1617, fol. (A. v.): and subsequent years. The same title-page in the Bibles printed at Edinburgh by the King's printers, 1633 and 1637.

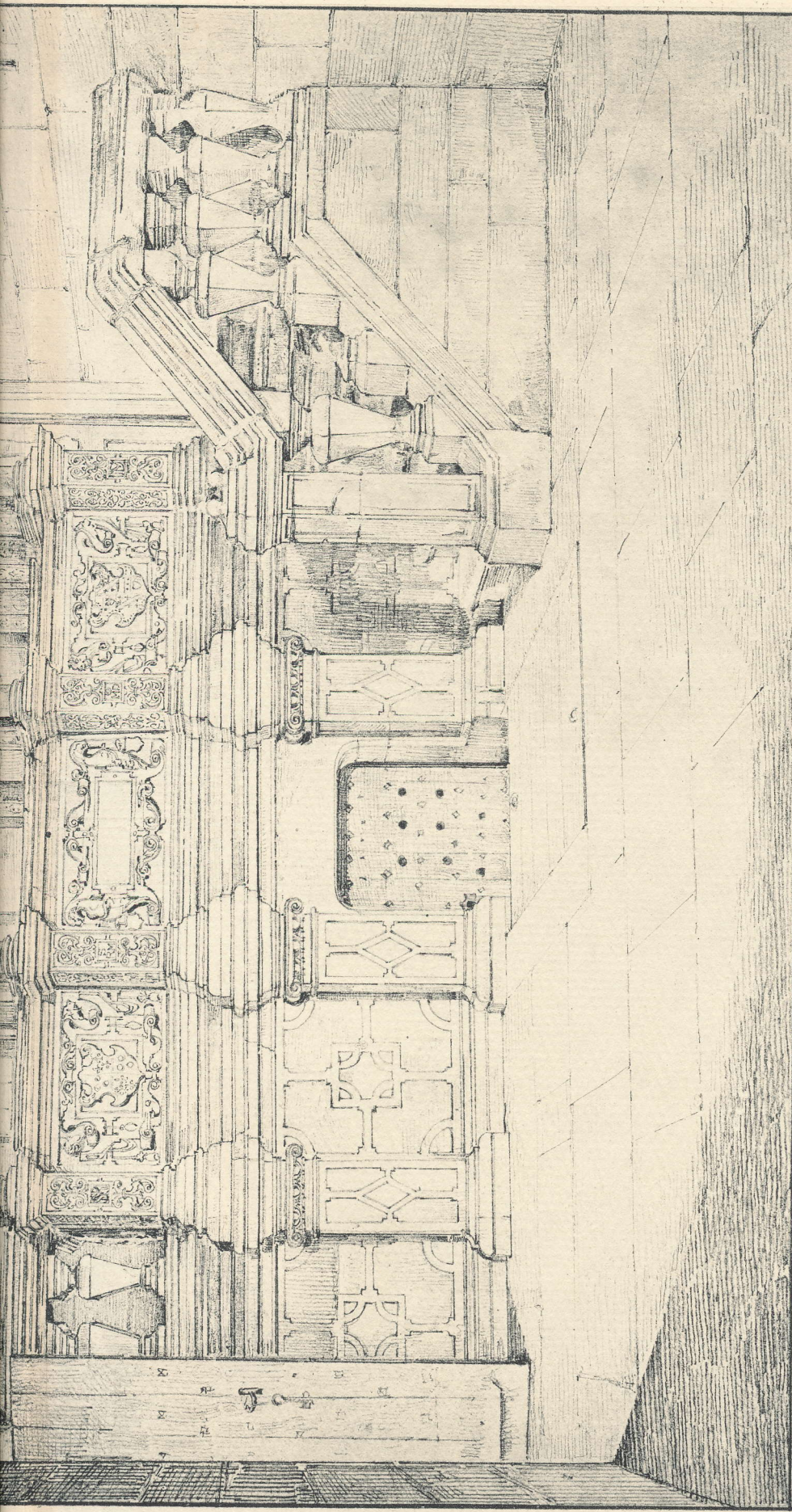
⁴ 1606, 4to: 1607, 4to: 1610, 4to: 1611, fol.: 1616, fol.: 1617, fol.: and later years. See also the Edinburgh Bible of 1633.

⁵ Gerard Legh, in his *Accedens of Armory*, published in 1562, tells us (fo. 30) that "the Hebrews sette forth in banners the armes of the

children of Israel, after the opinion of theyr Rabbies uppon the seconde of Numery": and he gives, in different passages, standards for nine of the tribes, five of them nearly as here, the others differing. André Favine, in the *Theater of Honour* (English version, 1623), also gives the arms of the Twelve Tribes on the authority of "the Rabbines expounding the nine and fortieth chapter of Genesis" (p. 3): but most of the devices differ, altogether or in detail, from those adopted by Speed. Sylvanus Morgan (*Sphere of Gentry*, 1661, p. 78) describes the shields nearly as in the aisle, apparently following Speed. Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Enquiries into Vulgar Errors*, discusses the authenticity of these scutcheons, and considers the evidence for them insufficient (Bk. v. Cap. 10). They were sometimes introduced as decorations in English churches. There is an allusion to this in Swift's *Baucis and Philemon* (l. 100). It appears that they formerly existed in St. Nicholas's, Glatton, Huntingdonshire, and St. Mary's, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire, and may still be seen in the parish church of Prestbury in Cheshire. (*Notes and Queries*, 6th S., xii. 315, 417: 7th S., i. 14.)

⁶ See vv. 10 and 17.





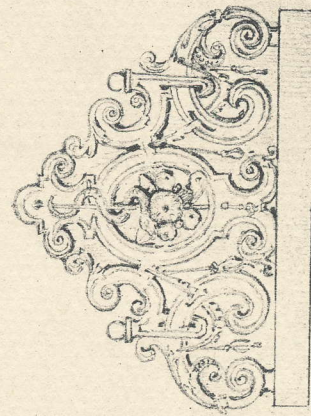
VIEW OF THE MONUMENT FROM THE SOUTH-WEST .



Finial,
front and side .

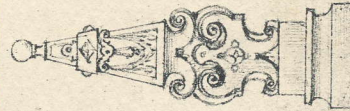


front and side .



Side Coronet .

12 ins. 6 2 feet.



Finial,
front and side .



W.H.R. & W.F. Dicks

has omitted two tribes, Naphtali and Gad. He has also departed from his previous arrangement by beginning at the north-east end of the ceiling. The shields are placed in the order of seniority of the sons of Jacob, and, commencing at the north end of the east wall, they are as follows: 1. Three bars, *undé*, vert, for Reuben. 2. A dexter hand holding a two-edged sword in pale, for Simeon. 3. A book displayed, for Levi. 4. A lion rampant, for Judah. 5. A serpent erect, torqued, for Dan. (On the west wall) 6. A cup covered, for Asher. 7. An ass (almost wholly effaced), for Issachar. 8. A ship in full sail, for Zabulon. 9. A bullock statant, for Joseph. 10. A wolf passant, for Benjamin.

We can advert but briefly to the minor ornamental details of the ceiling; but we must not omit to remark how greatly the effect of the whole is enhanced by the fanciful accessories which surround the principal designs; every available space in the compartments being occupied with figures of beasts, birds, and insects, in all the variety of their natural colours, combined with drapery, martial trophies, and tasteful convolutions of foliage. We shall also notice the six small shields, or cartouches, painted over the points of the arches, on four of which the initials S. R. M. and D. M. D. occur, twice each, in gilt characters.

The colouring of the ceiling which we have thus attempted to describe, now everywhere considerably faded, has in many parts altogether given way. Yet, considering its long exposure to the influence of so fitful an atmosphere, the free admission of which, through broken windows and crannied roof, had for many years been unopposed until, by order of Archibald William, 13th Earl of Eglinton, the aisle was repaired, it says much for the excellence of the materials employed, that they have to so considerable an extent resisted the most active agents of decay. The embellishments, both in design and execution, it may well be supposed, are not of uniform merit throughout. The ornamented inscriptive tablets, the various emblazonments, and the figures of Justice and Fortitude, have been decidedly the most happily conceived, and are the best executed parts of the design. The six landscapes rank lowest in the scale of merit, being alike deficient in composition, perspective, and colouring. The ceiling, however, with all its defects, has well-grounded claims on the attention of the decorative artist and the connoisseur in such matters; both of whom, we doubt not, will award it no stinted measure of commendation.

The monument stands across the aisle, near its northern end, and to the

left of the entrance.¹ In length it is $11\frac{1}{2}$ feet, in width 5 feet, and in height 18 feet. It presents two fronts and profiles responding to each other in every respect, save that on the southern side, which fronts the aisle, the depth of the basement is increased by a lower stage, 3 feet 10 inches in height.² Both elevations may therefore be described as a basement sustaining an arcade between two intercolumniations, with appropriate entablatures, surmounted by sculptured compartments, obelisks, and figures; the whole supported by eight Corinthian columns, four in each elevation, and ten pilasters of the same order, distributed between them. The columns, which were formerly painted black, stand on pedestals boldly projected, which, with the recessed divisions to which they are attached, compose the entire basement of the north elevation, and the upper stage of its counterpart. The lower portion of the latter, forming the wall of the vault, has pilasters answering to the pedestals above them, but of a slighter relief, and supporting a congeries of mouldings, in the design of which variety has been studied more than lightness or simplicity. To the east of the monument a stair of seven steps conducts, through a door, to a small area between the north elevation and the gable of the aisle. An ornamental pediment surmounting the doorway bears the date 1639, the year in which the monument was erected. From the platform the carved details of the monument may be advantageously studied, though the limited space precludes the spectator from forming a correct idea of its full outline.

The monument is indeed not less remarkable for the taste, variety, and finish exhibited in its ornamental details, than for the purity of its architectural profiles and general proportions, considering the period of its construction. We can, however, advert only to the more striking amongst its enrichments.³ Among the carvings which stand in boldest relief are fifty-five flowers or roses of various patterns, cut in panels on the soffit of the arcade, and others, similarly arranged, but larger, on the platfonds of the intercolumniations; while the arabesques, with which the faces of the pilasters and pedestals are encrusted, present well-managed specimens of low relief. Two small pilasters standing over those supporting the arch, as well as the spandrels they enclose, the friezes of the entablatures, and soffit of the principal cornice, are likewise distinguished by beautiful and delicately carved ornaments. The crowning compartments, however, with the

¹ Plate X.

² Plate VIII. Fig. 3.

³ Plate XI.

pyramidal finials and juvenile figures which flank them, are the richest and most ingeniously devised of all the sculptured compositions. Two of these compartments surmount the entablatures of the lateral intercolumniations, and a third is placed above that of the central arcade. The two former are of course similar to each other, and somewhat resemble in outline the profile of a console. They are edged with bands of foliated scrolls, which are extended partially over the surface of the compartment in a few curvatures, and finish in spirited heads of nondescript animals with distended jaws. Combined with the scroll-work of each design is a small trophy of martial weapons. Over the bounding columns of the elevation, and coinciding with the extremities of the compartments, are placed small half-draped juvenile figures. That above the column to the left of the spectator leans with the left arm on an inverted flambeau resting on a skull: the other holds a spade in the right hand, and an apple in the left. These effigies, as well as the obelisks, or finials, to be noticed presently, are about 2 feet in height. The figures, unfortunately, have a somewhat grotesque appearance, the form of their heads and the expression of their faces being considerably in advance of the undeveloped anatomy of their bodies. The outline of the central compartment is likewise composed of gentle curves ending in scrolls, the bands of which, being partially foliated and carried round the exterior lines, enclose the superficies with a sort of framework. The centre of the panel is occupied by a figure, of the form of which we can only say that it is composed of alternate round and hollow curves, and that the upper part of it rises above the outline of the compartment, and is finished with a plinth and ball. Within it are sculptured, the one surmounting the other, a mustachioed mask, surrounded with rays, a winged sand glass, and a female face, ensigned, if the expression be admissible, with a crescent. A flaming vase, with torches in saltire over it, hangs from one of the scrolls on each side of these figures, from which are likewise suspended, but in another direction, a couple of mandolins or guitars. This ornate composition (which, it may not be amiss to repeat, is, as well as the other parts just described, the same on both elevations) is flanked by obelisks, or finials, elegant in form and elaborately carved. Similar compartments, somewhat less elaborate in design, are on the flanks of the monument; and two other richly decorated finials, the true position of which is uncertain, bear respectively the initials RM and MD. The crowning member of the

monument, which deserves to be particularly noticed, is of a pyramidal form, and surmounted by a ball. It is upwards of 2 feet in height, and its sides are insculped with an ingenious variety of ornaments. One is allotted to musical instruments; another to martial gear, including a helm and coat of mail; a third bears several kinds of native fruit, suspended by drapery; and the fourth is decked with emblems of mortality. The subjects are arranged, or grouped, with considerable address; and the workmanship, as on every part of the monument, is free, spirited, and carefully finished.

The sculptured heraldry, and the inscriptions on the monument, have yet to be noticed. Eight shields of arms are carved on the recessed divisions of the basement, the central ones on either front excepted, which have been assigned to the inscriptions. The shields are of elegant form, and cut within panels encased with framework composed of scrolls, foliage, heads of animals, and drapery, the carving of which must have cost more labour than the armorials enclosed. There are two shields in each of the principal elevations, and two on either side. Those on the north front are, on the right (left of the spectator), Montgomerie of Skelmorlie, and on the left, Douglas of Drumlanrig. On the west side one shield bears again Douglas of Drumlanrig, the other is effaced. On the east side, that to the spectator's right bears again Montgomerie of Skelmorlie, and the other the same impaled with Semple. From the two on the south, or principal front of the monument, time has expunged the charges.¹ Of the eight intervening pedestals, four bear, besides other ornaments, the initials S . R . M ., and the other four D . M . D ., in raised characters. These initials are each repeated six times on other parts of the monument, besides being twice interlaced or combined into ciphers.

Should the initials of Sir Robert and his lady appear repeated to satiety (an error attributable with greater justice to the Elizabethan style and the architects of the period than to the vanity of their employers), but narrow limits, on the other hand, have been allotted for their respective epitaphs; the tablets destined to this purpose measuring only 18 inches by 6. These are ornamented in the same style as the panels enclosing the armorials. The lettering on the tablet of the southern, or principal elevation (doubtless intended to receive the epitaph of Sir Robert) has, if ever executed, time

¹ The shields shown in the illustration are those on the north front.

out of mind been completely effaced; but that on the opposite basement remains entire, and is as follows:—

BIS DUO BISQ DECEM TRANSEGI VIRGINIS ANNOS
TER DUO TERQ DECEM CONSOCIATA VIRO
ET BIS OPEM LUCINA TULIT MAS PATRIS IMAGO
SPESQ DOMUS SUPEREST FÆMINA IVSSA MORI
CLARA GENVS GENEROSA ANIMI SPECIOSA DECORE
CHARA DEO UIXI NUNC MIHI CUNCTA DEUS

This inscription, a free translation of which is given below,¹ presents a characteristic specimen of the turn of thought displayed in epitaphian compositions on persons of rank two hundred and fifty years ago. The son, the “hope of the house,” died subsequently, in the lifetime of his father.² The daughter here commemorated is not mentioned by any of the genealogists. The personal charms of Dame Margaret Douglas are attested by the poet Alexander Montgomery, the author of *The Cherrie and the Slae*, who addressed two sonnets to her.³

The monument above described is, we conceive, the purest specimen in Scotland of monumental architecture in the Italian style at the period of its construction. Two centuries ago, when the ceiling was in the full lustre of its untarnished brilliancy, and when the stately monument, well worthy of such a canopy, rose unscathed either by time or violence, the aisle must have presented a *coup d'œil* exquisite of its kind, and certainly unequalled for taste and magnificence, at least by anything reared in Scotland, since the era of

“That violent commotion which o’erthrew,
In town, and city, and sequester’d glen,
Altar and cross, and church of solemn roof,
And old religious house.”⁴

¹ Years twenty-four a maiden life
I lived, and thirty-six a wife.
Lucina twice gave kindly aid;
I bore a boy, and then a maid;
The son reflects his father’s face,
And lives, the hope of all his race;
My daughter an untimely doom
Consigned before me to the tomb.
My lineage high, and generous mind,
With matchless beauty were combined:
Beloved of God I lived; and He
In heaven is all things now to me.

² Robert Montgomerie, the younger, married Lady Mary Campbell, sister of the Marquess of Argyll. Their eldest son Robert succeeded his grandfather in 1651. His great-great-grandson became 12th Earl of Eglinton in 1796.

³ They are entitled “To M. D.: for Skel-murley.” The second sonnet contains an elaborate play on the name Margaret Douglas. —*A. Montgomery’s Poems*, edited by D. Irving, Edinburgh, 1821, p. 87.

⁴ Wordsworth, *Excursion*, Bk. vii. *ad fin.*

The family vault, as already stated, is situated beneath the monument. To its low-browed door, which is placed between the central pilasters of the basement on the south side, access is obtained by a descent of several steps. The vault is somewhat stinted in height, and is but obscurely lighted by a narrow aperture in the north wall. In this wall are two arched recesses, each traversed by a stone bench, on one of which rests a coffin of modern date, containing remains of several persons found within the vault at the time of its being put in repair. In front of the other recess are two large leaden coffins, containing the relics of Sir Robert Montgomerie and his lady. That of the latter bears in relief on either end her family armorials, and on the cover the same repeated, with the inscription ^{D.}_{M.} DOVGLAS . above the shield; and "Spous . to . S^r Robert . Montgomerie of Scalmurle . 1624 . " underneath it.¹ The coffin of Sir Robert is ornamented in a similar style, but on the cover, instead of the name, are the initials only R. M. above the shield, and underneath it the following inscription, in raised letters:—

IPSE . MIHI . PRÆMORTVVS . FATO . FVNERA .
 PRÆRIPVI . VNICVM . IDQVE . CÆSAREVM .
 EXEMPLAR . INTER . TOT . MORTALES . SEQVVTVS.²

The explanation of the strange conceits of this inscription appears to be that Sir Robert, having during many years prosecuted the sanguinary feud which raged between the families of Montgomerie and Cuninghame "with such eagerness as to occasion very much bloodshed of his enemies,"³ in his later days had been seized with remorse for these acts of vengeance, and was in the habit of descending into the vault at night to perform his devotions, thus in some sense imitating the Emperor Charles V., who, as was generally believed, had his own obsequies performed in his presence shortly before his death.⁴

¹ As Dame Margaret is stated in her epitaph to have been spouse to Sir Robert during thirty-six years, their marriage must, according to these authorities, have taken place in or very near to the year 1588. It appears, however, that the marriage-contract bears date 1593. Sir Robert received with his bride a tocher of 7000 marks.—See *Memorials of the Montgomeries, Earls of Eglinton*, vol. i. p. 160.

² I died in my own lifetime, and forestalled destiny with my funeral; following, amongst

all mankind, an unique example, and that an emperor's.

³ Robertson, *Description of Cuninghame*, p. 79: and *Ayrshire Families*, ii. 329.

⁴ The incident, however, has been called in question, chiefly on the ground that it is recorded by the Jeromite chroniclers only, and is scarcely consistent with the letters of the Emperor's lay attendants. The story is accepted by Sir William Stirling Maxwell (*Cloister Life of Charles V.*, third edition, 1853, preface), and

It appears evident that this coffin was prepared in the lifetime of Sir Robert. The word "obiit" has been subsequently cut at the head, but the date remains blank. Sir Robert died in 1651, having enjoyed the estate for sixty-seven years.¹

The visitor, before quitting the aisle, may bestow a glance on two wasted funeral escutcheons affixed to the side walls, fast perishing memorials of two representatives of this distinguished family.

The hatchment attached to the west wall, though the oldest, is the less utterly decayed of these proofs of noble ancestry. It was put up in 1694, on the demise of Sir James Montgomerie, the third baronet of Skelmorlie, a political character of considerable distinction in very wavering and perilous times.² The central achievement, and the lower quarterings, have entirely disappeared, but the upper ones still remain, though almost wholly effaced. The proofs of descent in the dexter quarter are, 1st, Montgomerie of Skelmorlie; 2d, Duke of Argyll; 3d, Duke of Queensberry; 4th, Earl of Morton: and those in the sinister quarter, or by the female line are, 1st, Scott of Rossie; 2d, Willoughby of Paran; 3d, Lord Lindores; 4th, Slingsby of Redhouse. A baronet's helmet still hangs over the escutcheon, while on each side of it, along the margin of the ceiling, were arranged eight small funeral banners of sheet iron. Four of these still remain, but the armorials they bore have been obliterated by damp and corrosion. With these ensigns of rank were probably connected the sword and spur which till lately lay, half consumed with rust, upon the monument.

The hatchment on the opposite wall is commemorative of Sir Robert

also, with hesitation, by Gachard (*Retraite et Mort de Charles V.*, Bruxelles, 1854, preface), but rejected by Mignet (*Charles V.*, 1854, pp. 402 *et seqq.*). Be this as it may, the instance is not unique, as Charles had been anticipated by Cardinal Erard de la Marck, Bishop of Liège, who had his own obsequies performed annually in Liège Cathedral for some years before his death.—(Stirling, *ubi sup.* p. 211.)

¹ For particulars relative to Sir Robert see Wodrow's *Analecta*, i. 371; Robertson's *Ayrshire Families*, ii. 329; and the *Memorials of the Montgomeries*, i. 158. With regard, however, to the slaughter of Alexander Cunningham, Commendator of Kilwinning, usually ascribed to

Sir Robert's father, Robert Montgomerie of Skelmorlie, who was killed in 1584, it must be observed that there is conclusive evidence that the Commendator was living in 1588, if not in 1591.—See *Memorials of the Montgomeries*, ii. 225, 227; *Register of the Priv. Coun.*, iv. 234, 256; *Acts of the Parl. of Scot.*, iii. 617; Spottiswood's *Practicks*, p. 187. The deed must therefore be laid to the charge of Sir Robert himself.—See Pont's *Cunninghame*, by Dobie, p. 265.

² See the somewhat conflicting estimates of him in Burnet (*History of his Own Times*, vol. ii. p. 63, folio edition), and Burton (*History of Scotland from the Revolution*, vol. i. pp. 78, 87).

Montgomerie, eldest son of Sir James above mentioned. He was governor of a garrison in Ireland, and died in 1731. The only remains of this escutcheon are the upper quarterings, two on either side, now hardly to be deciphered. These are the father and father's mother, on the right side, and on the other the mother and mother's mother; being respectively Montgomerie, as before, and Scott of Rossie; the Marquess of Annandale and the Duke of Queensberry. Though now in the last stages of decay, one may yet perceive that these escutcheons, when entire, must have contributed not a little to the heraldic interest and solemn splendour of the aisle. In their time-worn state, however, they are in perfect keeping with the present condition of the blighted adornments of the ceiling and the mouldering sculptures and broken profiles of the monument.

We shall now proceed to notice briefly two other monuments within the burying-ground. One of these, being the most ancient now remaining in the area, is that attached to the fragment of the south wall of the old church, which has been preserved on this account.¹ It denotes the place of interment of many generations of the Boyles of Kelburn, though nothing but the initials of the name of the individual it commemorated can now with certainty be known; "Decay's effacing fingers" have long since obliterated the lapidary record. The monument is composed of two Ionic columns with pedestals, five feet and a half apart, which sustain a heavy Tuscan cornice, without the intervention of a frieze, above which rises a central compartment formed by columns and a cornice of small dimensions, but otherwise copies of those below. Within the compartment, which is flanked by curvilinear panels, containing sprawling emblems of mortality, are carved a skull and cross bones, suspended by drapery (now wasted away), and above it stands an escutcheon, the crowning member of the composition. It bears three harts' horns, two and one, and the initials I. B. The principal cornice is returned over the columns, above each of which stands a small pyramid, curved in the profile, and resting on balls. Other features, particularly the capitals of the columns, which are equally tasteless in the design and faulty in execution, we pass over as unworthy of notice. This monument must have been erected at a period when there were in this country no standard models of the style of which it is a spurious imitation. It is not improbable

¹ Plate XII. Fig. 1.

that it may have been raised in memory of John Boyle of Kelburn, an adherent to the party of Queen Mary, who died in 1610: although, according to Bloxam,¹ few monuments were affixed to the exterior walls of churches in England in the early part of the seventeenth century, and it was not until after the Restoration that they became at all common.

West of the Skelmorlie aisle stands the funeral vault of the ancient family of Brisbane of Brisbane, formerly Brisbane of Bishoptoun. It is constructed entirely of stone, and its only chiselled adornments are two shields of arms, built into the gable over its well-secured portal.² The shield on the right (left of the spectator) bears a mullet between three cups covered, for Shaw, impaling three fleurs de lis; and, parted per fess, three annulets, for Montgomerie of Braidstane. On the upper part of the shield are cut the letters P. S., and in the flanks I. M., with the date 1634 below. The other shield bears only Shaw as above, and the initials I. S. It would appear from these armorials that the vault was built by Shaw of Kelsoland, or his heirs, considerably prior to that property becoming part of the estate of Brisbane, in which its name was subsequently merged. The letters on the right hand shield are the initials of Patrick Shaw of Kelsoland, second son of John Shaw of Greenock, who acquired the lands from Kelso of Kelsoland, and those of his wife Jean, daughter of Adam Montgomerie of Braidstane, and sister to Hugh, Viscount Airds in Ireland.³ The individual indicated by the initials I. S. on the other shield, we have been unable to ascertain. On the west wall is a stone with the initials P. S. I. M. I. S.

Since the acquisition of the property of Kelsoland by the Brisbanes, and the erection of the Barony of Brisbane in 1695, the vault has been used as the burying-place of that family. Marble tablets are affixed to the wall in memory of General Sir Thomas Makdougall Brisbane (1860), and his lady (1862), and several of their family; also of John William Douglas Brisbane, Captain R.N., 1848.

This paper may fitly close with a notice of two memorials situated elsewhere within the parish, viz. the tombstone of the Rev. William Smith, sometime minister of Largs, and the monument erected to John, third Earl of Glasgow, in the pleasure-grounds of Kelburn. The Rev. William Smith,

¹ *A Glimpse at the Monumental Architecture, etc., of Great Britain*, p. 261: London, 1834.

² Plate XII. Fig. 2.

³ Nisbet's *Heraldry*, vol. ii. App. p. 103.

minister of Largs, died in 1647 at the age of 28, of the pestilence or plague, caught while visiting his parishioners. In compliance with his wishes (such is one version of the tradition), he was buried in the valley of the Noddle, between two holly bushes growing near a small brook not far from the left bank of the river, about two miles from Largs, and about a quarter of a mile from the farmhouse of Middletown, the scene of his death. What are believed to be the hollies indicated by Mr. Smith, as marking the choice of his last resting-place, still grow hard by his grave. Tradition has further handed down a prophecy, ascribed to Mr. Smith on his deathbed, that the plague would not revisit the parish so long as the hollies were prevented from meeting over his tomb. The belief in the prediction caused the bushes to be repeatedly lopped, and it now appears unlikely that they will ever regain sufficient life to cause alarm. The little area is screened on every side by hollies, ashes, and pines, except to the north-west, in which direction there is seen, at a short distance, a portion of the banks of the impetuous Noddle, beyond which rise swelling arable fields, overlooked by the quiet bright green summit of Knock Hill.

The tombstone¹ is of the tabular form, and bears the following inscription, very inartistically cut. The English part runs around the margin of the stone, while the centre is occupied by the Latin lines, which are broken up without any regard to the versification.

HEIR . LAYETH . M . WILLAM . SMITH . MINISTER . OF . LARGES .

A . FAITHFULL . MINISTER . OF . THE . GOSPELL .

REMOVED . BY . THE . PESTILENCE . 1644 .

Conditus in tumulo hoc jaceo, juvenisque senexque,

Nempe annis juvenis, sed pietate senex.

Divino eloquio coelestia dogmata vidi,

Abstersi tenebras mentibus, ore tonans.

Attonitoque hæsit animo perversa malorum

Colluvies verbis improba facta meis.²

Reneued by James Smith his nepheu in the year 1710. Reneued 1760.

¹ Plate XII. Fig. 3.

² The subjoined translation, from the pen of the late Mr. James Dobie of Crummock, Beith, happily renders what appears to be the meaning of this obscure composition :—

Enclos'd within this tomb I lie,
An emblem both of youth and age ;
In years a stripling young was I,
In ripen'd piety a sage.
With eloquence celestial fraught,
Before my eyes God's counsels lay ;

My thundering words conviction brought,
And error's gloom was chased away.
The guilty throng of sinners near,
Convicted by my words of power,
Were seized with sad foreboding fear,
And trembled for the avenging hour.

Before leaving this lonely grave, we must advert to the error in the date assigned on the tombstone to Mr. Smith's death, which most probably has arisen in one of the renewals of the inscription. The Records of the Presbytery of Irvine leave no doubt that Mr. Smith died between the 18th May and the 28th September 1647.

The monument at Kelburn stands on a small terrace or platform, situated on the margin of a romantic dell.¹ The spot, though but little distant from the venerable family mansion, is yet very sequestered. The monument consists of a handsome female figure, placed in a niche formed in a piece of ashlar work resembling the section of a stunted obelisk. The niche is finished with doric columns, sustaining a pediment, and in a circular panel of white marble in the upper part of the obelisk are neatly carved the armorials of the noble family. The statue, which is of the same material, is most gracefully proportioned, and exquisitely sculptured. It represents, says the writer of the old *Statistical Account* of the parish, "Virtue lamenting the loss of one of her favourite sons." The figure, which is 4 feet in height, is in a gently reclining position: the right arm leans on an elegant urn, resting on a tripod; in the right hand she holds a chaplet of laurel, and in the other, which is slightly elevated, a portion of the flowing tangles of her hair. The expression of the visage, the form and position of the figure, and the style of the drapery, have been all most happily conceived and as admirably executed. On the basement supporting the columns is engraved the inscription, which is as follows:—

Sacred to the Memory of JOHN, EARL OF GLASGOW.²

Whose exalted piety and liberal sentiments of religion, unfettered by systems, and joined with universal benevolence, were as singular as that candour and modesty which cast a pleasing veil over his distinguished abilities. His loyalty and courage he exerted in the service of his country, in whose cause he repeatedly suffered with fortitude and magnanimity. At the battle of Fontenoy, early in life, he lost his hand and his health. His manly spirit not to be subdued: at Lafeld he received two wounds in one attack. To perpetuate the remembrance of a character so universally beloved and admired, and to animate his children to the imitation of his excellent qualities, this humble monument is erected by his disconsolate widow.

¹ Plate XII. Fig. 4.

² John, third Earl of Glasgow, died in 1775, in the 69th year of his age.

* * * This paper, by the late William Dobie, Esq., of Grangevale, Beith, as now republished, has been revised, with a few additions, by

ROBERT DOBIE WILSON.