

III.

NOTES FROM SOME UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE INSURRECTION IN ORKNEY IN 1614. By EDWARD PEACOCK, Esq., F.S.A.

The insurrection raised in Orkney in the year 1614 by Robert Stewart, base son of Robert Earl of Orkney, is noticed but slightly by Scottish historians. Indeed, but few details of the event have been preserved. Almost all the original records now extant connected with this turmoil have, however, been printed in Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials*, iii. 272, &c., but the following documents are not to be found in that valuable collection. I was unaware of their existence until my attention was drawn to them by Thomas Dickson, Esq., the present learned curator of the Historical Department of the General Register House.

The civil war in Orkney began in July 1614 by Robert Stewart assembling a body of men, who gained possession of the castle and the tower of the church at Kirkwall and proceeded to hold them as fortresses on behalf of the Earl of Orkney, at that time a prisoner in Dumbarton Castle.

George, fifth Earl of Caithness, was at once despatched to reduce the rebels to obedience. It is said that he "sued and laboured much to be employed in that service," and that he took it on the understanding that he should perform the duties thereof "without great charges to the king."¹

In the month of August the expedition which he had fitted out was ready to depart. Before it sailed the Earl executed the following obligation, a document which seems to imply that the service in which he was engaged was considered as much his own business as that of the crown:—

[*Reg. Secret Council—Acta penes, Marchiarum 1608-1623*, p. 119.]

"Apud Edinburgh, xij Augusti 1614."

"We George Erl of Caithnes lord Sinclair & Lieutennent constitute be cure souerane lord with aduise of the lordis of his maisteis priuie counsaill for repressing of the present rebellioun within Orkney and

¹ Gordon, *Genealog. Hist. of Earldom of Sutherland*, 229, 300.

reduceand of that countrie to his maiesteis obedience, be the tennour heir of grant vs to haif ressaut furth of his maiesties castle of Edinburgh fra the constable and keeparis thairof, ane grite cannoun callit thrown mow, markit with the porcapine, and ane battert marked with the salamander¹ with hail furnitor careage and ornamentis of the said peeceis according to ane inventar maid and sett down be James Murray master of his maiesteis workes, and that for the better furtherance of his maiesteis seruice within the said countrey of Orknay. And we bind and obleis ws to haif a special cair of the preservatioun of the saidis peecees, and that we sall send thame bak againe, God willing, in his maiesteis schip frauchte for this seruice and redelyuir the same vpon the shoir of Leyt with the first occasioun eftir the accomplisheing of this seruice. In wites quhair of we haif subscribit this presentes with oure hand at Edinburgh the xij day of August the yere of God MVI^c and fourtene zeiris Before this witness. James Prymrois clerk of the counsell.

“ Sic sub^{tur} CAITHNES

“ J. PRYMROIS wites.”

The Register of the Secret Council from which the above is transcribed furnishes a few other details. The ship in which the Earl and his company sailed was called the “Poise,” and they were accompanied by “John Skennire chirurgane, who had for his kirst and furnishing of drogges, meete for chirurgie. . . . ane hundreth pundes.” They were accompanied by Robert Winrahame, “herauld” Johnne Johnnestoun “trumpetor,” James Hammiltoun and Johnne Quhyte “wryghtes,” James Workeman and James Gairdner “cannonaris,” and a smith called Martine Sheill. The Bishop of Orkney also went with the expedition, but not very willingly it would seem, for he alleged to the Council that

¹The salamander in the midst of flames, with the motto “*NUTRISCO ET EXTINGUO*,” was the motto of Francis I. of France. It is said to have been invented by Artus de Gouffier-Boisy, a Poitevin gentleman, who was the king’s literary preceptor, for the purpose of symbolising the fiery spirit of his pupil. In the chateau of Amboise panel-work yet exists charged with “the F couronné for François and the C couronné for Claude” his queen, and mingled with them are his device of the salamander, with its motto and hers, the ermine passant.—See *Feudal Castles of France*, 29, 50.

he "had mony lattes and impedimentis quhilkis might hinder him at this time." (Pp. 97-99.)

The Fellows of this Society have no little reason to be thankful that his Lorship did consent to join the array. Had it not been for his good offices, the cathedral of Kirkwall would have shared the same unhappy fate as that which has befallen so many of the noblest ecclesiastical structures that were once the glory of Scotland. Gordon, in his account of these transactions, tells us that "the steiple of the church of Kirkway was first besieged, which after a little time was yielded. Then the Earl of Catteynes went about to demolish and throw down the church; but he was with great difficultie hindered and stayed by the bishop of Orknay, who wold not suffer him to throw it down." (P. 300.)

[*Reg. Secret Council—Acta penes, Marchiarum 1608-1623, p. 119.*]

"Inventrie maid at leyth the xvj of August 1614 off the ordnance and mvnitioun with vther provisionis delyuerit to my lord Erll of Caithnes his maiesteis Lieutennent direct to orknay be his maiesteis direction in his hienes seruice for repressing of ane rebellious committit thair aganis his maiestie quhairof the said Erll grantis the ressett as followis vnder his LP handwreate

"Item ane cannoun called throwne mouth marked with the porkaupyne with hir stok and quheillis all garnished with yron work with hir ladillis sponge and worme.

"Item thriescoir of bullettis for the said cannoun

"Item tua hailling towis of the said cannoun

"Item ane battart marked with the solamander, flowre de luce, and ef¹ with hir stok and quheillis all garnished with yron work with hir ladillis spounge and worme with thriescoir bullettis and tua hailling towis

"Item auchtene swesis and hand spokis and sex weidgeis

"Item ane pair of feises with hir balk and soall

"Item of pouldar fourscoir tua stane sex pund wey¹

"Item of Lwnt fyve stane four pund weyght

¹ This piece of ordnance may probably have belonged at one time to Queen Mary's first husband.

- " Item four oxe hydys and twelff schein skynns
- " Item ane barrill of butter contening ane stane weght
- " Item threttie ane stane ten pund four vnce weght of leid
- " Item fyve dusone of schoillis and sex spaidis and twelff mattokis
- " Item fyve gevillokis weyand nyne stane and tua pund wey^t
- " Item tua querrell mellis and sex wedgeis
- " Item four crawyronis.
- " Item sex hammeris for wrichtis
- " Item ane pair of smythis belleis with ane studie weyand stane wey^t with tua foir hammeris ane hand hammer and ane paire of tayngis with the brandering and kowe yron of the belleis, cleif yron and studie stok
- " Item aucht stane wey^t of naillis grite and small in ane barrell.
- " Item ane litle barrell full of grite garroun naillis
- " Item tua barrell with cuttit yron for hailshott
- " Item fourtie fyve of skullis and creillis
- " Item an hundreth daillis
- " Item fyve dusone of double rooff sparris
- " Item twa hundreth wicker sparris
- " Item tua thousand girth stingis quhair of ane thousand clowin
- " Item tua hundreth double rungis for letheris
- " Item some grite wyer
- " Item sex grite Jestis of threttie futis of lenth
- " Item ane vther Jest cutt in ten peeceis for blokis
- " Item fourscoir and six fadome of grite takill weyand twenty ane stane and ellevin pund wey^t
- " Item threttie fadome of small tow weyand fyiftene pund and ane half
- " Item ane schellop and ane yron bolt
- " Item sex plankis threttie tua fute of lenth
- " Item auchtene naillis for schoune
- " Item sex pair wendbandis
- " Item an trest
- " Item tua rowaris.
- " Item an grite kist with lockis and bandis
- " Item tua grite yron ladillis"

(P. 121.)

“Item ane grite cart with wheillis tramis axtrie with virrallis busheis and doulbandis.

“Item mair sex grite double blokis garnisht with thair scheafis and strapis

“Item ane hand chanyie to the cannoun of the kingis cullouris
“Sic sub^{ur} CAITHNES”

(An Unbound Account on two sheets of folio paper.)

“Kirkwall.

“The compt of the haill furnishing to the bark deburset in Orkney May 1613.

“Item to thrie men that calffit the outwth buird and inwth buird and the schip boit xiiij^s iiij^d; the man xxiiij dayis: in all xlviij^{li}

“Item for pik and tar to Joⁿ Sinclair merchand xvij^{li} iiij^s vj^d

“Item to James Layng smy^t, for boutis, carvall naillis, ringis and vther iron work xxiiij^{li}

“Item to W^a Guid, blok makir, for thrie dussoun of grit and small blokis at iiiij^{li} the dussoun, in all xij^{li}

“Item for calffing to calfat the schip v^{li}

“Item for plait led to naill on the schip l^{li} iiiij^s

“Item to W^a Coventrie for plens^r naillis ij^{li} x^s

“Item for ane Iron trans to the foir top mast xxxvj^s

“Item for towing the schip out of oyse qⁿ scho wes dres (?) xl^s

“Item for ballasting of hir ij^{li} x^s

“Item to Ro^t Ormistoun in Westray for four stane of taikle x^{li} xiiij^s iiij^d

“Item for pompe leder j^{li} iiiij^s

“Item for thrie compassis and ane night glas iiiij^{li} x^s

“Item Airthure Sinclair for ij stane of taikle v^{li} vj^s viij^d

“Item for sex eln of hardin to mend the main bonet ij^{li} viij^s

“Item for four airis to the schip boit ij^{li}

“Item for ane led and ane led lyne ij^{li} x^s

“Item for thrie pund of twyne j^{li} x^s

“Item for ten eln of hardin to mend the foir top sail iiiij^{li}

“Item for four pund of tallon to the tostis xiiij^s iiij^d

- " Item for sex pece of cruikit tymer to the boit ijⁱⁱ
 " Item for the cumpanyis wages xxxⁱⁱ
 " Item of malt ij^m¹ ij^{stis}²
 " Item four dusson of fisch xlviij fisch
 " Item of meill viij^{stis}
 " Item for ane aix and hammir and a spyssing, I bocht in Zetland xlviijⁱⁱ
 " Item for pump naill xvj^s
 " Item for auld taikle, I bocht fra Dutchmen in Zetland vjⁱⁱ xi^s
 " Item for bakneill x^s
 " Item for roset I bocht in Zetland l^s

 " My debursment in August in Leyth
 " Item for twa shod schuillis xxiiij^s
 " Item for ane boit to sek the ankir we tynt in Leyth Raid iiijⁱⁱ
 " Item for the men in Kinghorne denner that weyit the ankir xxiiij^s
 " Item twa stane of candell vⁱⁱ vj^s viij^d
 " Item for twa hundreth dowble naill jⁱⁱ xij^s
 " Item for twa sparis vj^s
 " Item for aucht daillis to dres the cwe iiijⁱⁱ
 " Item for lok and bandes to the cwe dur jⁱⁱ
 " Item for missan mast ijⁱⁱ
 " Item for twa pund of twine jⁱⁱ
 " Item for thrie stringis to be welding to the schroudis jⁱⁱ xvj^s
 " Item for the schipis ankerage in Bruntiland xij^s iiij^d
 " Item for the schipis ankerage in Leyth and shoir siluer xxiiij^s iv^d
 " Item to Gabriell Rankine for ane cable and vther takle containning
 threscoir stanne at l^s the stane, in all j^c lⁱⁱ

 " My debursment in October in Orknay
 " Item for two dussun and ane half of harden to beit the mainsail xⁱⁱ
 " Item for ane chenye that wes maid vp on the sey viij^s

 " My debursment in January 1614
 " Item for ane boit to tow the schip into the harbrie the first nicht
 scho come in ijⁱⁱ iii^s
 " Item for ane daill of coillis and ane half^s iiijⁱⁱ vj^s

¹ Merk.² Seteen.

"My debursment in February 1614.

"Item for ane cable fra Gabriell Rankyne of xxxiiij stane wecht at l' the stane, in all lxxxij^l x^s

"Item for xxv dussoun of canues to be cors and bonet of ane main saill and cors and bonnet of a foir saill at ij^l ilk dussun qlk is in all lxxv^l

"Item for fyve stane wecht of taikle to be boutraipis and ane bwrvp xij^l x^s

"Item for tailie stringis to be vlyeitis and keis ij^l

"Item for aucht punde of twyne to sew ye saillis ij^l

"Item for making of the saillis x^l

"Item for my awin charges from the begynning of Maj to the first March at xx^l in ye moneth for ten monethis 200^l

"The haill compt in siluer is 1045^l 8^s 4^d

"The haill malt to the schip is 33^m 2^{stis}

"The meill is in all 13^m iij^{stis}

"The hail fish is 20 dussoun

"The beff is of ballis v ballis¹

(*In dorso.*)

"Copy of the compt gevin in be Sir James Stewart anent the Bark and his servandis expensis in Orknay."

(*Account of Damage done by the Rebels, two sheets.*)

"Intromettet with furt of the barnyard of Birsay xviiij^{xx} thraisis of beir whilk being reknit at twa thresis the boll extendis in beir to ix^{xx} bol beir

"xx^{xx} thraises aitiss estimat at ij thraises the boll, extendis in aitiss to x^{xx} bol aitiss

"teynd fische and salt of the Doger bottis, extendis to lxx bolis the teynd of ilk bott being reknit to xxij^l and the salt at ij^l ilk barreil extendis in the haill in moneye to the summe of

"fra James Spens twa ky, twa hors estimat to the sume of xl^l

"xvj Lespund of woll at liij^s iij^d the pund."

Only the first of the foregoing inventories is given *in extenso*. From the two latter only such passages have been culled as seemed noteworthy.

¹ Barrels.