

II.—*An Account of St Columba's Abbey, Inchcolm. Accompanied with Plans, &c.*¹ (Plates IV.-VI.)

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[Communicated January 11, 1869, with an Introductory Note.]

NEAR the northern shores of the Firth of Forth, and within sight of Edinburgh, lies the island anciently known as Emona, and in later times as Inchcolm, the island of St Columba. It is of very small extent, scarcely over half a mile in length, and 400 feet in width at its broadest part. The tide of commerce and busy life which ebbs and flows around has left the little inch in a solitude as profound as if it gemmed the bosom of some Highland loch, a solitude which impresses itself deeply on the stranger who comes to gaze on its ruined, deserted, and forgotten Abbey. Few even of those who visit the island from the beautiful village of Aberdour, close to it, know anything of its history, and as few out of sight of the island know of its existence at all.

But although now little known beyond the shores of the Forth, Inchcolm formerly held a high place in the veneration of the Scottish people as the cradle of the religious life of the surrounding districts, and was second only to Iona as a holy isle in whose sacred soil it was the desire of many generations to be buried. It numbered amongst its abbots men of high position and learning. Noble benefactors enriched it with broad lands and rich gifts, and its history and remains, like the strata of some old mountain, bear the marks of every great wave of life which has passed over our country.

Picts, Scots, Danes, and English have all been associated with the chequered history of the lonely island, where lie the bones of saints and nobles, monks and soldiers, the patrons, the brethren, and the spoilers of its ancient church, mingled together in this Iona of the east.

Apart from the interest arising from such associations, this venerable monastery, notwithstanding that tempest, wars, and ruthless vandalism

¹ See Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries. Vol. VIII. p. 46.

have laid much of it in ruins, still preserves more of its original plan than any abbey in Scotland, presenting many peculiarities of arrangement to be found in no other building of the kind in Britain.

From the position of Inchcolm in the centre of the mediæval as of the modern life of Scotland, it maintained its ancient importance long after many of the famous houses of the primitive Scottish Church had fallen into decay, but for the same reason it suffered much from the hostile fleets which made piratical expeditions to the Forth, or were employed in conjunction with an invading force on shore. To the notices of such events, and incidental references in the early Chronicles, we are chiefly indebted for what we are able to gather of the history of this Abbey.

In the prosecution of their pious labours in Scotland, the first missionaries generally planted their stations on islands, as offering protection against the sudden attacks of men and beasts, and in many instances they chose such islands as had already a certain odour of sanctity, from having been the worshipping places of the pagan priesthood whom they supplanted. In the west, St Columba established himself at Iona, which became the centre of a group of "holy isles," the residence of hermits who sought to emulate the austerities and pious works of their leader. But the labours of that great apostle were not confined to one province; his object was personally, or by his followers, to evangelise the whole country. Having no doubt in view the importance of the districts around the Firth of Forth, he came hither in person to preach to the Picts and Scots, and we are told in "The Book of Cupar"¹ that he then occupied the island of *Æmonia*,² "Saint Colmes Inch *vulgariter nuncupatur*." It was here, then, and by the hands of St Columba himself, that the light of the gospel was first kindled in the east of Scotland.

¹ A name given to one of the MSS. of the *Scotichronicon*: "Quam quondam incoluit, dum Pictis et Scotis fidem prædicavit, Sanctus Columba, Abbas."—See "*Scotichronicon*," edited by Walter Goodall, 1759, lib. i. cap. 6, (foot note).

² The fine old name *Emona* is compounded of *I*, *Y*, or *E*, an island, and *mon*, Latinised to *mona*, an isolated situation, an island. The first syllable is found in *I-ona*, *I-corm-kill*, or, as it was more commonly called, *I* or *Y*, the island, par excellence. *Mon* occurs in *Man* (the Isle of), *Mona* (Anglesey, the chief seat of the Druids), *Pomona*, *Cramond*, &c.; possibly also in a contracted form in *I-ona*, though this is generally understood as *I-thona*, the island of the waves. If it is as we have suggested, the name *Emona* may have been given by St Columba or his followers in honour of their chief seat in the west, which they desired to emulate in the east of Scotland. Probably the Celtic missionaries added the generic name *I* to the older name

There can be no doubt that on his departure the Saint left behind him some of his disciples to carry on the good work, and that, as Christianity increased, many labourers were found willing to assist. We know that not long afterwards the other islands in the Forth were occupied by holy men. In Inchkeith, St Adamnan, the biographer of St Columba, and Abbot of Iona, was a monk, and here he received St Servanus and his companions on their arrival in this part of Scotland. The Bass was for some time the abode of St Baldred, the "apostle of the Lothians;" and the Isle of May was hallowed by the martyrdom of St Adrian and his brethren.

We have no further reference to Inchcolm from the first establishment of a Culdean mission station, about the end of the sixth century, till the middle of the ninth century, when the Scots were frequently called on to repel the Danish invaders, who were a source of constant annoyance, till the battle of Largs freed the country for ever from the unwelcome strangers.

Holinshed relates how, after a victory over the Danes, the people made procession to all places of the realm, returning thanks to God; but whilst thus engaged word was brought that another fleet had arrived at Kinghorn, sent by Canute, king of England, to revenge his brother Sweno's overthrow. To resist this invasion, Macbeth and Banquo were sent with the king's authority, who having with them a sufficient force, encountered the enemy, slew part of them, and chased the others to their ships.

"They that escaped and got once to their ships obtained of Macbeth, for a great summe of gold, that such of their friends as were slaine at this last bickering might be buried in Saint Colmes Inch. In memorie whereof manie old sepultures are yet in the said Inch there to be seen graven with the

mona, thus repeating the idea of an island, much in the same way as we say the island of Inch-corm, the river Avon, &c., or as it was reiterated in the phrase, the island of E-mona. The more modern name Inchcolm, from the Gaelic, *Inch*, an island, and *Colm*, or Columba, answers to the name by which Iona is now generally known—I-corm-kill, the island of Columba of the cells, or the island of the cell or church of Columba. It might be suggested that Emona is but a monkish form of the Gaelic *E-monaugh*, high or hilly, but the etymology given above is more probably the true one. A note in Chambers's Gazetteer of Scotland says, "A Gaelic antiquary will detect in this euphonious Latin name, 'the isle of the Druids,' which shows that, like many other Catholic institutions, the monastery of Inchcolm must have been planted on a place of heathen worship."

armes of the Danes as the maner of burieng noble men still is and heretofore hath been used."

Shakespeare, following the narrative of Holinshed, in his tragedy of "Macbeth," refers to the incident, and has perpetuated the memory of the venerable isle by recording its name in his immortal pages. In Act I. Scene II., Rosse, after giving an account of the victory over the Norwegians (Danes), concludes,—

"Rosse.—That now
Sweno, the Norways' King, craves composition ;
Nor would we deign him burial of his men
Till he disbursed, at Saint Colme's Inch,
Ten thousand dollars to our general use."

It is evident that the island had been long revered as consecrated ground, as the Iona of the east, where the right of burial was a privilege worth purchasing for a great sum. Perhaps it shared with its sister isle in the prophecy, which foretold that seven years before the great day of doom a deluge should cover Ireland and the countries round, but that Columba's happy isle would still lift its head above the flood. Though in earlier times the Danes had repeatedly burnt down the monastery of Iona, and even at this time were not clear of the charge of pillaging it when opportunity offered, they seem, nevertheless, to have had a high veneration for St Columba. Saints were not common in their own country; and this one was so much after their own mind, and had such miraculous power over the winds and waves,¹ with which they were daily contending, that it is not to be wondered at, that of all saints they should show most respect for one so highly renowned, and who might at the same time be useful in their way of life.

Most probably the original buildings of wood-framing, filled in between with wicker-work, covered with the skins of animals, and roofed with thatch, such as were usually constructed by the early Celtic missionaries, had, some time before the events we have just referred to, been replaced by larger buildings of rough rubble masonry and lime. It is true the "Roman manner" of building had been long previously introduced, but building in

¹ The Monks of the West, vol. iii. ch. 6.

that style, of hewn stone, must have been very rare before the days of St Margaret. The church of Whitherne was in all probability built for St Ninian by workmen from France, assisted by the Christianised Roman soldiers then occupying Valentia, and engaged in constructing the wall between the Forth and Clyde, while the importance given by Bede to the fact of the introduction of builders from Jarrow to erect a church at Abernethy, implies that such works were very uncommon, and that the Scots and Picts were not able of themselves to construct them.

We now come to the account of the foundation of the Abbey by Alexander I., as given by Fordun in his "Scotichronicon," lib. v. ch. 37. "De fundatione monasterii canonicorum de Scona, et Sancti Columbæ de Æmonia :"—

"About the year of our Lord 1123, not less miraculously than wonderfully, was founded the monastery of St Columba, of the island of Æmona, near Inverkeithin.

"When the noble and most Christian king, Lord Alexander, first of that name, upon certain business of state, was crossing the Queen's Ferry, he was overtaken by a fierce tempest, blowing from the south, so that the sailors were compelled to make for the island of Æmonia, where there lived a solitary hermit, who devoted himself to the service or rule of St Columba, living in a cell, and supporting himself on the milk of a cow, and the shellfish which he collected on the shore. On these things the king and his companions subsisted for three days, during which they were detained by the storm.

"But when in the greatest peril of the sea and the raging tempest, when fearing and despairing for their lives, the king made a vow to the saint, that if he would bring them safe to that island, he would there found a monastery to his honour, which would become an asylum and refuge for sailors and shipwrecked persons.

"Thus it came to pass that he there founded a monastery of monks, such as exists at present ; both because he had always from his youth venerated St Columba with special honour, and also because his parents were long deprived of the comfort of a child, until by devoutly supplicating this saint, they gloriously obtained what they had so long earnestly desired. Whence the verses—

‘ M. C. ter, I. bis, et X. literis à tempore Christi,
 Æmon, tunc ab Alexandro fundata fuisti
 Scotorum primo. Structorem canonicorum
 Transferat ex imo Deus hunc ad alta polorum.’”

Whatever truth there may be in the romantic yet not altogether improbable story, there is no doubt but that a body of Augustinians was settled here by Alexander, in pursuance of the policy carried out by all the sons of St Margaret, of gradually displacing the early Scottish or Culdean clergy in favour of the Romish orders. The monks were brought to Inchcolm from the Abbey of Scone, founded in 1114 by the same king, who settled there a colony of Austin canons from St Oswalds at Nostell, near Pontefract. These canons were amongst the first Romish monks brought into the country; and the selection of the order displayed some shrewdness on the part of the king, for of all others, their rule most nearly resembled that followed by the disciples of St Columba.¹ When the Canons Regular were sent to a Culdee house, the old clergy were warned that they must either live on good terms with the new comers, or leave. Of course, though many reconciled themselves to the new faith, a large number either left the new foundations, or remained, as at St Andrews', to wage a long and unsuccessful battle with the usurpers and their new creed.

Alexander, we are further told, richly endowed his foundation. Probably the monastery was begun soon after; and the massive buildings on three sides of the cloister court may be portions of the works then carried out; but these parts are so devoid of architectural details, that we cannot from the work itself confirm the probability, though there is nothing to militate against it.

In the reign of Alexander III., Allan de Mortuo Mari, or Mortimer, lord of the manor of Aberdour, purchased the right of interment in the church of Inchcolm Abbey by a grant of the western half of his lands. The Register of the Abbey says, that “Alanus de Mortuo Mari, miles, Dominus de Abir-

¹ The Augustinian monks, called Canons Regular, or Austin Canons, were less strict in their rule than ordinary monks; in this respect they occupied a place between monks and secular canons. They were often called Black Canons, in contradistinction to the Premonstratensians, a reformed branch of Augustinians called White Canons. Their habit was a long black cassock, with a white rochet above it, with a black cloak and hood over all. They wore beards and caps, which further distinguished them from ordinary monks.

daur dedit omnes et totas dimidietates Terrarum Villæ suæ de Abirdaur, Deo et Monachis de Insulâ Sancti Columbi, pro sepulturâ sibi et posteris suis in Ecclesia dicti Monasterii." The family of the Mortimers had acquired the lordship of Aberdour by the marriage of one of their ancestors in 1216, during the reign of David I., with Anicca, only daughter and sole heiress of "Dominus Joannes de Vetere Ponte or Vypont," to whom it anciently belonged.¹

The munificent benefactor of the Abbey (spoken of in the records of the monastery as its founder) does not appear to have secured the privilege of burial on the island, for which he had paid so generously. The legend, as given by Sibbald, tells that "the founder, Allan Mortimer, being dead, the monks, carrying his corpse in a coffin of lead, by barge, in the night time, to be interred within their church, some wicked monks did throw the same in a great deep betwixt the land and the monastery, which to this day, by the neighbouring fishermen and salters, is called Mortimer's deep."

Let us hope, for the credit of the brethren of St Columba, that the danger of crossing a rough sea with such a load proved too much for their frail bark, and that when they threw the dead body of their benefactor overboard, their honour was saved by the imminence of the danger to the living.

In the year 1265, according to the "Scotichronicon," "Richard, Bishop of Dunkeld, built the new choir in St Columba of Emonia at his own expense, whose soul, therefore, God bless. Amen." This Richard was Chamberlain of Scotland from 1255 to 1257; and on his death, in 1272, his body was interred in Dunkeld, and his heart was laid in the north wall of the choir of Inchcolm, which he had built.²

¹ Sir R. Sibbald's "History of Fife," &c. This moiety of the lands of Aberdour, with its ancient castle and church, afterwards passed to the Douglas family; and William, Lord of Liddesdale, "The Flower of Chivalry," conveyed it by charter, in the reign of David II., to James Douglas, ancestor of the present house of Morton. William, Eighth Earl, who died 1648, was Lord High Treasurer, and by his influence the town of Aberdour was made a Burgh of Royalty. The title, Lord Aberdour, is borne by the eldest sons of the Earls of Morton.

² Scotia Sacra of Father Augustine Hay, M.S. "Scotichronicon," lib. x. cap. 20 and 30. The "Scotichronicon" contains many brief references to Bishops of Dunkeld buried at Inchcolm, lib. viii. cap. 75; ix. cap. 27; x. cap. 21; x. cap. 30. Dunkeld, it will be remembered, received the body of St Columba after its removal from Iona, and it is therefore not easy to find a reason for this preference of Inchcolm over Dunkeld, unless we venture to suppose that the relics of the great apostle of the Scots had been subsequently transferred to "St Columba's Emona."

The original church, built by Alexander, had probably been found too mean for the increased wealth and importance of the Abbey, and the new church was no doubt a contribution to the works of reconstruction then being carried out. The chapterhouse, the offices to the north, and the tower, must have been erected about this time, for the successive spoliations of the monastery which we have now to record would so impoverish and dishearten the community, that further building operations would not be undertaken, at least till a period later than that indicated by the style of the parts we have named.¹

The Abbey, as it now stood fresh from the builder's hands, must have been very beautiful; and when we bear in mind its reputed wealth, drawn from lands on both sides of the Forth, and its exposed situation, we cannot wonder that the English fleets which scoured the Scottish coast during the wars of independence should soon find their way to Inchcolm. The account of the first spoliation in 1335 is very fully recorded in the pages of Fordun and other chronicles. We quote a portion of the metrical version of the history of Hector Boece,² written about 1531-35:—

¹ On the chapter seal of Inchcolm "is engraved a view of the ancient church, and on the counter side a lymphad, or one-masted galley, the means of communication between the brotherhood and the outer world. The church is represented as consisting of a nave and choir, with a central tower surmounted by a spire, and with plain round headed windows in the choir. All the impressions are very imperfect, but no doubt represent the original structure of the twelfth century."—*Wilson's "Prehistoric Annals,"* vol. ii. p. 372. The description of this seal, and that of an Abbot of Inchcolm, is thus given in Laing's (Henry) "Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Scottish Seals" (Edin. 1850):—"Incholme, Abbot of—A very pretty design of two figures in a galley with the sails furled; one of the figures appears to be St Columba, and the other a monk, each holding a crozier, and engaged in prayer. 'S'ABBATIS DE INSULA SANCTI COLUMB.' Detached seal, Chapter House, Westminster Incholme, Monastery of—A much damaged seal; a building probably intended for the monastery; above the roof appears to have been a crescent and mullet. Counter seal of the east. A galley of one mast without sails; in the upper part a mullet. The inscriptions on both these seals are illegible. Appended to a Tack by James, Commendator of the monastery, to James Millar, of the teinds of the sister lands of Aberdour, A.D. 1577. Morton Charters."

² The Buik of the Chronicles of Scotland; or, a Metrical Version of the History of Hector Boece. By William Stewart, &c., 1858. Vol. iii. p. 326. Published by the Master of the Rolls.

“ Ane hundreth schippis and auchtie, to conclude,
That samin tyme he furneist to the flude
Quhilk into Forth, as my author did sa,
Arryuit all besyde Emonia,
Sanct Colmis Insche is callit now to name.
That halie place quhilk wes ay of greit fame,
And of religioun haldin ay the rois,
As the charbokill of all stonis the chois,
Thir pagane pepill without fidelitie,
In thair shippis war liand on the se,
Into that place, tha landit on ane da,
And spulzeit it, as my author did sa,
Of chaleis, crowat, and censuris also
Corsis, chandillaris, and mony relictis mo,
Of siluer fyne nane better on the mold,
And vestimentis of birneist silk and gold,
And buikis, bellis, and nane better mycht be,
Syne with that spulzie passit to the sea,
Quhat wes the end quha lykis for to speir
Tak tent to me and I sall tell zou heir.”

The chronicler goes on to say that, a short while after, as they were leaving, arose a great storm, which damaged the ships and drowned all who were engaged in the robbery. The rest, understanding that this was sent by the vengeance of Heaven,

“ At the requeist of this ilk halie man
That aucht the place, quhilk tha haid spulzeit than,”

fell on their knees and prayed to St Columba, vowing that if preserved out of this peril they would return all the spoil. “ Incontinent with that the stour did ceis,” upon which they fulfilled their vow. Another account¹ says, they had taken, amongst other statues and images, a famous one of St Columba, which was kept in the church—that the ship was driven on the rocks at Inchkeith, and that the repentant sailors landed the saint at Kinghorn, whereupon a favourable wind sprang up, which carried them safely out of the Forth.

The terror inspired by such a warning that the mighty Saint was not to

¹ Given in Grose's “ Antiquities of Scotland.”

be offended with impunity, soon passed away; and again, in the following year, 1336, we have the sacrilege repeated. One of the ships of an English fleet then ravaging the Fife coast came to

“ Sanct Colmis Kirk, within the se that stude,
And spulzeit all that pleasand fair Abba.”

The plunder is described as very large, and particular reference is made to a beautiful carved wainscot, probably a reredos, with which the choir was adorned. The gentle robbers carefully removed this, so that it could be refitted to adorn some southern church. But the vengeance of the outraged St Columba awaited them. They had just cleared off from the island, when suddenly the vessel sank like lead, and all were lost. This second and more terrible judgment made the name of the Scottish saint a name of fear amongst these English invaders; “their countrymen said that he should be called, not St Columba, but St. Quhalme—that is to say, the Saint of Sudden Death.”¹

The impression thus produced was, however, not more lasting than the effect of previous warnings, and for the third time we have to record an attack on the monastery, more fierce and wanton than the foregoing, to be followed by a still more signal display of the power of the patron to protect his church and votaries. The fleet of Richard Second, in 1384, sailed up the Forth and landed at Inchcolm, plundered the Abbey, and distributed to the soldiers the riches of gold and silver, and “other geir,” which they took. This being done, they proceeded to fire the building, and

“ Except the kirk, brynt all the laif on fyre.”

The chroniclers tell that a son of Belial attempted to set the church on fire three times, but that the flames ever went out of themselves; or, as another account has it, the guardian saint changed the winds and blew back the flames. Seeing this, the would-be incendiary went suddenly mad, and tore himself, rending the flesh from his bones. The booty being carried to the ship, the spoilers set sail and landed at Queensferry, where they began to “rive” the cattle, when they were attacked by “Thomas and

¹ Monks of the West, vol. iii. chap. 8.

Nicholas Erskine and Alexander de Lyndesay, with fifty horse from the east, and William Conyngham of Kilmaurs with thirty from the west." The robbers were routed, many slain, and the rest driven back to their ships, leaving the mad ringleader in the attempt to fire the church a prisoner in the hands of the Scots, who slew him, and buried his corpse "in a crossway near the town of Dunipace." Those who escaped made such haste to reach the ship, that forty of them caught hold of the rope which held it, and tried to clamber on board, but the Scots being close behind, wishing to prevent the escape of the ships, secured the end of the cable, upon which those on board cut the rope, and let all that clung to it into the sea, where they were drowned, or returning to land were killed. We are informed that the men who thus lost their lives at the very moment when they appeared to have escaped, were such as had been foremost in plundering and firing the Abbey of St Columba. After this signal act of retribution, the community enjoyed the peaceful occupation of their monastery till its dissolution at the Reformation.

These accounts enable us to form some idea of the wealth and grandeur of this little Abbey, and the comparative poverty to which it must have been suddenly reduced. The effects of fire on such structures as were built in the middle ages, with floor, walls, and ceiling of stone, would be to destroy all fittings and furniture of a perishable kind, and to leave the main fabric of the buildings comparatively uninjured, except the outer roofs over the vaulting, which, catching the fire bursting from the windows, would be very soon consumed. The chapter house must have escaped scathless, as such apartments would scarcely have furniture in them sufficient to make a fire that would seriously damage it. We read of no rebuilding after this time, and, as we have already noticed, the present remains undoubtedly belong to a period anterior to these assaults.

In 1402 was founded the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, adjoining the south side of the choir of the church, by Richard of Aberdeen, Prior, and Thomas Crawford, Canon of Inchcolm.¹ Portions of the walls, and a fragment of the vaulting of this lady chapel, still remain, showing that the work has been rude when compared with the older buildings.

¹ Fordun, by Bower, lib. xv. chap. 13.

WALTER BOWER, one of the most industrious and reliable historians of the middle ages, was elected Abbot of St Columba, in Emonia, in 1418. At the request of Sir David Stewart, of Rossyth, he undertook to edit and complete the fragmentary chronicle of John of Fordun, written towards the end of the fourteenth century, and to continue the history to his own times. The invaluable chronicle, the result of his labours, has furnished much of the material which forms the groundwork of all the later histories of Scotland. Of the sixteen books which formed the "Scotichronicon," five only were the original work of Fordun, and to these Abbot Bower made many additions, while the remaining eleven books were wholly written by him.

In addition to the labour involved in such an undertaking, we owe to the same industrious scholar the preservation of one of the most complete series of monastic muniments extant, extending from the earlier part of the thirteenth century, many of which he transcribed with his own hand.¹

The English pirates having ceased their assaults, there could be no more appropriate or delightful retreat for a literary student than the Abbey of Inchcolm, and no life more congenial than the monastic.

It is highly probable that the muniment room over the chapter house was built by Bower for the more careful preservation of the conventual records on which he set so high and just a value, and at the same time to serve as a scriptorium or study, where, shut off even from his monkish brethren, he could give himself up wholly to the study of the obscure manuscripts from which he gathered his accounts of the stirring events of Scottish history. No traces are now to be seen of a black letter inscription which, in Grose's time, might be traced on the walls of this literary lighthouse, but of which nothing could be deciphered except the ominous word "stultus."

Bower would appear also to have been considered an able and highly important person in his own times, as we find him appointed along with the Bishop of Dunblane as commissioner to collect the sum demanded for the ransom of James I., then a prisoner in England, released in 1422.²

¹ Billings's "Antiquities of Scotland, 'Inchcolm.'"

² Fordun, by Bower, lib. xvi. cap. 9.

But the monastic system, which in earlier times had been the nursery of all arts, science, religion, and literature, without which such men as Bower, and such works as the "Scotichronicon" could have had no existence, had outlived the state of society which had at the first made such a system a necessity. In the higher culture, which had now extended beyond the cloister, and in the keen ambition for scholastic honours amongst a class that had formerly held literature in contempt, there existed a spirit which, while it ensured the protection of learning, opened out for it a freer and nobler path than that prescribed by the conservative influence of the monasteries. In 1543 Abbot Henry surrendered his office; the brotherhood of St Columba, after existing for upwards of four hundred years, was dissolved, and the Abbey was deserted for ever.

Desecration soon followed. For after the disastrous battle of Pinkey, 1547, the Duke of Somerset occupied the island as a post commanding the river Forth. Patin, the historian of the expedition, says that "S. Coomes Ins" is "but a mile about, and hath in it a pretty abbey (but the monks were gone), fresh water enough, and also coonyes, and is so naturally strong, as but one way it can be entered." The old chronicler then grows humorous:—"Sir John Luttrell, Knight, having bene, by my Lord's Grace and the Counsell, elect abbot, by God's suffraunce, of the monastery of Sainct Coomes Ins, afore remembred in the afternoon of this day departed towardes the island to be stalled in his see thear accordyngly, and had with him a coovent of C hakbutteres and L pioners to kepe his house and land thear, and ii row barkes well furnished with municion, and lxx mariners for them to keep his waters, whereby it is thought he shall soon becum a prelate of great power."

James Stewart, afterwards Sir James Stewart of the family of Ochiltree, and uncle of the Admirable Crichton, having "acquired" from the Abbot Nicholas the lands of West Aberdour and Beith, on the surrender of Abbot Henry at the Reformation, became Commendator of Inchcolm, and sat in that capacity in the Assembly which ratified the Confession of Faith in 1560.

His second son, James Stewart, Lord Doune, was in 1611, by special favour of James VI., created a peer by the title of Lord St Colm. Having married the daughter of the Regent Murray, the lands and titles were united to those of the Earls of Moray, who are the proprietors of the island, and

whose seat of Donibristle House stands near the shore, a few miles to the west.

As to the history of the island subsequent to the Reformation, we cannot do better than quote the passage from General Hutton's work, written in 1822, given in the admirable historical notice of the Abbey in Billings's "Ecclesiastical and Baronial Antiquities of Scotland:"—"In the middle of the Forth, about 100 yards to the east of Inchcolm, there is a small black rock which is called the Prison Island, and which it is said was used by the convent as a place of punishment and penance. The island of Inchcolm was occupied about twenty-five years ago as an hospital by the Russians when their fleet lay in the Forth, which may account for the surprising quantity of human bones which are to be found all over the island, heaped together with the utmost confusion, according to the Russian mode of burial. It had always been said that the church of the convent had fallen in upon a Sabbath day during worship. About fifteen years ago, some workmen sent to repair the battery" (erected in 1794) "were collecting a few stones from the north-east corner of that space marked in the plan 'the south wing of the church,' they came to a human skeleton standing upright in the ruins, on which they desisted, and no search has since been made."

In fine weather the visitor to Inchcolm may easily row himself across the two miles from Aberdour harbour, but if the sea is rough the easiest way is to pull along the shore to "the cave," about a mile to the west, from which the island is little over a mile distant. This "cave" is a well-built vaulted chamber, erected on the extreme edge of a rocky promontory. An examination of the ruins shows that this is only the lower story of what may have been a tower of some height, and the round-headed door and small windows facing the sea are so well formed of ashlar work, as to suggest that it has been the work of the builders who were engaged on the Abbey. In all probability it was built as a ferry-house for the use of the monks in their journeys between the island and mainland.

On approaching the island, we find it consists of two parts connected by a low narrow neck of land, over which the waves are said to dash in stormy weather. The eastern half is a bluff rocky eminence of considerable height, with the ruins of a fort on the top, from which a fine view of the monastery may be had. The western and larger half, on which the Abbey stands, rises in a gentle slope, increasing in height and width towards the west,—an

example of the "crag and tail" formation observable in all elevations in the valley of the Forth and Clyde, and which indicates the existence at one time of a sea flowing with a strong current from the Atlantic. At the north side of the little isthmus is the landing-place, from which by a short ascending path we reach the ruins, grouped like fallen masses of rock about the square military looking tower. But as we enter a kind of entrance court, surrounded on three sides by the monastic buildings, we find that, though much dilapidated, they are really in a less ruinous condition than appeared at first sight.

The choir of the church, however, from its unfortunate proximity to the landing-place, has been used as a quarry by some Vandals, who have pulled it down, carrying away whatever they required, and leaving a mass of *débris* which has raised the level of the ground on its site about eight feet above the floor of the adjoining chapter-house. The venerable appearance of the ruins has been also much destroyed by a former proprietor, who, by additions and alterations, has formed a dwelling-house out of the old refectory and offices on the south and west sides of the cloister, to which an entrance has been made by unsightly breaches in the intervening buildings. The dwelling had some pretensions to comfort when first built, but has fallen into decay, and is now abandoned to the use of a poor under-tenant who is permitted to occupy it only because it is, we believe, a condition of the tenure that the island should never be uninhabited; so that here storm-pressed pilots and seamen may still find shelter, though the board would not be much better than that supplied in the olden time by the hermit of *Æmonia* to good king Alexander. The only other inhabitants of the island are the pigs, who occupy the nave of the church.

Having completed our notices of the history and present condition of the monastery, we will now endeavour to explain the general arrangements of the various buildings, as these may be gathered from what remains, and the analogy of similar architectural works.

The accompanying sketch-plan (Plate IV.), although it has no pretensions to minute accuracy of measurement, will assist the description which follows.

The older portions (tinted black on the plan) are the cloisters or ambulatories, and the buildings over them on the east, south, and west sides of the *Cloister Court*. This court, including the covered way now destroyed, next the church, is about 34 feet square. The ambulatories, which surround it on three sides, are 11 feet 6 inches wide, enclosed towards the open court or

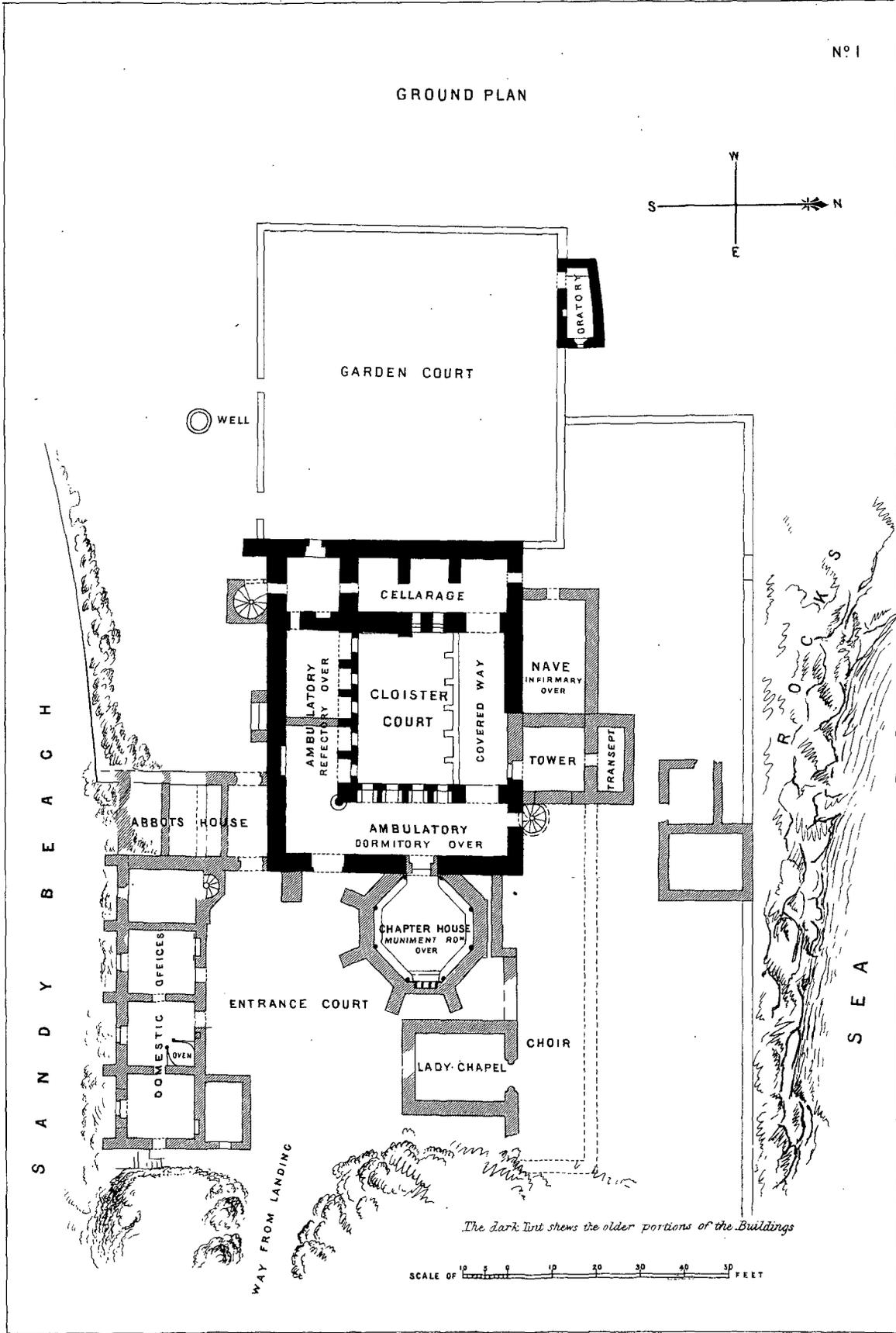
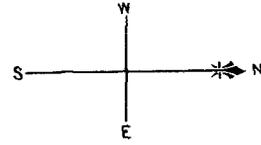
“ garth ” by walls, 4 feet 8 inches thick, having plain, round-headed windows, of moderate size, on the east and south sides. These windows, of which there are five on the south and four on the east side, have stone seats on each side in the thickness of the wall. On the east side next the tower is a round-headed archway, 7 feet 8 inches wide, corresponding to a similar archway on the west side of the court. Between these was a covered way, 11 feet 3 inches wide, divided into seven bays in the length, as is indicated by the sills or bases which remain. The roof of this passage was certainly of wood, and in all probability the pillars or posts which carried it were of the same material. It is worthy of note, that even in such magnificent structures as Melrose Abbey, St Andrews' Cathedral, &c., the cloister passages have been merely of wood; that even the splendid cathedral of Glasgow has no cloisters; and that in all probability Scotland was without a single specimen of a cloister walk enclosed and roofed with stone,—a feature which in other countries is always one of the most beautiful parts of cathedral and conventual buildings,—unless we include the passages we have here described as ambulatories, which, however,—differ materially from the true piazza-like cloister walk.¹

The eastern ambulatory has a door at the north end, next the archway referred to, communicating by a circular stone stair with the dormitory above, and also with the choir of the church. In the back wall, which is 4 feet 10 inches thick, are two doorways; one in the middle enters directly on the chapter-house, the other at the south end opens out on the entrance court, and was, no doubt, the principal entrance to the monastery. Near

¹ The seclusion provided by the cloisters for the monks while taking exercise, or studying in the open air, was here sufficiently secured by the insular position of the monastery. The whole island would, therefore, be free for the brethren, though we may presume that the garden court and the open area to the south of the refectory would be the favourite resorts, on account of their sheltered position, sunny aspect, and proximity to the church and refectory. The enclosed ambulatories would be chiefly used in cold and stormy weather. The open court to the south is shown in the drawing of the Abbey, in Pennant's work, as enclosed by a wall, having a postern at the south-west angle. The buttressed projection at the south-east end of the refectory, a comparatively recent addition, probably served as a recess for the Abbot's triclinium, or for the reader to sit in during dinner. Next the court, the space between the piers or buttresses would serve for the “ carols,” where the senior monks taught the noviciates and junior brethren. The communication between this court and the cloister was probably near the entrance to the present house.

No 1

GROUND PLAN



The dark tint shows the older portions of the Buildings

SCALE OF 0 10 20 30 40 50 FEET

this, in the south ambulatory, are some remains of a lavatory. On the west side of the cloister court are traces of a staircase, which probably led to the refectory. The large archway already noticed is the principal feature on this side, communicating with the garden court to the west of the monastery and the churchyard on the higher ground beyond.

The *Dormitory* is here built immediately over the eastern ambulatory or cloister, to which it forms a second storey. It is lighted by five windows, looking into the court, and has two doors at the north end,—one in connection with the circular stair from cloisters, the other leading by a flight of steps from the choir. A small opening or hagnoscope near this latter door commands a view of the altar, for the convenience of those monks who were unable to be present in the church, and wished to join as far as possible in the worship. A narrow door in the east or back wall of the dormitory gives access to the *Muniment Room*, Scriptorium, or Library, for to all of these uses it was probably turned. This low, octagonal chamber, awkwardly roofed by a plain barrel vault, is lighted by small windows in the south and south-east sides, and has a fire-place in the north wall. This wall, like many of the other small apartments throughout the Abbey, has been plastered inside,—in this case, no doubt, with a view to protect the manuscripts from the damp. As this upper storey is evidently a later addition to the chapter-house below, we may conjecture that it was built by the famous Abbot Bower as a study; and here, no doubt, he laboured at his “*Scotichronicon*.”

The *Refectory*, which usually adjoins the cloisters on the south, is, like the dormitory, built over the ambulatory. Unfortunately, though much of the old walls remain, the buildings on the south and west sides of the court have been considerably altered in adapting them as a farm-house, and in consequence the details of the arrangements of the refectory and contiguous apartments are lost. According to the usual order, the kitchen and store-rooms would be placed on the west side of the cloister.

The portions of the monastery we have now described (except the muniment room) are the only parts which could safely be referred to a period earlier than the close of the twelfth century. In the absence of any mouldings or distinctive architectural feature it would be impossible to fix the date more definitely.

Those parts which remain to be noticed, comprising the greater part of the Abbey, are, for the most part, of the middle of the thirteenth century,—

a period during which Gothic architecture attained to its highest perfection in Scotland.

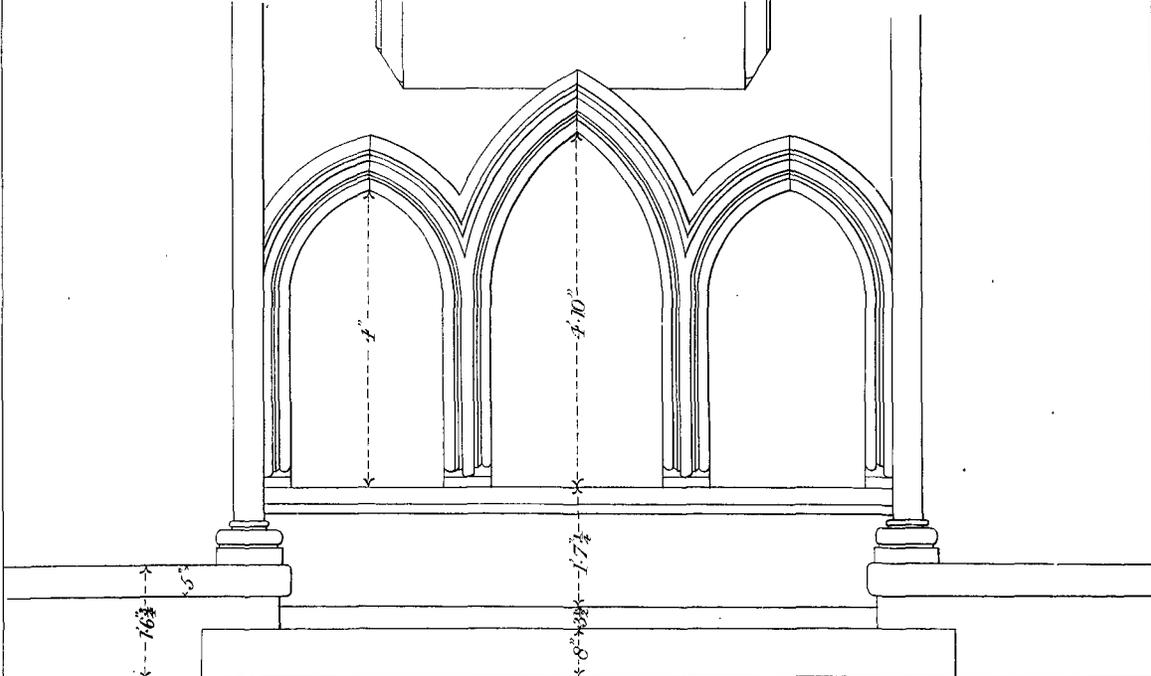
The *Chapter-House*, though probably the smallest in Britain, being only 22 feet 8 inches between the opposite sides, is, nevertheless, a well-proportioned and beautiful structure. It is octagonal on plan, having a stone bench, 16 inches broad, round six sides, the remaining bays being occupied by the doorway from cloister, and the sedilia in the opposite bay. The doorway, 4 feet 1 inch wide and 6 feet 4 inches high to top of arch, is richly moulded on the side next the chapter-house, but very plain towards the cloister. The mouldings are arranged in two orders,—the inner being continued round the arch and down the jambs to within $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches of the step, where they are splayed off; the outer order or congeries of mouldings rests on single shafts, having moulded caps, but without bases. The triple sedilia for the abbot, prior, and sub-prior, on the side opposite the entrance, is elevated on a platform two steps higher than the general floor; the seats, which are all of the same height, are 12 inches above the stone benches. The centre niche, for the abbot, is somewhat loftier than those at the sides, and all are recessed to a depth of 12 inches from the general face of the wall. The arches are ornamented by a simple moulding, which is continued down to form the sides and divisions. In the angles of the chapter-house are shafts, with bases resting on the stone benches, and having moulded caps, from which the ribs of the groining spring. The rib mouldings are very simple and effective, and the groin arches acute and graceful. The boss or carved keystone at the apex is the only piece of carving to be met with in the Abbey. The only objectionable feature is the lighting; the windows being various in size and design, and placed only towards the south and east, there is a sad want of symmetry, so essential in a building constructed on a geometric figure such as the octagon, and an inequality in the distribution of the light, which is not only inartistic, but must have been a serious inconvenience to the monks of St Columba in chapter assembled. (Plates IV. and VI.)

The mediæval architect, religiously following established rules, which required the chapter-house to be placed on the east side of the cloister, has, from the very limited size of the court, been literally driven into a corner, which admits of only a small building, and that so closely environed by the choir on the north side, that it was impossible for him

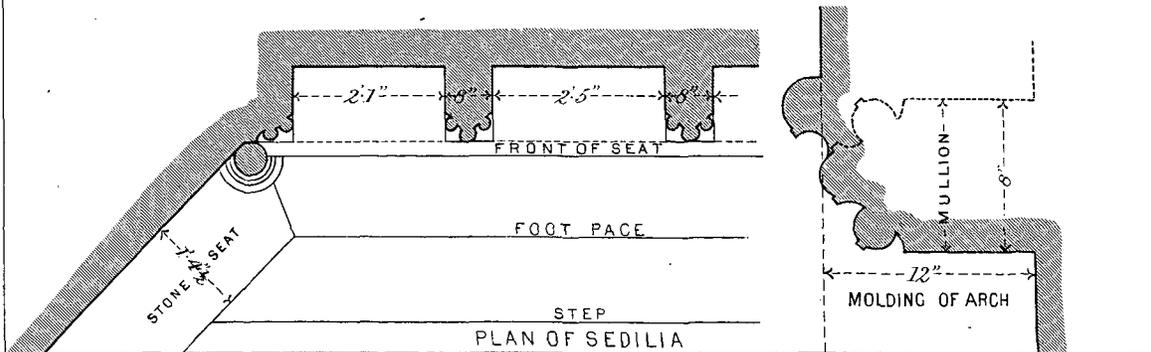
Nº II



VIEW OF THE ABBEY FROM THE ROCK ON THE S. E.



ELEVATION OF SEDILIA IN CHAPTER-HOUSE



THOMAS ARNOLD. 1867.

W. & A. K. Johnston, Lithog.

INCHCOLM ABBEY

to get such a symmetrical and well-lighted apartment as he must have desired.

The buttresses are set on all the external angles except those next the choir, and have boldly moulded bases and gabled terminations finishing under a rudely corbelled projecting stage or story, which forms the muniment room. This upper story, which we have already noticed as entering from the dormitory, is no doubt an addition of later date, and certainly is in itself clumsily contrived, and spoils the external appearance of the chapter-house.

On the south side of the entrance court stands a rectangular block of buildings, about 20 feet in breadth, in rather a ruinous condition, especially at the west end, where the vaulted roofs have fallen. This wing or block shows one storey in height towards the court, but, being built on the slope towards the beach, is really in two storeys, with a double range of windows looking seaward. It is divided into chambers by cross walls, 11 feet 6 inches apart; these divisions being marked externally by buttresses, which, with the pointed windows between them, give a certain amount of architectural effect to the buildings as seen from the sea. The uses to which this wing was appropriated are indicated by large fire-places, ovens, and flues in the upper as well as in the lower storeys. *The Kitchen, Bakehouse, Wine and Beer Cellars, and General Store-rooms*, were of so much importance to monks as a class, and more especially would be so where, from the situation, supplies could often only be had at long intervals and with some risk, that we may allow for the somewhat undue size of these offices as compared with the whole area of the monastery. The various apartments communicate with each other: two of those in the upper floor open out on the entrance court. There is a door at the east end of the building; and a flight of steps outside leads to another door, which is the only access to the lower storey. (Plate IV.)

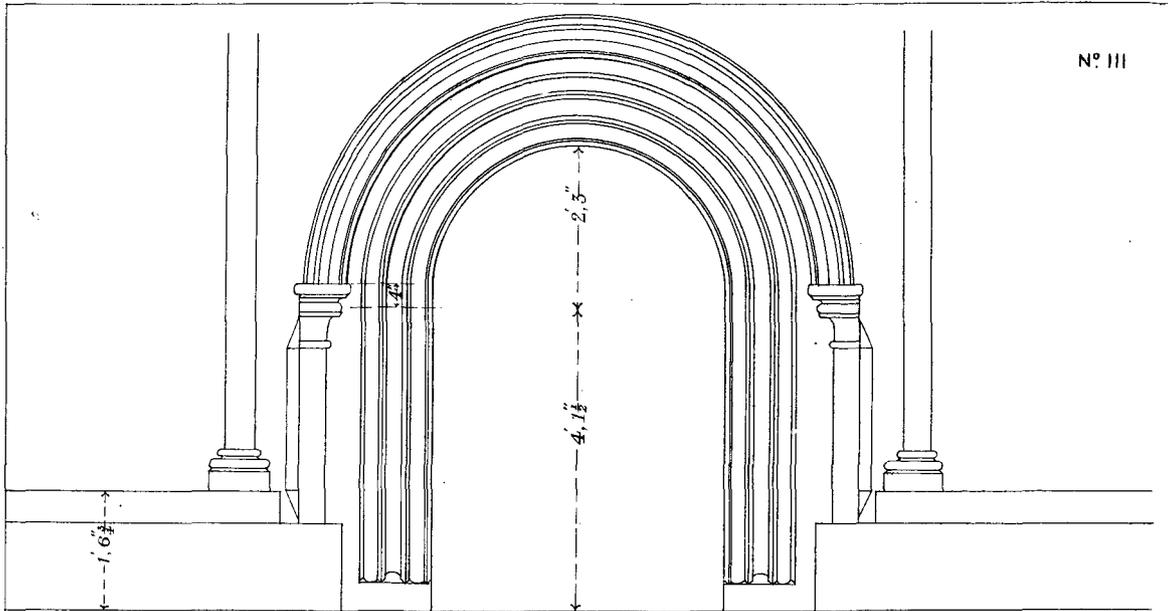
The ruinous continuation of this block to the west appears to have comprised a set of apartments, probably *the residence of the Abbot* and other chief officers, though it is quite possible, as we shall afterwards see, that this may have been the *Guest House*. A projection in the angle of the entrance court contains a circular stone stair connecting these apartments with a range of chambers in two storeys 16 feet wide, adjoining the buildings around the cloister court. A passage way to the modern dwelling-house has been formed

through the ground floor of this wing, and the rest of the buildings are much destroyed. In one of the cells or chambers in this quarter a human skeleton was discovered built into an angle of the wall, not the only one which has been found in a similar position amongst the ruins.

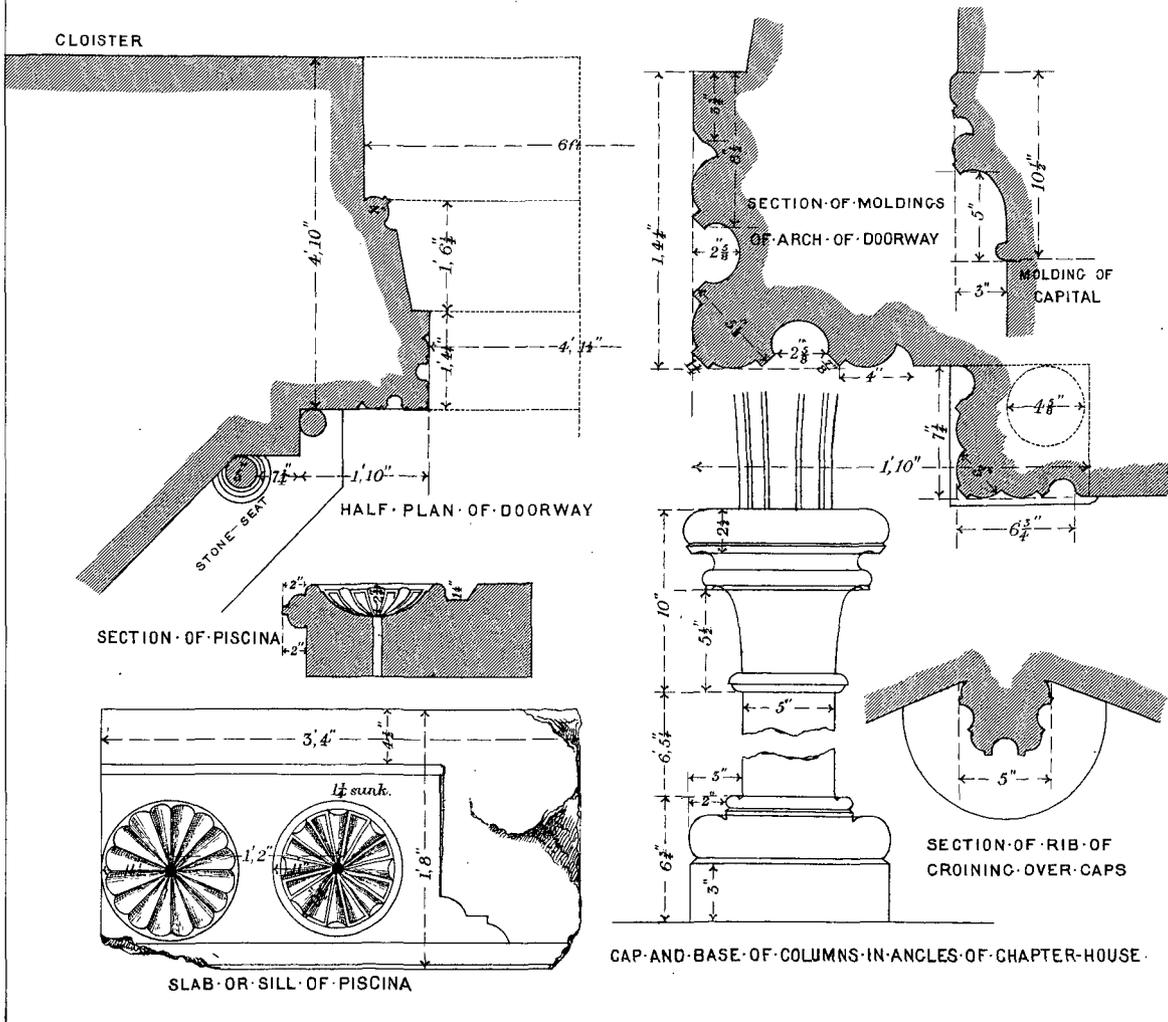
The Abbey Church.—We have previously referred to the wanton destruction of the choir, and the mass of *débris* which now covers its site. At little expense this might be removed, so as to discover the foundations, and enable us to form correct ideas of the plan. *The Choir* must have been of considerable length, as the remains of a door or window jamb are to be seen near the east wall of the lady chapel, a distance of about 70 feet from the east side of tower. Presuming, as we may safely do, that the width of this part of the church did not exceed that of the tower and nave, which are only 20 ft. 6 in. over walls, and about 16 feet inside, the length would be about five times the width. When we compare with this the length of the nave, which is only $1\frac{2}{3}$ its width, we are at first astonished at the very unusual proportions. Still more so when we remember that the Canons Regular of St Augustine were, like the Culdees whom they supplanted, a community of parish priests under rule, who usually built their churches on quite opposite principles, providing for large congregations in naves of great length, as at Jedburgh and St Andrews. But at Inchcolm they could have no congregation of the people whatever, and consequently no use for a nave; a choir sufficiently large to accommodate all the brethren was all the church necessary. It is not improbable that the choir has had a north aisle of four bays in length. Narrow proportions are characteristic of Scottish churches, even of those erected in the best periods of church building, as Kirkwall, Glasgow, and St Andrews' Cathedrals.

The difficulties and great expense which would have to be encountered in constructing large stone roofs at such a distance from the mainland, and the greater simplicity and strength of the narrow span adopted throughout the Abbey (nowhere exceeding 16 feet), are no doubt the true reasons for the very small width given to the choir and other parts of the church. That it arose from no want of skill is sufficiently proved by the beautiful design and workmanship of the groined chapter-house. From indications on the east wall of the tower, the roof of the choir appears to have been of the very plainest description of pointed vaulting, and of considerable height, equal to the two storeys of the other buildings. A high pitched roof rose over this at

Nº III



ELEVATION OF DOORWAY IN CHAPTER-HOUSE



such a height as to admit of a passage between the stone ceiling and the roof proper. This form of simple pointed vaulting is very common in Scotland, especially amongst the collegiate churches, as Bothwell, Roslin, and Seton. But in most cases we have the ceiling relieved by ribs, sometimes arranged in imitation of groined vaulting, or by sculptured rosettes, &c.

At Bothwell and Seton the roof covering is of large stone slabs laid on the back of the stone vaulting, while at Roslin the vault itself forms the only and true roof. The former mode of construction has been adopted in the roofs of the block of offices to the south of the entrance court, while the small "oratory" in the garden court and the muniment room have had the outer covering of smaller and less carefully dressed blocks of stone.



East Wall of Tower.

That the church of Inchcolm was formerly richly adorned with statues of the saints, carved woodwork, sacred vessels, ornaments of gold and silver, and costly vestments, we are assured in the accounts already given by the chroniclers of the sacrilegious plundering of the English "pirates." All that now remains to indicate the style of the building erected by Richard, Bishop of Dunkeld, in 1265, is the sill of a double piscina, a broken slab containing two basins carved with different designs of fluting, and now lying in the archway between the entrance court and the farm house. (Plate VI.)

A wide opening with half pillars on the jambs, on the south side of the choir, marks the entrance to the *Lady Chapel*, built in 1402. It has been covered by a semicircular stone vault, the greater part of which has fallen, leaving the remainder hanging together by the strength of the cement which binds it, forming a very striking feature in the view of the ruins from the east and south. It is rather singular that this chapel has been built at right angles to the church, requiring the altar to be placed at the east side instead of at the end. Possibly this was done because it would be easier to unite the vaulting at right angles than longitudinally, and at the same time would avoid cutting into the main walls of the church.

We have already, when speaking of the dormitory, referred to the steps

from it to the choir for the use of the monks attending on the services at early morning and midnight, and have noticed the squint or hagnioscope enabling those who remained in the dormitory to follow the officiating priest. In the south angle next the tower is the circular stone stair, which conducted from the cloister to the dormitory and the apartments in the upper part of tower and nave.

The Tower, 20 feet 6 inches square, though of no great height, forms a somewhat conspicuous object in the view of the monastery from the sea. It is of four storeys in height, and is finished at top by a plain corbelled parapet. In the upper storey, on three sides, are two coupled windows, under a simple round label, and underneath is a string course equally plain. The apex of the external roof over choir has reached to this moulding, so that the tower has been only one storey above the adjoining roofs of the church. This is quite in conformity with the usual practice in churches built for this order, where we find the towers are seldom made of great height or importance. No doubt a peal of bells formerly hung here, as bells are mentioned among the spoils carried away by the English. Passing in the meantime the room below,—in the ground floor of the tower is a door from the cloisters, with shafted jambs and simple semicircular moulded arch. The ceiling is a plain barrel vault in continuation of that over the nave, having a large circular opening in the centre, probably intended for communication with the floors above or for the admission of light.

The small adjunct, or *Transept*, on the north side of the tower, is covered with a lean-to roof, but probably had a high-pitched gabled roof of same height as those over the choir and nave, and consists of two small chambers, one over the other, communicating with the other apartments in the tower. It is evidently a later addition, and its principal use seems to have been to give a more church-like appearance to the north view of the Abbey. As a rule, the transepts of Scottish cathedrals and churches are very shallow, in no case exceeding two bays in projection from the intersection, and in some instances, as Glasgow Cathedral, the transepts are mere breaks in the general line of the walls, introduced, as it would seem, solely to relieve the external elevation, and mark by a varied treatment the division between the choir and nave.

The Nave is, as we have already noticed, unusually short in comparison with the choir. Perhaps the only other case in which we find a similar

arrangement is that of Kelso Abbey Church, where the nave is of one bay about 23 feet square, while the choir has side aisles, and was at least three bays in length, exclusive of the apse. The nave of Inchcolm Church is about 26 feet by 15 feet 6 inches, and is a plain vaulted chamber, which could never have been sufficiently lighted to admit of its use as part of the church. It is quite possible that the tower and nave were, as now, built off from the choir, and formed part of the domestic offices of the monastery.

The Upper Rooms over the Nave, Tower, and Transept formed a suite of apartments used in all probability as the infirmary of the Abbey, or additional dormitories. The room over the nave has a fire-place in the west-end wall, and windows on the north and south sides. It was not roofed in stone like all the other buildings in the monastery, but had a simple wooden roof, long since destroyed. The addition of this upper storey to the nave may, like the transept and muniment room, have been made at some later time to meet the increased requirements of the Abbey. Such an arrangement is probably unique as far as regards Scotland and England, but examples are to be met with in Ireland, of rooms not only over the nave, but even over the choir in small churches.

That the nave would never be required for the ordinary use of a congregation makes the arrangement less objectionable in the present instance, a fact of which the architect, no doubt, availed himself in his endeavours to economise space and expense. In the adjoining chamber in the tower there is a window on the south side, overlooking the cloisters, having stone seats in the thickness of the wall. The small "turnpike stair" from the cloisters in the south-east corner formed the communication to these upper rooms; another leads from the south-west angle of this chamber to the rooms in the tower above.¹ The small apartment which adjoins and forms the upper floor of the transept is provided with a fire-place and aumbry.

Another very feasible mode of disposing of these upper rooms, and one in some respects more in accordance with the usual plan of conventual

¹ It is not improbable that a portion of the triple arcade shown in the small sketch (page 65), was open, so that invalid monks from this chamber could follow the offices of the Church without leaving their dormitory.

establishments, so far as the exceptional circumstances will admit of comparison, is to consider them as the Abbot's house. What we have described as the Abbot's house at the entrance court would then become the guest house, and the infirmary would be over the south side of the cloister, at right angles to the refectory.

On the north side of the choir and transept are some remains of buildings, but from what is left it would be impossible to conjecture their purpose. No doubt some of these walls are of comparatively modern erection.

A large portion of the enclosing wall of the Abbey still remains parallel with the church on the north. It extends along the rocky margin of the island for a distance equal to the length of the church; it then probably joined the wall of the garden court at the west end, and at its eastern extremity turned at right angles to join the east wall of the choir, having a large gateway in front of the entrance court. The range of buildings built up to the sandy beach on the north side would complete the enclosure of the Abbey.

It only remains for us now to notice one or two objects of considerable interest that have been associated by some eminent antiquaries with the early history of Inchcolm.¹

On the south side of the island, about 20 yards west of the dwelling-house, is "*The Well*," constructed of carefully wrought masonry, 4 feet 6 inches external diameter, and about 50 feet deep. That this was built and used by the monks of St Columba there can be no doubt, as it is the only one on the island; and for the same reason we cannot doubt that, when it bubbled up from the ground, and ran a little rill to the sea, it was the "holy well" whose waters supplied the simple but wholesome drink of the royal founder and his saintly companion.

Still more interesting is the small building at the north-west angle of the wall, enclosing what we have called the garden court, for it has been conjectured to be the veritable cell or chapel which sheltered the shipwrecked king, and may even have been built by St Columba himself as the

¹ D. Wilson's Prehistoric Annals, vol. ii. See also Sir J. Y. Simpson "On an Old Stone-Roofed Cell or Oratory in the Island of Inchcolm." Proc. Soc. Antiq., vol. ii. p. 489. This paper came under the writer's notice after these pages were in the printer's hands. It contains much valuable matter regarding the earlier history of the Island, and detailed notices of its minor antiquities.

first Christian church in this part of the east of Scotland. It is a very small, irregular structure, measuring internally 15 feet 9 inches in length, by a width increasing from 4 feet 8 inches at west end, to 5 feet 10 inches at east end. The entrance is by a low lintelled door, 4 feet wide at the west end of the south wall, and it is lighted by a small slit in east wall, externally 2 feet 8 inches by 10 inches wide, but splayed out inside to a width of two feet.

A bole or aumbry, 1 foot 2 inches by 1 foot, and 1 foot 3 inches deep, in the south wall, and a modern seat along the west end, complete the few points observable inside. The roof is of stone—a rude specimen of pointed vaulting, having an outer covering of stones dressed and laid so as to throw off the rain, while at the same time it gives stability to the vaulting.

Many suggestions might be given as to the probable use made of this cell. Its proximity to the burial-ground suggests a charnel-house or chapel of St Martin, frequently attached to monastic cemeteries; or, if taken in connection with the garden court or herbary, it may have served as a storehouse for implements of husbandry, or fruits, or for some purposes connected with the religious life of the community, as a place for retirement, study, or penance. To whatever use it was afterwards applied, the probability appears to be that this represents the original Culdee chapel or clachan, and that the canons of St Columba, anxious to preserve a relic and testimony to the truth of the legend of the foundation of their Abbey, had long preserved it in its primitive condition; and when, through the inevitable effects of time, it began to fall into ruin, workmen were employed to “restore” it, preserving as well as they could the original walls, and adding a roof of stone to protect it from further decay.

There seems no reason to doubt that we have here a relic of the primitive Scottish Church, one of the earliest ecclesiastical buildings existing in Scotland, or in Britain, a memorial of the mission of the great and good apostle St Columba, whose name has made this Island sacred ground for 1300 years, and to whom, more than any other, we owe the first impulses of that deep religious feeling which has ever been one of the most marked characteristics of the Scottish people, and the glory which has exalted them as a nation.

That no epoch of the history of this Island may be without some remains to which we can link its varied story, there is lying in the chapter-house a sculptured stone, a fragment of what may have been a memorial cross, intended to be built against a wall, or laid horizontally over a grave.

What remains is evidently part of the lower limb of the cross, and is covered on one of the broader faces, the sides, and end, with the interlacing ornaments characteristic of Scandinavian art. Though this style of ornament is to be seen in Celtic manuscripts and tombs of presumable Celtic workmanship, it was essentially the art of those northern nations who from time to time made descents on the Scottish coast leaving colonies to settle there, or, as we have seen them in the early history of Inchcolm, defeated and driven back, purchasing for their dead comrades a grave in the land they could not conquer.

To the same age we may refer the "Danish monument," drawn in Sir R. Sibbald's "History of Fife." The rude sketch there shows a strange form with a human head at either end, the body covered with some sort of reticulated ornament. This is laid horizontally on what appears to be four short piers of stone, with panels between, the centre one having a figure holding a spear carved on it. Grose having consulted this drawing, compared it with the monument it was intended to illustrate, but could distinguish nothing like a human head at either end, though he says that "something like a man with a spear is seen (by sharp-sighted antiquaries) on the north side, and on the south the figure of a cross."

Before closing our account of Inchcolm we may notice the fine echo, which in early and superstitious times must have greatly added to the mysterious sanctity always connected with the island. He who would experience the full effect of this phenomenon should choose a quiet autumn evening, when darkness or a thin mist has almost shut out the view of the shore, and bring his boat to about one hundred yards from the north-west corner of the Inch. Then let him call aloud to the spirits that sleep in the Holy Isle—a deathlike silence follows; but soon, with appalling distinctness, comes forth the echo. The sound is caught up by the wooded crags of the old lordship of Aberdour; from shore to island, from Abbey to castle, the genii call, till their voices mingle, fade, and are lost in the eternal murmur of the sea. Fit emblem and appropriate memorial of scenes and times whose glories have departed, and left but the fading voices of history and legend to speak their fame. We have tried in the present sketch to revive these echoes, and to build up again in imagination the ruined and waste places, "the desolations of many generations."