

THE SIGNET-RING AND SILVER BELL OF MARY
QUEEN OF SCOTS.

AMONGST the recent acquisitions by which the National Collection has been enriched, few objects are to be found which will be viewed by many visitors to the British Museum with greater interest than the Signet-ring of Mary Stuart. This little relic, associated as it is with one of the most tragic and touching passages in the romance of history, is scarcely less remarkable for the tasteful perfection of its workmanship, than for its undeniable authenticity. It is familiar to many of our readers, through the kindness of its late possessor, Mr. Richard Greene, F.S.A., who permitted it to be produced on several occasions at the meetings of the Institute.

It were now a fruitless task to seek to discover through what means this ring might have passed into the possession of the Queen of George III. No earlier trace of its existence has been found than the notice in the Account of Royal and Baronial Seals of Scotland, communicated by Astle to the Society of Antiquaries, in 1792, and published in the *Vetusta Monumenta*. The impression of the ring is there figured on an enlarged scale, and described as "from a seal of Mary Queen of Scots, in the royal collection at the Queen's House; it is set in gold, and has the letters M. R. in a cipher on the back of the seal. This seems to be a royal seal which she used after her return into Scotland."¹ It may seem scarcely needful to observe that Buckingham House, in St. James's Park, having been settled by Parliament, in 1775, on Queen Charlotte in lieu of Somerset House, was called "The Queen's House." The ring came into the possession of the late Duke of York; and at the sale by Christie of his plate and jewels, in March, 1827, it was purchased by Mr. Greene for fourteen guineas.² In 1842 a notice was communicated to the Society of Antiquaries by

¹ *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. iii. p. 12, pl. xxvi. fig. 8.

² *Gent. Mag.* vol. xcvii. part 1, p. 359.

Mr. Greene, and on a subsequent occasion the ring was exhibited.³

The ring is of gold, massive in fashion, and weighs 212 grains. The hoop has been chased with foliage and flowers, and enameled; it appears to have been much worn, and very few traces of enamel remain, although the outlines of



the design may be discerned. The impress is the royal achievement engraved on a piece of crystal or white sapphire of oval form, measuring about three-quarters of an inch by five-eighths. The arms are those of Scotland, here given on an enlarged scale.⁴ The crest, on a helmet with mantlings and ensigned with a crown, is a lion sejant, affronté, crowned, holding in his dexter paw a naked sword, and in

the sinister a sceptre, both bendwise. Above the crest appears the motto *IN DEFENS*, and lower down, the initials *M. R.* The shield is surrounded by the collar of the Thistle, with the badge, and supported by two unicorns chained and ducally gorged. On the dexter side there is a banner charged with the arms of Scotland; on the sinister another with three bars, over all a saltire.⁵ The arms of Scotland, as they appear on this ring, with supporters, banners, and motto, occur in other instances during the times of Mary. Mr. Greene had pointed out the engraved achievement in the edition of Lesley's treatise "*de origine, moribus, et rebus gestis Scotorum*," 1578, which corresponds almost in every particular, with the exception that the sinister banner is charged with a saltire within a bordure,

³ This paper was read 24th Nov. 1842, but not printed. The ring was exhibited 7th Dec. 1848. *Proceedings*, vol. i. p. 290.

⁴ This achievement is figured in the *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. iii. pl. xxvi.; *Laing's Catalogue of Scottish Seals*, p. 228; and *Archæologia*, vol. xxxiii. p. 355. I am indebted to Mr. Laing for the use of the woodcut given above.

⁵ The practice in regard to the banners accompanying the royal arms of Scotland does not appear to have been uniform. On the earliest Great Seal of Mary both the banners placed behind the

arms seem to display a saltire, passed through an open crown at the intersection of the limbs. The like banners appear on her Great Seal as Queen of Scotland and Dowager of France, appended to one of the Morton Charters, dated 1564. In some MS. Scottish Heraldic collections, of the time of James VI., for which I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. Dr. Wellesley, the sinister banner in the King of Scots' arms is, *vert*, a saltire *argent*, fringed with the same tinctures, company.

which apparently is not intended to represent the fringe; and that a motto is introduced beneath the arms, and is *OPTIMAM PARTEM ELEGIT*. Mr. Joseph Robertson has moreover pointed out to me that this type of the Scottish arms occurs previously to the reign of Mary, an example being found on the title-page of Bellenden's Translation of Hector Boece's History of Scotland, written in 1531, and printed between that date and 1542. The date of the achievement is fixed by the inscription, *IACOBVS · REX · 5*. James V. reigned from 1513 to 1542. The same woodcut apparently was used in the Acts of Parliament of Scotland, printed at Edinburgh in 1566, the name *MARIA REGINA* being substituted for that of her father: and in the Acts of Parliament of King James VI. printed at Edinburgh, in 1568, the arms being in that instance accompanied by the name *IACOBVS · REX · 6*.

It is remarkable that the heraldic tinctures are represented on the back of the engraved stone, either by enameling or by painting, and the field or background is coloured dark blue. This mode of ornamentation is found in some of the fine Italian works of the period, of which the enameled Pax of the order of the Saint Esprit, now in the Louvre, is a striking example. It is fully described by Count De Laborde, in his valuable catalogue of the enamels in that collection, with a special notice of "Cristaux peints," and of other specimens existing in France.⁶

This mode of giving an enriched effect to an intaglio is comparatively uncommon. The most remarkable example known to me is the ring of Jean *Sans-Peur*, Duke of Burgundy, assassinated in 1419. It was found in 1792 in his tomb, and came into the possession of the Baron Van Hoorn, from whose collection it passed into that of the celebrated Denon. It is thus described:—"Un saphir blanc, taillé en table, et sur lequel sont gravées les armes de Bourgogne: ce cachet est monté en bague d'or de travail ancien; sous la pierre sont coloriés les *metaux* et les *émaux* de la famille dont elle offre l'écusson."⁷ Some examples of less elaborate character than the signet of Mary Stuart are in the rich *Dactylothea* of Mr. Edmund Waterton, F.S.A.

Within the hoop of the ring there is a cipher, originally

⁶ Notice des Emaux, Bijoux et Objets divers exposés dans les Galeries du Louvre: par M. De Laborde. Paris,

1853; pp. 141, 143.

⁷ Description du Cabinet du Baron Denon; Monuments Historiques, p. 123.

enameled ; it is here represented on an enlarged scale. It is inclosed within a band and ensigned by a crown. The band had been enameled with white, of which two portions remained when the ring came into Mr. Greene's possession, amounting together to nearly half the circumference. I have been informed by Mr.



Franks, that some very small fragments of white enamel remain in the circular band ; a portion of red is to be seen at the top of the upstroke of the M, on the sinister side ; there are traces of pale blue or greyish white in the oval of the monogram, as also in the central upstroke. On some of the leaves on the exterior of the hoop remains of green enamel may be discerned. It had been conjectured that the motto *Nemo me impune lacessit*, or *Optimam partem elegit*,

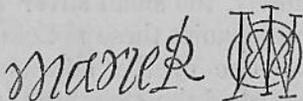
might have been painted upon the white band in black enamel. If, however, any inscription was originally there to be seen, it may more probably have been the anagram *Sa vertu m'attire*, which will be noticed hereafter as connected with the cipher in question.

Sir Henry Ellis, in a communication to the Society of Antiquaries, stated his conviction, when the ring was brought under his notice, that inquiry "would probably identify it either as an affiancing, or what was still more probable, as a bridal ring of the unhappy Queen. It was evidently made for a female finger. In my own belief (observes Sir Henry) I took it for what it certainly now appears to have been, her nuptial ring."⁸ In explaining the ground of this opinion, Sir Henry sets forth the several forms in which, at different periods of her reign, Mary bore the Scottish arms, commencing with those of Scotland alone, before her marriage with the Dauphin in 1558, and, after certain changes, as Dauphine, Queen Consort, and Queen Dowager of France, she finally reverted to the coat of Scotland alone subsequently to her marriage with Darnley in 1565. Whilst searching the Scottish Correspondence at the State Paper Office, in the fruitless endeavour to discover some letter bearing an impression of the signet-ring, Sir Henry Ellis noticed in the letter from Mary to Queen Elizabeth, dated

⁸ Archæologia, vol. xxxii. p. 355. These observations were read in Jan. 1850.

15 June (1565), and thus subscribed, *Votre tres affectionnee et fidelle bonne sœur et cousine Marie R.*, the remarkable accompaniment of a cipher closely resembling that which appears within the ring. (See woodcut.)⁹

"The monogram," Sir Henry observes, "both here and within the hoop of Mr. Greene's ring, is identical, and is clearly formed of the letters M and A. The comparison of the two gives countenance to the opinion that the written monogram was intended for Elizabeth and Burghley to study; the subsequent creation of the title of Duke of Albany in Lord Darnley ultimately opening their eyes to the enigma."



With all deference to the opinion of an antiquary of such sagacity and experience as Sir Henry Ellis, this interpretation can scarcely be accepted, even if we are content to pass over the improbability, apparently regarded by him as of slight moment, that Mary should have selected for such a device the initial of a title, which it was her intention at some future time to confer upon Darnley. It is believed that at the period when the letter bearing this signature was written, he was not merely her accepted suitor, but that their marriage had actually been celebrated in private at Stirling Castle, early in April, 1565.¹ It was, however, only shortly before the public solemnisation of their nuptials, on July 29, that Mary created Darnley Duke of Albany. It is obvious that Sir Henry's proposed explanation is liable to a serious objection, since it leaves wholly unnoticed a considerable portion of the monogram; the oval, the central stroke, and a character introduced at each side of it resembling an E, which is not found in the monogram within the ring.

A third example of the monogram has been brought to light, which had not come to the knowledge of Sir Henry Ellis; it may be numbered amongst the interesting results of the extensive collections in illustration of Scottish History and Antiquities, contributed with most kind liberality for

⁹ A facsimile of the entire signature may be seen in the *Archæologia*, *ut supra*, p. 357, from which the portion given above has been copied. The letter had been printed by Prince Labanoff, *Recueil*, tome i. p. 273, without noticing

the peculiarity of the signature. No impression of the ring has been found on any letter or other document.

¹ The proof of this private marriage is found in the *Memoir*, Labanoff, Supplement, tome vii. p. 67.

exhibition in the Museum of the Institute, at the meeting in Edinburgh in July, 1856.

Amongst the valuable objects associated with the memory of Mary Stuart, heirlooms of the ancient family of Bruce of Kennet, a relic of singular interest had been preserved, namely, the small silver hand-bell of which a representation accompanies these notices. There can be little doubt that it was one of the objects of personal use, which habitually garnished the chamber of the captive Queen, and it is perhaps the identical "*clochète*" described in the inventories of those valuable effects, the relics of former state, which she was permitted to retain until the cruel termination of her life at Fotheringhay. Of this it must be admitted that the evidence is deficient, since no positive information can be adduced to prove by what means the silver bell passed into the possession of the ancestors of the Bruce family; but it is certain that Mary was accustomed to make use of such a bell, which, in accordance with the fashion of the time, accompanied the "*escritoire*" and other furniture of her table.² The personal devices, however, found on the bell under consideration appear to afford no slight argument in favour of the supposition that it may have been her companion throughout her prolonged captivity. In the will made by Mary, when suffering from sickness at Sheffield, in February, 1577, she bequeathed to her secretary Nau, by whose hand that document was written, the following precious objects: "A Nau, mon grand diamant, ma grande escritoire d'argent aux bords dorez, et la clochète de mesme."³ In the inventory of Mary Stuart's jewels and plate, taken, as it is believed, at Chartley, during the time when she was suddenly removed to Tixall, in August, 1586, there occur, amongst the "*Joyaux, vaisselle d'argent, et autres besongnes, au cabinet,*" the items, "Un grand escriptoire d'argent ouvragé, doré par parcelles;" and "Une clochette d'argent de sus la table de Sa Majesté."⁴ Again, in the inventory of the jewels, plate,

² A small hand-bell appears repeatedly in portraits of the sixteenth century. The portrait of Sir Robert Cecil by Mark Garrard in the Duke of Bedford's collection may be cited as an example; the bell appears placed on a table at his side; as likewise in the portrait of Archbishop Parker at Lambeth; in that instance it is accompanied by a small

casket, probably an inkstand, and a seal.

³ Labanoff, *Recueil de Lettres*, tome iv. p. 360. The original, partly in Mary's own hand, is preserved in the British Museum, Cott. MS. Vesp. c. xvi. fol. 145.

⁴ Labanoff, *Recueil*, tome vii. p. 247. It may be observed that two other *escritoires* are enumerated, one of them of silver, but no other *clochette* appears.



Silver-gilt Hand-bell.

Height, 14 in.



Queen Mary's "Candle Cup."

Height, 5 in.

Relics of Mary Queen of Scots, in possession of Robert Bruce, Esq., of Kennet, Clackmannanshire.

money, and other goods remaining in the custody of the several servants of the late Queen of Scots, taken at Fotheringhay, Feb. 20, 1586-87, there are found, amongst plate in the custody of Elizabeth Curle, "A candlestick of silver gilt; a little silver bell; two standishes of silver, the one playn, the other gilt in the edges."⁵

The bell, now in the possession of Robert Bruce, Esq., of Kennet, Clackmannanshire, by whose kindness it was exhibited with other relics of Mary Stuart, in the Museum at the meeting of the Institute in Edinburgh, measures about 4 inches in height, the handle included; the diameter at the mouth measures $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Around its waist, externally, are engraved, 1, the royal arms of Scotland, the shield ensigned by a low arched crown, with strawberry leaves alternately with fleurs-de-lys, as on her Scottish seals. 2, the monogram composed of the Greek letters Chi and Rho, signifying the name of Our Lord, within a circle inscribed with the words IN HOC VINCE 86, and at the close of the inscription a trefoil slipped. 3. On the side opposite to the last, the *impresa*, a vine of which a moiety is dead and leafless; a hand issuing from clouds above and holding a pruning bill cuts off the dead wood: on a circular band around this device are the words VIRESCIT · VVLNERE · VIRTVS.⁶ This *impresa* is identical in all details with that on one of four of Mary's silver jetons, of which examples exist in the collections of Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Benjamin Nightingale. This piece, it may be observed, bears on the obverse the arms of Scotland only, under an arched crown, as on the bell, with the legend MARIA · DEI · G · SCOTOR · REGINA ·; whereas the other counters, in dimensions and workmanship precisely similar, display the arms of France dimidiated by those of Scotland, with the legend MARIA · D · G · SCOTORV · REGINA · FRAN · DOI. The jeton just described bears no date, each of the other three is dated 1579. That year, it will be remembered, was the eleventh of Mary's captivity; she was at that time

⁵ Labanoff, *ibid.*, p. 362.

⁶ De Bie, in his description of this piece, adds the date 1557; no date appears in the engraving of the reverse amongst the medals of Mary Stuart in Mezeray, *Hist. de France*, tome ii., p. 807. These pieces, sometimes described as medals, were evidently counters for arithmetical calculation. The Motto

Virescit vulnere virtus, with the *impresa* above described, was embroidered by Mary's own hand on a cushion which she sent in Sept. 1589, from Wingfield, to Lesley, Bishop of Ross. It displayed the arms of Scotland, beneath which there was the hand pruning the vine. See Miss Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of Scotland*, vol. vii. p. 21.

at Sheffield in the custody of the Earl of Shrewsbury. The jetons appear to be of French workmanship, and they may have been a new year's gift from some of Mary's relations in foreign parts.⁷ 4. This device is the monogram or cipher before described as to be seen within the hoop of Mary's signet-ring; here it is ensigned by an arched crown, and enclosed within a band inscribed thus, SA · VERTV · MATIRE. This motto, which is an anagram of Mary's name, occurs in the description of devices embroidered on a bed wrought by her, as stated in a letter from Drummond of Hawthornden, to Ben Jonson. "I have been curious," writes the poet, "to find out for you the impresas and emblems on a bed of state, wrought and embroidered all with gold and silke by the late Quene Marie, mother to our sacred Soverayne, which will embellish greatly some pages of your booke, and is worthye of remembrance. The first is the loadstone turning towards the pole, the words, her Majesties name turned into an anagram, MARIA STEUART, SA VERTU MATIRE, which is not much inferiour to VERITAS ARMATA."⁸

The bell preserved at Kennet had been traditionally designated as a "mass-bell." It appears, however, most improbable that it was destined for any sacred use. There is an enigmatical device engraved within the bell, which has been supposed to show that its use was of the ordinary kind at that period, simply to summon the Queen's attendants to her presence. Within the bell are engraved concentric circles, with lines radiating from the central point where the clapper is attached. These lines, as shown in the accompanying woodcut, point to certain letters and numerals engraved within the circles. The letters have been read, commencing from the circle nearest the rim of the bell, CLAMAT SVAS, she calls her attendants; departing a little from the order which the circles seem to indicate, and passing over the numerals. This may seem too arbitrary a process to be quite satisfactory. It is possible that the letters are initials, and the

⁷ These elegantly designed counters were very probably an accompaniment of the standish and other appliances on the Queen's writing table, being used with a kind of *Abacus* for casting accounts. They are doubtless identical with the counters described in the Inventory taken at Chartley, August, 1586. Under "Joyaulx, &c. au cabinet" are

entered.—"Bourses de veloux vert, garnyes de jetons d'argent aux armes de sa Majesté." Labanoff, tome vii. p. 246.

⁸ Letter dated July 1, 1619, printed in Drummond's *History*, 1655, p. 137, and edited for the Shakespeare Society, 1842, by David Laing, with careful collation of the MS.

numerals ciphers for names or words. The figures have been read 43, and it has been suggested that they may refer to Mary's coronation by Cardinal Beaton, on Sept. 9, 1543, when she was only nine months old. Another conjecture would explain these figures as indicating the age of Mary, at the period when this device was engraved. There is no event in the year of her age, from Dec. 8, 1584 to Dec. 8, 1585, to which the device seems referable, nor can we discover any memorable occurrence in her thirty-fourth year that throws light on the obscure intention of these numerals.

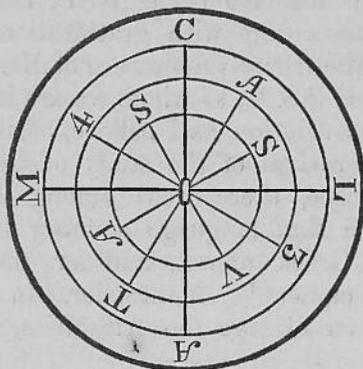


Diagram showing the interior of the Silver Hand-bell of Mary Queen of Scots.

Diameter of the Original, $2\frac{1}{2}$ in.

It is remarkable that the number, 43, is precisely the moiety of that occurring with the inscription *IN HOC VINCE*, in the device before described, engraved on the external surface of the bell. Both of these mysterious numbers may have been intelligible only through some of the secret ciphers used by Mary Stuart in her correspondence.⁹ I am indebted, however, to Mr. Augustus Franks, Dir. S. A., for the observation, that whilst the figures 43 are possibly allusive to Mary's coronation in 1543, the figures 86, which accompany the motto around the sacred monogram of the Saviour's name, before described, may be explained by the date of her death, Feb. 8, 1586; since, according to the

⁹ It is well known that Mary's partisans, or the persons with whom she maintained secret correspondence, were designated by numbers. The dispatches seized upon Baillie at Dover, in April, 1571, were addressed 40 and 30, con-

jectured to indicate the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Lumley. Turnbull, *Letters of Mary*, p. 57. See in Labanoff, t. vi. p. 259, the subtle expedients used by Mary in her secret correspondence.

Old Style, the year 1587, in which it has been commonly stated that the execution of Mary occurred, did not commence until March 25. It may deserve consideration, in connexion with the explanation thus proposed, that both the *Imprese* engraved on the bell appear to show, on minute examination, appearances of later workmanship than the arms and crowned cipher; and the device, with the appropriate motto *In hoc vince*, and the numerals possibly indicating a date, may have been added subsequently to her death.

I will now revert to the monogram, of which no satisfactory interpretation has hitherto been given; and I would here acknowledge with gratification my obligations to the friendly assistance of Mr. Weston S. Walford, F.S.A., to whom we are indebted for the true solution, as I believe, of the enigma. On the revival of the study of Greek in Western Europe, there arose among those acquainted with that language a fancy for the adoption of Greek names, and for the use of Greek characters for ciphers.¹ Menestrier, in his *Véritable Art du Blason, ou l'Usage des Armoiries*, observes, "Sous



Francois I. on affecta de mettre en divers endroits des chiffres Grecs de son nom, Φ, parceque ce Prince avoit rétably les lettres et cette langue sçavante. On voit aussi en quelques endroits des Λ. pour Louys XII., et on l'a continué pour Louys XIII. aux ornemens des vignettes de l'impression du Louvre, particulièrement pour les ouvrages Grecs."² Among the ciphers in the original collar of the Order of the Holy Spirit, founded by Henry III. of France in 1578,

¹ A remarkable illustration of the familiar use of the Greek language at this period is supplied by the history of Henry IV. In the lotteries termed *Blanque*, one of the diversions of the Court of Charles IX. in 1563 and 1564, the tickets of the young Prince of Navarre, then in his tenth year, were inscribed, Η νικῶν ἢ ἀποθάνειν. He was repeatedly a winner, and Catherine de

Medicis sought in vain to learn from himself the signification of the device; when explained to her, she forbade his being taught such ambitious phrases. It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader of the favourite motto of the Connestable Montmorency—ΑΠΛΑΝΟΣ.

² Menestrier, *Véritable Art du Blason*, Paris, 1673, 12mo. p. 22.

was A, (Lambda) for Queen Louisa. It formed part of a cipher with H, so that it might be read both from below and above.³ The other ciphers, here shown, are stated to have been "reserved in the king's own mind, of other persons his favorites." An example of this collar on the binding of a book is noticed in a recent number of the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries.⁴ In the collar of the Order of the Holy Magdalen, which was proposed to be instituted in France in 1614, was to have been a cipher composed of M. A. A, for the initials of the Magdalen, Louis XIII., and his Queen, Anne of Austria.⁵ Frederic, King of Bohemia, who married the Princess Elizabeth of England, the granddaughter of Mary Queen of Scots, used two Phis, intersecting each other. In the inventory of the jewels of Elizabeth his Queen we find the following items: "Ane pictour box of gold q^rin is conteaned in the on syd the king of Boheme his portrait, the cover q^rof is sett with diamonts eftir this forme $\Phi\Phi$, conteining twa J. deciphered withine two oo, resembling twa great l^res [letters] Φ , for Frederick the king his name."⁶ The writer of the inventory evidently mistook the intersection of the two Phis for an Omicron. The duplication of ciphers, which might be read in any direction, was then in vogue. His Queen Elizabeth used a cipher consisting of two Es, or Epsilons, intersecting each other, which is mentioned in the same inventory, and is subscribed by her to the letters which are printed with a woodcut of the cipher in the Archæologia, vol. xxxvii., p. 225. The cipher of Frederic also appears on a small seal, with which two letters written by his sons, Prince Frederick Henry and Prince Rupert when children, to Lady Morton and Lady Apsley, are sealed.⁷ (See woodcut, double the original size).



³ See Favine's Theatre of Honour, English translation published at London, 1623, Book iii. ch. 7, pp. 389, 391.

⁴ Vol. iv. p. 125.

⁵ See Favine, *ut supra*, pp. 551, 553. The collar could not have been devised until the year following, viz. 1615, when Louis XIII. espoused Anne of Austria. It is possible that the cipher may have been originally intended to be wholly

royal, and to be composed of the initials of Mary de Medicis, then Regent, but subsequently in disgrace, together with those of the young king and his consort.

⁶ Notes and Queries, vol. i. New Series, p. 195.

⁷ These letters have been printed in the Sussex Archæological Collections, vol. iv. p. 223.

If we take into consideration the use of Greek characters for ciphers in the sixteenth century, there can be no difficulty in accepting the monogram on the ring and the bell of Mary Queen of Scots as composed of the Greek Phi and Mu. Indeed, from the fact of the lines forming these two characters both on the ring and the bell being differently marked, as if for distinction, (the Φ on the latter being shaded, and the other strokes left plain,) there can be no reasonable doubt of these being the characters; and if so, they can scarcely be intended for anything else than the initials of Francis and Mary. The monogram is in both instances accompanied by the arms of Scotland only, as used by Mary previously to her first marriage, and subsequently to her alliance with Darnley; and it is probable that both ring and bell were engraved in France during the interval between her betrothal to the Dauphin, Aug. 1548, and their marriage, April 24, 1558.⁸ This supposition appears to be in a great degree confirmed by the piece, probably a silver counter, given by Cardonnel, presenting on one side the Scottish arms, as on the jetons already described, and on the other the ungraceful monogram frequently found on Mary's coins, consisting of F. and M. combined, under a crown, with the motto DILIGITE · IVSTICIAM · 1553. The use of this cipher, several years before her marriage with the Dauphin, has been the subject of much conjecture amongst numismatists, but all difficulty vanishes if this piece is regarded as a jeton struck during her residence in France after her betrothal. Mary's gold coinage of the same year displayed a complicated cipher which may be read MARIA R. or MARIA REGINA. These ciphers are so ungraceful, more especially the combination of F.M., that they may serve in some degree to account for the substitution of Greek characters, in conformity with the fashion of the period, and especially when used on a tasteful ornament of personal use.

It has been previously remarked that the monogram which accompanies Mary's signature to the letter addressed to Queen Elizabeth, as described by Sir Henry Ellis, is not identical with that on the ring. It differs in the addition of the letters E, of which no explanation has been offered.

⁸ It must be noticed that both on the ring and the bell the crown is of a highly arched form, and with large fleurs-

de-lys, resembling the crown of France, and differing from the more depressed crown seen over the arms of Scotland.

It has been suggested, with much probability, that Mary, being attached to the cipher she had previously used, composed of the Greek Φ and \mathfrak{M} , may, when it was no longer appropriate, have by the addition of two Es (Epsilons), converted it into *MAPIE*, written in Greek characters, the Φ being read as two Rhos, *dos-à-dos*. This suggestion supposes an unwillingness to depart from the original cipher further than was necessary. Whilst it must be admitted that to render this reading completely satisfactory, the down stroke of the Rhos should have been lengthened, we must remember that ciphers of this description were intended to be read not only backwards and forwards, but also upside down. Whether this explanation be accepted or not, it is evident that the addition of the Es renders this a different cipher; no difficulty, therefore, which may present itself in this instance, necessarily affects the proposed interpretation of the cipher in its simpler or earlier form.

In conclusion, I will briefly enumerate the other relics of Mary Stuart in Mr. Bruce's possession, and which, with the kindest liberality, he permitted to be produced both at the meeting in Edinburgh, and in the collection exhibited by the Institute last summer. The most important, as an example of mediæval art, is a large covered ciborium of copper, richly enameled with scriptural subjects. It bears considerable resemblance in form to the celebrated *Coupe d'Alpâis*, in the collection of enamels in the Louvre; and it is one of the finest existing specimens of the *champlevé* process of the art of enamel in the twelfth century.⁹ This, as also the bell and other precious objects preserved at Kennet, is traditionally regarded as having been given by Mary to her faithful partisan, Sir James Balfour, deputy-governor of Edinburgh Castle under the Earl of Bothwell. He espoused the heiress of Balfour of Burleigh, and these valuable possessions passed, as it is stated, to the family of Bruce of Kennet by marriage with the heiress of the fifth Lord Burleigh. I have sought to trace this beautiful vessel in the inventories of Mary's jewels and effects; and it may possibly have been described in the "Inventair of the Queene Regentis movables," received by Servay de Conde, valet of chamber to the Queen

⁹ A detailed description of this ciborium is given by Mr. Franks in his Observations on Enamel, in "The Art

Treasures of the United Kingdom," published by Messrs. Day.

in 1562, under the item of enameled objects, "Ane lawer with a cowp and a cover of copper ennamallit."¹

Another object of considerable interest is the so-called "Caudle-cup" of Queen Mary, formed apparently of agate, with silver gilt mountings and handle. I am indebted to the skilful pencil of Mr. George Scharf, jun., for the drawing from which the accompanying representation has been prepared, and its accuracy renders it unnecessary to offer any detailed description. It may, however, deserve notice that it is probably of Scottish workmanship, the mounting having the plate-mark, an unicorn's head erased. The ornaments on the handle are a lion's head and a rose, both in relief. The *ciborium*, accompanied by the silver bell and agate cup, appears in the group of interesting objects forming a frontispiece to the Photographs from Portraits of Mary Stuart, admirably reproduced by Caldesi and Montecchi for the Series recently published by Messrs. Colnaghi.

A few objects of minor interest are likewise preserved at Kennet as associated with the memory of Mary; these consist of silver spoons, and a richly ornamented handle of bloodstone, mounted with gold, and exquisitely enameled, possibly of Italian workmanship. It apparently may have been intended as the handle of a fan of feathers, or some similar appliance which might suitably grace even a royal hand. A circular fan of yellow ostrich feathers tipped with red appears in Mary's hand in the portrait attributed to her in the episcopal palace at Gloucester. An inscription, however, of later date than the portrait states that it represents Queen Elizabeth. Miss Strickland has pointed out the ruby heart ensigned by the Scottish crown, forming the centre of the fan, and which she regards as the cognisance of Darnley's maternal ancestors of the house of Douglas.²

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¹ Collection of Inventories of the Royal Wardrobe, &c., edited by Thomas Thomson, Esq., Edinburgh, 1815, p. 158.

² Lives of the Queens of Scotland, vol. v. p. 41. Such a crowned heart, formerly in possession of the Duke of Sussex, and accompanied by a note in his hand writing, stating that it had belonged

to Mary Stuart, was contributed by Mr. Henry Farrer, F.S.A., to the collection of Portraits and Memorials of Mary, exhibited by the Institute in June, 1857. It had possibly been originally appended to the "Douglas Jewel," now in the possession of Her Majesty.