

IV.—*Part of a Letter from the EARL OF BUCHAN to the Secretary, giving an Account of a Tour through Aberdeenshire, in 1789.*

[Read to the Society, 15th of December 1789, and 12th of January 1790.]

Dryburgh Abbey, September 9, 1789.

SIR,

HAVING made a tour lately in Aberdeenshire, I accidentally obtained the following particulars, which may furnish half an hour's amusement to the Society of Antiquaries, and afterwards go to the Letter-books for preservation.—The oldest council-book of Aberdeen was lately in the possession of Provost Robertson at Glasgowego, near that city, and is now in the custody of his heirs. It commences with the year 1398; and from thence the following notices are extracted:—(a)

Mr Thomas Gordon, professor of humanity there, has made very considerable collections for a History of the College, and was so good as to promise me a copy of them for the Society. I inquired if he had heard of the existence of any of the Chartularies of the Ecclesiastical House anciently established at Aberdeen; but he had only heard of detached charters in private collections.

I examined all the Monuments in St Machar's Church, and found the following only, in such a state as to require drawings to be made of them for Gough's Sepulchral Monuments of Great Britain:—The tomb of Bishop Leichtoun: The niche and sarcophagus of Bishop Dunbar. The cumbent figure of the Bishop was broken and carried away at the Reformation. There was a large figure in stone of the same Bishop, in the old building of the College, which was destroyed at the same time, from which a drawing had been made; from which drawing old Alexander the painter, when he was skulking, made a painting of the Bishop's portrait, which hangs in the refectory of the College. The same artist made a copy of the original picture of Bishop of Elphinstone, which is preserved in King's College. This original is painted on board; and appears to have been the work of a foreign artist, probably painted when the Bishop was at Paris on his embassy. There are in the same refectory portraits of Bishop Scougall and his Son, the pious and learned William Henry Scougall, author of *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*; of Bishop Forbes of Corse, ancestor of Forbes of Craigievar, and Lord Granard, an excellent portrait; and a portrait of Bishop Leslie, which I rather think a copy, though an old picture.

(a) A considerable part of this letter is occupied with Extracts from the earlier volumes of the Town-Council Records of Aberdeen, made by Professor Ogilvie. These have not been printed, as much more copious extracts and illustrations of manners and customs in 'Bon-Accord' have since been given to the Public in Mr Kennedy's elaborate History of Aberdeen, 1818, 2 vols. 4to.

Mr Fraser of Inveralochy has at Castle Fraser an excellent original, which, I dare say, he would be disposed to give to the Society, if he knew it would be acceptable.

Mr Thomson, a house-painter at Aberdeen, in partnership with Duff, has lately made a limning of the ceiling of St Machar's Church, which ceiling was executed in the reign of James V. with some additions in the reign of Queen Mary; and I dare say, from what I learnt from Thomson, that he would be easily induced to present it to the Society.

This work in St Machar's Church was executed at the same time, and by the same artist, with the ceiling of the refectory of the King's College, and is of good workmanship. On the ceiling are the armorial bearings of the reigning sovereigns in Europe, the succession of bishops of Aberdeen, and of the clergy and nobility of Scotland, donors to the Church of Old Aberdeen. In the Faculty Rooms there is a painting by Gordon of Straloch of the Old College, as it was in the reign of James VI. with the Students represented in their collegiate gowns and caps.

Bailie Duff of Aberdeen has an original portrait of Archbishop Adamson.

Professor Ogilvie has given encouragement to a young man of the name of Robertson, who is a house-painter at Aberdeen, and obliged to work in that profession for his sustenance, but has a good taste in drawing, and draws correctly. The professor proposes to employ him in making drawings of the tombs and other remains of antiquity in Old Aberdeen, and to make drawings likewise from the above mentioned portraits. Professors Ogilvie and Gordon informed me that William Henry Scougall died of the effects of an unfortunate and hopeless passion for a married lady in Aberdeen, and ended his days in a room in one of the steeples of the Cathedral Church of St Andrew's. He was so corpulent at the time of his death, that to bring him they were forced to hoist the coffin out at the window of his room, the door being too small to admit of its being conveyed out by that passage.

Having visited Lord Kintore at Keith Hall, I took occasion to examine the Bas of Inverury, which evidently appears to have been a mount artificially raised to commemorate the place of interment of some person of eminence; and it still continues to be a place of interment to the people of Inverury. Bas, in old Irish, signifies death; and I am persuaded all our Basses in Ireland and Scotland were places of interment, such as the Bass of the Forth, the Bass of the Dun, or Duni-bas (Dunipace,) the Bass of Inverury, &c. &c. The Bass of the Forth, by us called Kalexochin. *The Bass* was, I believe, a burying-place for lepers, and those who died of pestilential disorders.

I enquired, while in the North, concerning ancient MSS. in private collections. Lord Forbes has the best copy of Spalding's History; Mr Fraser of Fraserfield has a considerable part of the History wanting in Lord Forbes's copy.

Mr Constable, at Dundee, is searching for ancient deeds relating to the Antiquities of that Town, and, I heard, was meditating an History of it, and of the Religious Houses formerly established there.

Mr Hutton of the Royal Artillery Company continues his researches into our Ecclesiastical Antiquities with unabating application, and has received many communications from the North. The final result of this gentleman's enquiries will be a specimen of

a Monasticon Scotiaæ, which, with the ground-work laid by Spottiswoode, may be more easily accomplished than hitherto. If you think these memoranda worth the Society's time, to amuse for half an hour, you may take occasion to communicate them when nothing more interesting happens to be upon your table.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient humble servant,

BUCHAN.

Mr James Cummyng, Secretary, &c.