

III.

NOTICE OF AN OLD HERALDIC IRON DOOR KNOCKER FROM MEIKLEOUR, NEAR BLAIRGOWRIE. BY ROBERT CRAUFURD WALKER, F.S.A. Scot.

The fine heraldic knocker, shown in fig. 1, was recently discovered by Mr James Isles, F.S.A. Scot., of St. Ninians, Blairgowrie, in an old house in the village of Meikleour. It had evidently been on the hall door of Meikleour House in former days. It is of wrought iron, and is very interesting, both on account of its age, 1682, and from the fact that it has on it the armorial bearings of Sir James Mercer of Meikleour and Aldie, and his wife Dame Jean Stewart. Above the arms are the letters S.I.M. and D.I.S. The arms are cut through the iron. They are on the dexter [on a fesse] three bezants between three crosses patée in chief and a mullet in base, being the well known arms of Mercer, and on the sinister a fesse chequy between three mullets in chief, and a lymphad or galley in base, being an adaptation of the armorial bearings of Stewart of Grandtully, who properly quartered the galley with the Stewart fesse.



Fig. 1.

Sir James Mercer of Meikleour, Knight and Baronet, married Jean, eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Stewart of Grandtully, by whom he had five daughters. Sir James was taken prisoner on the Braes of Angus, in 1645, after the battle of Kilsyth, and was appointed Gentleman Usher to Charles II. in 1671.

The present house of Meikleour was built about 1734 and enlarged in 1870. The former house, which is said to have had a thatched roof, stood about 150 yards in front of the present building. It was burnt down about the beginning of last century. In the older portion of Meikleour House is a stair of black oak, which is said to have been made from wood found in the River Tay by William Dewar, a joiner, who, tradition says, was brought from Aldie to do the work. His descendants are still living at Meikleour.

There is an interesting Market Cross in the pretty village of Meikleour. It is dated 1698. Two ash trees beside it are said to have been planted to commemorate the coronation of Charles II.

The estate of Meikleour now belongs to the Marquis of Lansdowne, who is descended from Sir James Mercer in the female line.